

THEOIS
34
101
10250479

This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

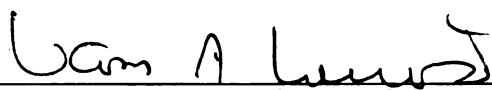
THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
FOR READER RESPONSE TO
FOREIGN LANGUAGE LITERARY TEXTS:
STUDENT RESPONSES IN ORAL AND WRITTEN FORMS

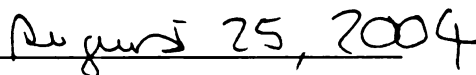
presented by

KATHARINA HÄUSLER GROSS

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctoral degree in German and Cultural Studies


Major Professor's Signature



Date

LIBRARY
Michigan State
University

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
APR 03 2006 04 23 00		

**THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
FOR READER RESPONSE TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE LITERARY TEXTS:
STUDENT RESPONSES IN ORAL AND WRITTEN FORMS**

VOLUME I

By

Katharina Häusler Gross

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages

2004

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR READER RESPONSE TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE LITERARY TEXTS: STUDENT RESPONSES IN ORAL AND WRITTEN FORMS

By

Katharina Häusler Gross

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how non-native, college-level readers of German with diverse backgrounds construct and negotiate meaning when responding to Foreign Language literary texts. To collect the data for this study with objectivity and quality in mind, the study was divided into three phases.

The first phase included a set of pre-reading questionnaires to determine student background information on various levels (personal, academic, socio-economic and socio-cultural), students' reading experiences in both their first/native language (L1) and second/foreign language (L2), and students' reading response preferences. During the second stage a set of open-ended guide questions for reader response activities was geared to identify how students verbalize their oral and written responses to Foreign Language literary texts. Students' responses to selected short narrative fiction were collected using think-aloud protocols and out-of-class response journals. In the final phase a post-reading questionnaire with open-ended guide questions directed personal interviews to conclude how students experienced and accomplished the process of reading and the construction of meaning during the reading process. The interview also

gave students a chance to revisit the texts and reflect upon their writing as a response to those texts.

The significant amount of data about the study participants (background questionnaires and personal profiles) was included to help explain in what way individual student background information played a role in the student's construction of meaning when reading and responding to Foreign Language literary texts.

The data for phases one and two of this study was collected in a natural in-class setting, while data for phase three was collected in an out-of-class conference between the instructor and individual students. For analysis purposes transcripts of both oral and written responses were used. All data was analyzed using preset criteria.

Findings from this study suggest that the readers background knowledge influences the way they respond to literary texts in the Foreign Language classroom. The results of this study also indicate that students' individual background knowledge informs and guides them in the way they access Foreign Language texts and how they process text information during the different reading stages. Furthermore, the results of this study suggest that out-of-class response journals allowed students to activate their background knowledge in a more open and less restrictive way than in-class reader-response activities. Findings also indicate that revisiting the reading and meaning-making process during the personal interview enhanced the students' understanding of the text and appreciation for it. Finally, the results imply, that structured reader response activities such as the guided questions for think-aloud protocols and out-of-class response journals enhance students understanding of short narratives in the foreign language and augment student's abilities to construct and negotiate meaning of those texts.

Copyright by
KATHARINA HÄUSLER GROSS
2004

Für Paul-Alexander

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to my committee members for assisting me in the dissertation writing process by providing valuable feedback and scholarly guidance during the various stages of this project. I wish to thank in particular Dr. Karin Wurst for her unwavering support, insightful comments and encouraging words – especially during times when writing got tough. I also wish to express my thanks to Dr. Charlene Polio, Dr. Tom Lovik, Dr. Patrick McConeghy, and Dr. George Peters for their helpful suggestions and comments throughout this process. Furthermore, I am grateful to Dr. Susan Gass and Dr. Charlene Polio for assisting me in creating this empirical study. And, of course, this project would not have happened without the help of my students, who volunteered to participate in this study. Thank you for sharing your voices, thoughts and personal responses with me. A very special thanks goes to Jeanine Weber for her never-ending patience and continuous assistance in obtaining the many ILL books or articles I requested for this research. Thank you for "keeping me on track", without you this work would not have been possible. I also wish to thank my colleagues and friends, who have listened to me and given me invaluable advice, encouragement and support during the different stages of the dissertation, thank you all!

Most of all I wish to express my deep gratitude to Jerry, who literally shared my sentiments and feelings throughout this lengthy and challenging process while writing his own thesis, and Pauli, whose daily question "Mama, bist du jetzt fertig mit deiner Arbeit?" still resounds in me. Thank you for your love, support and sacrifices. This one is for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
 CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background and Rationale.....	1
The Place of the Personal.....	1
The Changing Place of Literature in the Foreign Language Curriculum.....	6
Why Teach Foreign Literature Anyway?.....	7
Changing Positions: In Search for a New Meaning).....	11
Literature, Literacy, and the Standards-Based Foreign Language Curriculum.....	23
The Role of Context for the Creation of Meaning.....	30
The Role of Culture in Teaching Language and Literature.....	31
How to Teach the Literary Text in the FL Classroom? Towards a Pedagogy of Dialogue.....	34
Problem Statement.....	39
L2 Reading Research and the Role of Social Context.....	41
SLA Research in Language and Literary Studies: Intersection.....	42
Focus on the Learner.....	43
The Role of the Reader in the Construction of Meaning.....	45
Purpose of the Study.....	47
Significance and Justification.....	48
Limitations of the Study.....	49
Research Questions.....	50
Methodological Overview.....	51
 CHAPTER 2	
LITERATURE REVIEW	53
Understanding the Reading Process: L1 versus L2.....	53
Schema Theory.....	55
Defining Comprehension in the Reading Process.....	57
Factors Influencing the Readability of L2 Texts.....	59
Context.....	60
Textual versus Authorial Intent.....	61
Reading Models in L1 and L2.....	62
Bottom-Up Models and their Implications for L2 Reading Comprehension.....	63
Top-Down Models and their Implications for L2 Reading Comprehension.....	65
Interactive Models and their Implications for L2 Reading Comprehension.....	68

Levels of Representation.....	74
The Influence of Socio-Cultural Aspects for Memory Representation.....	76
Relevant Issues from L1 Reading Research for L2 Reading Comprehension.....	77
SLA Recommendations for the L2 Reading Process.....	80
Text types: Expository versus Literary Texts.....	82
Justifying the Literary Text in the FL Classroom.....	84
The Role of Cultural Background Knowledge for L2 Comprehension.....	88
Recall in Target Language versus Native Language.....	96
The Need for Culturally Literate L2 Readers.....	98
Reader Response Theory in the FL Literature Course.....	99
 CHAPTER 3	
LITERARY THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE L2	
READING AND COMPREHENSION PROCESS.....	102
Focus on the Text, or Emphasis on the Reader: In Search of Creating the Dialogue.....	102
Shifting Positions.....	102
Interaction in the Reading Process.....	103
The Development of Reader Response Criticism: An Overview.....	105
Of Texts, Readers and the Interaction between Them.....	105
Roland Barthes: The Reader as a "Writer".....	106
Stanley Fish: From Affective Stylistics to Interpretive Communities.....	109
Hans Robert Jauss: Horizons of Expectation.....	112
Wolfgang Iser: The "Actual" and the "Implied" Reader.....	116
Louise Rosenblatt: Transactional Theory.....	127
The Reader's Stance: Aesthetic versus Efferent Reading.....	128
The Place of Reader Response in the FL Literature Classroom.....	130
Reader Response Theory in L1 and L2: Previous Results.....	134
Pedagogical Implications of Reader Response Theory for this Study.....	143
 CHAPTER 4	
METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	
Introduction.....	145
Summary of Methodologies Used for this Study.....	145
Prior Research: Purpose and Relevant Findings.....	153
Current Investigation: Purpose and Significance.....	155
Research Questions.....	157
Methodology.....	160
Qualitative versus Quantitative Research.....	160
Qualitative Methods and Designs.....	162
Prior Studies in Qualitative Research.....	164
Case Study Research and Ethnography.....	167
Ethnography.....	169
Case Studies.....	171

Relevance of Case Study Type for the Current Study.....	174
Evaluative Criteria for Qualitative Research: Advantages and Limitations.....	176
Procedure.....	178
Design of Study.....	178
Rationale.....	179
Description of Site and Setting.....	181
Courses and Groups.....	181
Control versus Experimental Group.....	182
Selection of Literary Texts.....	185
Personal Interest and Motivation.....	187
Familiarity with Text Genre.....	189
Genre: Short Story.....	190
Researcher's Role as Participant-Observer.....	191
Sampling: Rationale for selection of individual cases for analysis...	193
Data Collection.....	195
Preparation of the Course.....	196
Procedures.....	198
Pre-Reading Phase: Questionnaires.....	198
Pre-Reading Phase: Open-Ended Questions.....	200
While-Reading Phase: Think Aloud Protocols.....	204
Post-Reading Phase: Response Journals.....	216
Post-Reading Phase: Personal Interviews.....	219
Researcher's Field Notes.....	220
Data Analysis and Processing.....	220
Important Considerations before the Analysis begins.....	221
Coding of Data.....	222
Framework for Reader Response based on Reader's Background Knowledge.....	223
Analysis of Personal Interviews.....	226
Phases of Data Analysis.....	227
Development of Oral and Written Responses to selected short stories.....	229

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	233
Introduction.....	233
Background Information for Case Studies.....	234
Student Profile 1 ("Andrea").....	234
Individual Background Information.....	234
Student's Reading Behavior in L1 and L2.....	236
Student's Reading Response Preferences.....	238
Personal Characteristics and Response Behaviors.....	239
Student Profile 1 ("Theresia").....	244
Individual Background Information.....	244
Student's Reading Behavior in L1 and L2.....	247
Student's Reading Response Preferences.....	248

Personal Characteristics and Response Behaviors.....	249
Student Profile 1 ("Thomas").....	253
Individual Background Information.....	253
Student's Reading Behavior in L1 and L2.....	255
Student's Reading Response Preferences.....	257
Personal Characteristics and Response Behaviors.....	258
Student Profile 1 ("Michael").....	263
Individual Background Information.....	263
Student's Reading Behavior in L1 and L2.....	265
Student's Reading Response Preferences.....	267
Personal Characteristics and Response Behaviors.....	268
Categories reflecting the Influence of individual and socio-cultural	
Background Knowledge in Written Responses.....	272
Categories reflecting the Influence of individual and socio-cultural	
Background Knowledge in Personal Interviews.....	284
Summary.....	291
 CHAPTER 6	
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	293
Findings.....	293
Conclusions.....	297
Implications for Teaching.....	301
Sample Lesson Plan for the short story "Das Brot" by Wolfgang Borchert..	305
Stage 1.....	306
Stage 2.....	310
Stage 3.....	311
Stage 4.....	314
Stage 5.....	317
Stage 6.....	318
Implications for Research.....	319
 APPENDICES.....	322
Appendix A Course Description for Seminar in German Literature.....	323
Appendix B Questionnaire: Student Background Information.....	324
Appendix C Questionnaire: Reading Survey.....	335
Appendix D Questionnaire: Reading Response Preferences.....	341
Appendix E Pre-Reading Questions for Think-Alouds.....	343
Appendix F Procedures for Think-Aloud Protocols.....	344
Appendix G Guide Questions for out-of-class Response Journals.....	346
Appendix H Guide Questions for Personal Interviews.....	347
Appendix I Informed Written Consent Form.....	348
Appendix J Audio Consent Form.....	350
Appendix K Categorization Schema for Written Responses to Realistic	
Fiction.....	353
Appendix L Categorization Schema for Analysis of Mental Activities	
as implied by Teacher Questions.....	355

Appendix M	Categorization Schema for Literacy Response Questionnaire (LRQ).....	356
Appendix N	Categorization Schema for Variables in Student Reader Responses as expressed in Response Journals.....	357
Appendix O	Preliminary Categorization Schema including Personal Notes.....	359
Appendix P	Data Sources for Analysis based on Preliminary Categorization Schema for Written and Oral Responses.....	371
Appendix Q	Final Categorization Schema for Reader Response based on Background Knowledge.....	373
Appendix R	Analysis Diagram for Evidence of Final Categories as documented in Written and Oral Responses for selected short stories.....	376
REFERENCES.....		388

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1	
Important Characteristics of Case Study Research and Ethnography.....	167
 TABLE 2	
Das Judenauto (September 22, 2003).....	200
 TABLE 3	
Die unwürdige Greisin (November 13, 2003).....	203

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*An intense response to a work will have its roots
in capacities and experiences
already present in the personality
and mind of the reader.
(Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 41)*

Background and Rationale

The place of the personal

My first extensive readings in Foreign Language (FL) literature classes and subsequent experiences discussing the texts go back to the undergraduate English literature courses I took almost twenty years ago. While reading the assigned works was a linguistic challenge in itself, *making sense* of what I had read seemed even more difficult. The mainly teacher-centered and lecture-type literature classes, although inviting comments and opinions from participating students, seemed to focus on locating an interpretation of the literary work that already existed or had been established prior to my own reading of the text. However, based on the prevailing view of the learning and reading process at that time, this form of knowledge dissemination (i.e., "finding the correct answer to a question") was consistent with the idea of how I should interpret literary works: through the professor's interpretation, scholarly articles, and secondary literary sources. Subscribing to this method of teaching and learning I conducted my own literature classes in a similar fashion as I was taught, and provided my students with the necessary historical, sociocultural and literary background information that would prepare them to situate the work within those contexts. Questions regarding the author's

intention and the meaning of the text would then mostly be answered with furnished interpretations.

When I received my first full-time teaching appointment as a foreign language instructor, teaching German at a small liberal arts college, I soon realized that this meant "teaching it all": Beginning, intermediate and advanced-level language courses, composition and conversation, culture and civilization, as well as the ubiquitous introductory or survey literature course for undergraduate foreign language majors. Tucker (2000) quite accurately describes what it felt like to be "thrown into [my] first literature courses" (p. 56), trying to find a compromise between my training as a language teacher for communicative competence, my scholarship in literature, and my own insights and experiences in both these areas. Through the coursework I had completed at the graduate level I became familiar with various perspectives that enter scholarly discussions in the literary discourse.

I had also learned about the importance that the position of "the personal" (here as in the personal perspective) has in literary criticism. Yet it was still an arduous process to integrate all these notions into my own undergraduate literature courses. Students in their third and fourth year of foreign language study did not seem linguistically, literally or culturally equipped to engage in more sophisticated types of literary discussions. Moreover, the learners entering my German literature classroom came with various backgrounds, learning styles and career goals that seemed to favor 'more practically oriented courses' over literary discussions. While advanced-level German courses like *Grammar and Composition*, *Conversation and Culture* or *German for Specific Purposes* were perceived by students to have an immediate and real-life application to their future

careers, they viewed the literature class as somewhat irrelevant or unnecessary while pursuing their professional plans.

Initially, I kept using the 'transmission model' when teaching literature: discussing the readings in class, but ultimately conveying the meaning of the texts to my students. 'Literary analysis' was therefore limited in my classroom to answering comprehension questions, giving plot summaries and describing individual characters of a story. It soon became clear though, that this did little to foster the students' direct engagement with the text or help develop their literary competence. Especially in third year courses I found my students (and myself) faced with the dilemma that Kramsch (1993b, p. 130) describes as trying to make the transition from the "here-and-now communicative activities" to the "more text-bound discussions" of literature. After students had completed the third-year *Conversation* and *Composition* courses they were, by and large, able to verify their competencies in the foreign language by expressing themselves, orally and in writing, at a more sophisticated level. When entering their first literature class however, the majority of learners experienced disappointment and frustration, because of their inability to talk "literary".

The lack of analytical and critical thinking skills for text interpretation paired with the linguistic shortcomings of a fifth semester student left most 'literature novices' feeling overwhelmed and inadequately prepared for the course. In addition to the linguistic challenges that foreign language learners still face in upper division courses they also encounter a number of literary obstacles, as Nance (1994, p. 24) points out. It is unrealistic to expect that all foreign language students already have a prerequisite of literary experiences, which they (supposedly) gained through previous English classes.

Scher (1976) observed almost thirty years ago that "most...undergraduates do not really know *how* [italics mine] to read literature as a work of art", and also lack the "technical vocabulary and critical concepts" (p. 56) that would help them define those experiences still holds some truth today. It is also misleading to assume that undergraduate students who are attending their first foreign language literature class will become, as Mead (1980) put it "erudite specialists in a restricted field" (p. 537). If students do not have the required linguistic tools *and* the sociocultural, historical and literary backgrounds that assist them while reading FL literary texts, they will most likely not succeed in comprehending them.

When enrolling into introductory or survey FL literature courses, students cite different reasons why they are taking these classes. Oftentimes, the learners' decision is based on necessity and/or individual motivation. It needs to be pointed out here that the first aspect may be more of an issue for smaller FL departments than for larger language divisions. Since smaller departments usually only offer a limited number of courses at the upper level, students' individual choices are somewhat curbed in respect to when they can take a particular course. Yet, while most learners need this class to fulfill a requirement for their respective Foreign Language major or minor, it appears that a fair number of students also enroll because they enjoy reading in their second language.

Some students' focus in the literature class may be on learning more about the cultural aspects through reading literature, others want to broaden their view on a variety of subjects and topics in the target culture. Others again want to read the classics in the original language. Besides the restriction that course availability places on students, it can probably be assumed that an individual's main reasons for enrolling in a foreign language

literature class are closely related to and influenced by his or her prior experiences with reading (literary texts) and personal interests and motives.

I first began to consider this *personal stake* that the individual learner has in the literature classroom when I received students' term papers at the end of the semester. Still struggling to find the "right" words to express themselves, students oftentimes rendered a "personal" interpretation of a literary work, which seemed to be strikingly similar to the one that had been offered and discussed in class, found in secondary literary sources, or even on the Internet. This is not to say that students could not have agreed with a particular analysis or interpretation offered to them. Yet, their individual voice(s) – as writers of their paper - seemed to be the only one that was not adequately represented. Given this scenario, I began to search for ideas that provided learners with better opportunities to locate and express *their own voice* in the FL literature classroom, while at the same time integrating the teaching of language and literature in a Standards¹-based curriculum.

Research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Literary Studies has for some time highlighted the importance of the individual in a reading process that emphasizes *interaction* between the reader and the text. One possibility of realizing this concept in the foreign language classroom is the implementation of more experiential modes in the reading and teaching foreign language literature. These methods should then allow students to explore their own personal responses to literature, without losing sight of the text itself. By formulating an initial problem statement that would guide my current research project, the following questions began to surface:

¹ Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the Twenty-First Century, (1999)

1. Which teaching approaches and strategies would prove to be most effective in helping me shift my teaching of literature from the more traditional text-bound and teacher-centered instruction to models that integrated language, literature, and culture?
2. Based on my past teaching experiences in the foreign language (literature) classroom, which personal responses were evoked from students while they were reading culturally unfamiliar texts in the target language, and how were these response formulated?
3. In what way would the students' individual background knowledge influence *how* and *why* they reacted in a certain way to FL literary texts?

Drawing on a substantial body of research that investigated similar or related questions, and which also provided various suggestions for the teaching of literature, language and culture (cf. Barnes-Karol, 2000; Bernhardt, 1995, 2002; Bretz, 1990; Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996; Fecteau, 1999; Frantzen, 2002; Friedman, 1992; Kadish, 2000; Kauffmann, 1996; Kramsch 1985, 1993b; Mittman, 1999; Nance, 1994, 2002; Swaffar, 1998; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991; Tucker, 2000), it was indispensable to look at the place that literature had occupied in the FL curriculum and how that position had changed over time.

The changing place of literature in the foreign language curriculum

Based on the vast amount of articles and essays in professional journals that have addressed the "language versus literature dichotomy"² or the so-called *lang-lit-split*, it

² For more detailed articles on this subject see Barnett, 1991; Bernhardt, 1995, 2002; Gamel, 1984; Henning, 1993; Hoffmann & James, 1986; Kempf, 1995; Kramsch, 1993b; Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000; Mueller, 1991; Shumway, 1990; Tesser, 1999; Tesser & Long, 2000.

appears that language and literature are still leading a "shotgun marriage" (Shumway, 1990, p. 40) after all. Perhaps the most in-depth picture that documents the role literature has (or has not) played in foreign language teaching can be found in Kramersch & Kramersch's (2000) MLJ essay "The Avatars of Literature and Language Study". Providing a detailed analysis about the many different views of literature, seen from the perspective of foreign language teaching throughout the 20th century, the authors highlight the pervasive presence that the literary has to this day in the teaching of foreign languages. However, despite the fact that "literature has consistently provided the cultural backbone and, very often, the intellectual legitimation for the teaching of foreign languages" (Kramersch & Kramersch, 2000, p. 568), a cooperative partnership between these two components for the FL curriculum is still wishful thinking in most departments. And even though many viable solutions have been offered over time to help bridge the counterproductive and in some ways dubious differences that appear on either side of the spectrum, the (now re-claimed) place of literature in the undergraduate foreign language curriculum has not been secured after all.

Why teach foreign literature anyway?

To start with one needs to ask, "Why is literature (still) being taught in the foreign language classroom?" The reality is that most foreign language majors do not graduate with the intention to enroll in Graduate School in order to pursue advanced studies in foreign language and literature. Instead, their professional goals lie in other areas. For example, the majority of foreign language learners at the institution where this investigation was conducted combine their language major with disciplines such as Art,

International Studies, International Business, English, Political Science or History. They do see the language as an asset in their future careers, but do not necessarily focus on obtaining jobs that depend on the knowledge of a foreign language. On the other side of the spectrum is an increasing number of undergraduates – in particular continuing education students who return to universities and colleges to obtain their Master's degree in teaching – who set out to become foreign language teachers in the K-12 school sector. For them, of course, the study of the language and its culture, history and literature is the most important component in their academic study. When reflecting upon the value that literature has in the foreign language curriculum - not as a "stand-alone" feature but as a subject that is closely woven together with other academic areas and disciplines - the study of foreign literatures must clearly be acknowledged as an integral component of the language learning and teaching process.

More recent issues of the *ADFL Bulletin* have taken up the matter of 'language and literature' and devoted a number of articles to this topic. In the context of redefining the undergraduate (and graduate) curriculum in FL departments the paradigm shift in instructional methodology, which has changed both literature and language courses, has remained in the center of the debate (cf. Barnes-Karol, 2000, 2003; Essif, 1998; Kadish, 2000; Nance, 2002; Patrikis, 2002; Pfeiffer, 2002; Tucker, 2000). The transition from intermediate-level "language" to advanced-level "content" courses (referring to literature, culture and civilization, and composition) is by no means a smooth continuation, for students and teachers alike. I specifically use the terminology *language* and *content* here, to refer to the misconception that still prevails in foreign language education to some extent. While participants in elementary and intermediate-level foreign language courses

are trained in communicative competencies, upper-level students are envisioned discussing, analyzing and interpreting literary and cultural topics at a more sophisticated level. If one notes the choice of words that are being associated with language ("learning", "acquisition", "communicative activities", "language proficiency") and literature ("studying", "interpretive and analytical skills", "literary competence") the split between these two fields becomes even more apparent.

Working with these assumptions will, not surprisingly, continue to create problems for literature instruction. As Kramsch (1993b) explains, students who are supposed to jump "from the here-and-now communicative activities" to the more "text-bound discussion" (p. 130) of literary works are not adequately prepared for these new tasks. Many learners in upper-level courses are still in the process of developing and refining their language skills, and are not proficient enough – linguistically, literary and/or culturally – to cope with the challenges that the literature course offers (Bernhardt, 1995; Barnett, 1991; Henning, 1993). Therefore, expecting students to perform on an almost abstract level once they enter their first or introductory literature course often results in frustrated students and disappointed faculty. However, to treat the cultural unfamiliarity FL learners experience with literary texts as simply a linguistic deficiency on the side of the student is denying the fact, that the students' "cultural knowledge or problem-solving abilities need training" (Swaffar & Bacon, 1993, p. 124). To be clear, students do enter the FL literature course with a certain amount of prior knowledge, and interpretive skills and strategies, which they (may have) acquired in their English or American literature classes. But while this knowledge base can be useful, it may not

always be appropriate or sufficient for interpreting FL literary texts. The following example will illustrate this point.

In trying to understand the different opinions about work ethic and work morale that Böll's main protagonists, the fisher and the tourist, display in the story "Anekdote zur Senkung der Arbeitsmoral" (1963), students are required to make connections between their first- and second language base at a conceptual level. This means, they need to match their existing knowledge base with the one necessary for placing this story in its appropriate context. If readers identify the fisher's behavior and personality as being simple(-minded), poor and lazy, characterizing him as an individual who deserves to be pitied for his lifestyle, they clearly fail to acknowledge the ironic portrayal and mockery of the typical, performance-oriented western society (*Leistungsgesellschaft*) that Böll provides. While today's students can most likely associate with behavior patterns exhibited by the tourist (for example, a fast-paced and often stressful life style; travel to so-called "exotic" places because they are warm, sunny and inexpensive; use of a reward system that adequately(?) reimburses overtime work and issues productivity bonuses to individuals who "work hard"), they must also apply the factual sociohistorical and sociocultural knowledge that this text is embedded in (i.e., the time period of the 'economic miracle' or *Wirtschaftswunder* in the 1950ies in Germany, and the situation and status of Turkish and other southern European guest workers in Germany in the late 1950ies to mid 1960ies) in order to "make sense" of what they read.

The constant state of reform that many foreign language institutions seem to be in, with literature courses moving "away from its various traditional canons...toward courses of theoretical or popular interest" (Arens, 2002, p. 22) is not seen as a dilemma by all

language and literature professionals. The reasons that have contributed to the new situation the profession is in have largely to do with the general changes that have occurred in post-secondary education in the past decades. Student profiles of today are quite different from those ten or twenty years ago, based on the strong influence that new mass media and technology have on them. In addition, due to recent demographic shifts and changes that have largely been influenced by global transformations of political and social issues, current K-16+ classroom settings need to pay attention to their modified environments in order to accommodate their increasingly becoming heterogeneous groups of learners.

Changing positions: In search for a new meaning

The position of the literary text in the FL Curriculum has experienced many changes over the years, which have predominantly been shaped by literary theories of the given time. For a more comprehensive overview and discussion of the role and place that literature has occupied in foreign language teaching throughout the 20th century the reader of this study is referred to the essay "The Avatars of Literature in Language Study" (Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000).

In decades prior to the communicative approach in language teaching, most of the teaching and class time was dedicated to the translation of literature in order to develop linguistic skills and to relate information about the foreign culture (Grittner, 1990, p. 19). Providing authentic reading materials that were rich on vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, the literary text served thus mainly as a tool for advanced translation exercises. Based on this rationale, the focus of using literature in the FL

classroom was clearly on students mastering vocabulary and grammar exercises as accurately as possible. Text interpretation or analysis of textual features consequently centered on the discussion of linguistic points or questions about text comprehension. In this context, meaning (of the text) was produced or assigned through the precise literal translation of the text itself, either from the foreign language into the native or vice versa.

The conclusion then was that the most flawless translation of a literary work would in turn render the most accurate meaning of it. The view of the literary text was – based on this grammar-translation approach – that of a "fixed object of study with a correct answer to each question posed" (Schultz, 2002, p. 5). To understand foreign literature meant to understand the individual words and grammar of the text. Students enrolled in literature courses of this nature were therefore instructed to read and comprehend literary texts as firmly established cultural artifacts that came embedded in a specific historical context and with an inherent meaning, which reflected the author's experiences and intentions.

Clearly defined were also the roles that teacher and students had in this (traditional) literature classroom. The text, and subsequently its interpretation, needed to be *taught* by a literary well-versed specialist - the instructor, most likely - because students did not possess the necessary skills or competencies to effectively analyze the respective literary work. Ruled by this belief, text discussions ultimately centered on the teacher's final presentation of a (somewhat) pre-fabricated interpretation of the text. Thus, most literature was "taught as [a] finished product, to be unilaterally decoded, analyzed, and explained" (Kramsch, 1985, p. 356). While the next five decades focused on the different potentials that literature had to offer (including political, moral, economic and

social education), the teaching of literature also included and applied various methods, which were often inspired by other academic disciplines (pedagogy of literature in the 1930ies, the rising influence of linguistics on foreign language acquisition in the late 1940ies and 1950ies), or affected by current sociopolitical developments of the time.

With the advent of the oral proficiency movement in the 1970ies, communicative methodologies emerged that emphasized the development of speaking skills in real-life situations. Teaching literature by providing samples of highly stylized and sophisticated written language did not seem to respond to the need for authentic and primarily oral linguistic input, which in turn led to reducing if not abandoning literature from the foreign language curriculum. Unfortunately, this development has also added to the artificial divide between language and literature that still exists today in many foreign language departments in American higher education (cf. Barnes-Karol, 2003; Byrnes, 2000; Kern, 2002). While lower-level language classes seem to be predominantly occupied with language teaching, upper-level courses appear to be reserved for literature and content-based instruction.

Recent years have seen more collaborative efforts that have been undertaken by scholars representing SLA theory and pedagogy and contemporary literary theory, in an attempt to further explore the potential that literature offers in the FL classroom, and to present new insights for a revised FL curriculum. By working jointly and offering solutions to overcome the ongoing dichotomy between language and literature, the contributions in Scott and Tucker's (2002) volume entitled "SLA and the Literature Classroom: Fostering Dialogues" can thus serve as an excellent basis for establishing effective communication between the two fields. Acknowledging the fact that students in

foreign language departments are first and foremost (still) language learners, both SLA and literary scholars have placed the focus on language learning and the language learner. And by doing this, they have also re-defined the role of the teacher. As a facilitator in the learning process the instructor is no longer seen as lecturing but *guiding* his or her students "in an exploration of how meanings are expressed and communicated through a target language" (Scott & Tucker, 2002, p. x).

At this point it is necessary to mention the pioneering and consequential work that Claire Kramsch has contributed to Second Language Acquisition, literary, and cultural studies. Through her research she has not only brought the various fields closer together, but also provided a conceptual framework for foreign language instruction that highlights the particular value of the individual's voice(s) within a new pedagogic discourse. Kramsch's (1993b) proposal of "teaching language in context...to exploit the rich meaning potential of all activities we conduct in the classroom", which would eventually permit the "discovery and discussion of individual and social meanings" (p. 94) is not only applicable to language instruction per sé, but holds especially true for the teaching of literature in the FL classroom. While this investigation incorporated ideas and suggestions from some of Kramsch's more influential works, it is due to space limitations not possible to give a detailed account of her expansive bibliography on the teaching of language, literature and culture in the FL classroom (cf. Kramsch, 1983, 1985, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 1996, 1998a, 2001; Kramsch & Nolden, 1994).

Of particular interest for the present study were Kramsch's innovative visions for foreign language pedagogy in connection with teaching literary texts. Almost twenty years ago, Kramsch (1985) outlined her view of language learning as a dialogue between

cultures, thus calling for a new discourse in language teaching, that was marked by "engaging students in the negotiation of meaning in spoken and written discourse" (p. 364). In search for possible solutions that assisted students in developing their interpretive abilities, Kramersch suggested that students should be taught to "understand a literary text as they understand themselves and each other, responding to and rewriting the text" (p. 364). Applications that illustrate how these strategies can work in the FL classroom are provided by Kramersch herself, but can also be found in McCarthy (1998), Murti (1996), and Weber (1996).

McCarthy (1998, p. 15), for example linked his teaching of Goethe's "Faust" with an interactive computer program. He employed a CD-Rom program entitled "Goethe in Weimar: Eine virtuelle Welt in die Welt des grossen Dichters", which not only stimulated students' use of it because it was easily accessible, authentic and flexible, but also included a virtual tour of the great poets' environment. Moreover, by "touring" the unique cultural and historical sites that Weimar offers through the Web, and by listening to Goethe's poetry and prose in the target language, McCarty affirms that students gained a deeper understanding of the author's (Goethe) and the work's contextual background (i.e., historically, politically, socially, literary).

Murti's (1996) integrated approach focuses on the dialectic between language learning and understanding literary texts. The instructional model that Murti conceived for a graduate level introductory literature course, in which students read (among other primary texts) Novalis' "Heinrich von Ofterdingen", was therefore comprised of various texts and materials that clearly reflect the author's interdisciplinary interests (cultural anthropology, history, media art, and literary criticism). Referring to Kramersch's (1985)

model of discourse analysis (expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning, p. 358), Murti suggests a reading model (adapted from Swaffar et al., 1991, pp. 213-230) that fosters students' discovery of the multiple layers that exist between literary work and reader interaction. On the semantic level Murti (1996) cites examples that range from speculating about the novels' title (*predicting*, p. 196), to drawing implicit and explicit connections of the main figure (*characteristics of Heinrich*, p. 197), to establishing relationships between vocabulary and real world (*Heinrich's word choices - as a prophet and/or a poet - to describe the Orient in comparison to Europe*, p. 198), to name only a few. Similar examples are given for the syntactic levels of interaction between text and reader (Murti, 1996, pp. 198-200).

While Murti's contribution emphasizes the intrinsic relationship that exists between language learning and understanding literary texts, it is even more significant to identify the understanding of the text as a *dialogic* process. But for this exchange to happen, readers must learn to see things from different perspectives and new angles. Recognizing the tension that can occur "between historical and hermeneutic consciousness", Bredella and Delanoy (1996) argue that this may put the reader in a difficulty position as it is described in the following paragraph:

On the one hand side we should step out of our language system and learn to feel at home in that of the foreign language. On the other hand we should learn to express in the foreign language what we think and feel. When we read a literary text from the foreign culture, we should learn to see things from a different perspective but we should also relate what it says to us and our own culture. Historical understanding wants us to think with the ideas and thoughts of the foreign culture, while hermeneutic or student-centered approaches want us to think with our own ideas and thoughts. Both positions are one-sided. (xvii).

How truly "at home" foreign language speakers can feel in the target language might be questionable. A point that becomes even more apparent when students speak more than

one foreign/ second language in addition to their first or native tongue. For example, it could be anticipated that speakers who have lived in different linguistic and cultural environments for longer periods of time (especially during their formative years as a young child an/or adolescent) will develop a feeling of "being at home" in their foreign language because living in and speaking that language became such an integral part of their lives. However, any additional foreign language, especially when added after the threshold of natural language acquisition has been surpassed, would not necessarily hold that same potential for the speaker, thus making it more difficult (if at all attainable) for the learner to "feel at home" in that language.

Despite this argument, Bredella and Delanoy's (1996) point is well taken. If the process of understanding literary texts is to be seen as a dialogue, than it must follow that readers approach these texts from two sides. Naturally, the readers' *own* thoughts and feelings, which come from and are stimulated by their personal cultural background, need to be considered. At the same point however, they should learn to distance themselves from their personal emotions, ideas and convictions, thereby permitting and inviting those of the foreign or target culture (Bredella and Delanoy, 1996).

The goal of achieving literary competence by discovering the meaning of texts in the way Kramsch proposes is probably best reflected in Weber's (2002) collective volume "Vorschläge 1 Neu: Literarische Texte für den Unterricht Deutsch als Fremdsprache". Weber's suggestions put into reality what is meant by the reader's active participation in the reading process, thus facilitating students' deeper and expanded understanding of another (literary) culture. Hoping for the reader's curiosity and zest in discovering the texts ("eine Erzählung mit entdeckender Neugier zu durchdringen suchen", p. 8), his

"Vorschläge" outline an interactive compromise between reader and text, in which the reader is encouraged to fill Iser's (1978) "gaps" (or *Leerstellen*) that the literary works contains. Weber does not endorse an "anarchic" act of reading that might give way to an "anything-goes" interpretation by the reader, nor does he propose that there is *the* or *one* "right" interpretation of the text. Rather, he wants his recommendations be understood as both text-and reader-oriented ("textnah und leserorientiert", Weber, 2002, p. 7).

The excellent examples that "Vorschläge" offers for text analysis include such personal written forms of expression as letters, diaries, and journal entries. They reflect about a story from different perspectives, or stimulate students to write a different end to a story. In sum, these suggestions activate the reader's cognitive processes while reading, and also make the texts more relevant to students' lives. Combining recommendations that can be used to point out the literary and cultural significance of a text while at the same time making transparent the syntactical and semantic issues that are at work, Weber's ideas clearly advance the integration of language learning and literary competence in the FL classroom. The following example may serve to illustrate this point.

Ilse Aichingers' short story, "Das Fenster-Theater" (1954) offers a variety of imaginary and creative ways for students to explore the narrative possibilities that come into play when re-creating a text. The story that revolves around three major themes ("play", "isolation", and "communication") is being narrated from the perspective of a woman, who is yearning for some excitement that would alleviate the boredom and sadness of her dull and empty life. Unfortunately, however her need for sensation has not been answered yet, because "Es hatte ihr noch niemand den Gefallen getan, vor ihrem

Haus niedergefahren zu werden", (*No one had done her the favor of being run over in front of her house*). Being preoccupied with her longing for some sort of thrill or melodrama she is thus turning a harmless, playful scene that she witnesses from her window into a criminal spectacle. Depending on the activities that will be designed to "explore the interactions between the discourse structure and the response of the readers in the interpretation of the text" (Kramersch, 1993b, p. 146), students can be invited to identify and change a number of components that highlight the different voices and dispositions in the reader-text-dialogue. Readers could for example speculate about what might or could happen after the story has ended. They can also be asked to re-create the story from different perspectives: either from the view of one of the characters in the story (i.e., the old man, the child, the police), or new ones (i.e., a neighbor, a news report). They could further be encouraged to dramatize the text by putting it on stage (literally) or re-writing it from their own perspective, for example with a different ending or for different audiences (Kramersch, 1993b, p. 146).

Moving beyond a literary competence as outlined above, Kramersch's latest understanding of language and culture, connecting the disciplines of SLA with literary and cultural studies, derives from a "social semiotic perspective" of language study (cf. Halliday, 1978). Kramersch (2002) addresses the issue of language as a social semiotic from the perspective of applied linguistics, an area that is mainly concerned with the "process of transition" (p. 8), that learners encounter when they apply their knowledge to the study of a new (or foreign) language. This knowledge base - an accumulation of the individual's linguistic, cultural and literary background – which needs to be applied in the L2 or FL learning process is what Kramersch (2002) refers to as, "the way language

functions both as expression of and metaphor for social processes of meaning making" (p. 8). Kramsch's model is essentially based on three principles that are equally relevant in the teaching of literature:

1. all language users are historically situated,
2. language learning is intertextual,
3. language learning is a social and dialogic process of meaning-making.

Yet it is in particular the third component that defines language (of the literary) in a different way as Kramsch (2002) outlines in her following statement:

...a social semiotic approach considers language as a holistic network of various signs in the environment, including gestures, silences, body postures, graphic and other visual and acoustic symbols, which shape a context of meaning and invite us to respond to it. (p. 10)

When transferring this model to a FL literature classroom that invites reader responses in light of the many different life and academic experiences that individuals bring with them to the text, teachers should also strive to integrate a variety of media (visual, audio, print, Internet) from cross-disciplinary fields (i.e., art, music, cultural studies, sociology, history, anthropology, SLA) to stimulate these experiences. The contributions, for example that a work of art or a piece of music can offer for the understanding of a literary work, can also provoke students to go beyond pure speculations or referential meanings of words. Stimuli of this nature can further inspire learners to look for connections and analogies between reading a text and "reading" a piece of music, a painting, or a photograph.

In summary, the new view of literature and language, as Schultz (2002) explains, considers how the understanding of literature has changed over time and how this shift has affected the *use* of literature in the foreign language classroom. In particular the

application of theoretical concepts such as reader-response theory and semiotics "signaled a movement away from historical and biographical criticism...and opened up the appreciation and interpretation of literature to all readers" notes Schultz (2002, p. 6). Emphasis in the FL literature classroom is thus less placed on teaching the text or even the text's interpretation *to* students, but rather on teaching students the necessary interpretative *skills* that enhance their understanding of the text and increase their ability to value the (literary) work in and of itself.

As repeatedly argued by a number of scholars (Barnes-Karol, 2003; Essif, 1998; Kern, 2000; Kramsch, 1985), students are for the most part "non-intended" readers when it comes to reading literary texts in the FL classroom. Rather, they need to be considered "readers-in-training – linguistically, culturally, and conceptually" (Barnes-Karol, 2003, p. 23). It then follows that in order to develop the students' individual sense of literature and help them to comprehend what they read in the Foreign Language classroom, it is essential to acknowledge and – if necessary – redefine the interactions that take place in literature courses. Traditional teacher-student modes as described by Bernhardt (2002, p. 200) that keep focusing on either the instructor, or the literary text would therefore be ill-suited for a course that is interested in truly eliciting readers' responses to the text.

The *act of reading* that takes place in or outside of the classroom also needs to be regarded as an *act of teaching*, meaning that instructors might need to re-think how they teach literature. Not only *what* students read, but especially *why* and *how* they read particular texts plays an integral role in understanding how the individual operates in the FL literature classroom. Instead of restricting learners to be mere spectators in literature course, Nance (2002) calls on instructors "to remove the barriers that stand between

students and their own knowledge" (p. 31), and incorporate what learners individually and as a group bring to the literature class.

Tapping into their learners' very own capacities and experiences that already include a comprehensive base of personal and socio-cultural knowledge, can serve as an excellent starting point for teachers to assist students in developing their individual responses and interpretations of a given text. Rather than seeing the literary text as a closed historical and socio-cultural phenomenon, the new view of literature places emphasis on the text "as [an] autonomous...open and dynamic entity of plural meanings and multiple interpretative possibilities" (Schultz, 2002, p. 6).

While the previously described concept of literature is not entirely new, it radically breaks with long-held beliefs and attitudes of how literary texts have been taught (and sometimes unfortunately still are) and calls for more dynamic and dialogue-oriented approaches of teaching and studying literature. By demystifying the notion that literary works are for an "elite" and can only be understood adequately by a selected group of trained or learned scholars, readers in the foreign language course are given the opportunity to actively participate in the meaning-making process of literary texts. Furthermore, by acknowledging the vital role that the reader has in the process of reading and interpreting foreign language literature, teachers help building their students' confidence that literature courses are just as accessible for them as the introductory or intermediate level language course.

Literature, literacy and the Standards-based foreign language curriculum

The current approach to language teaching focuses on oral competency, as described in the "Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the Twenty-First Century" (1999). While the "Standards" encourage language instruction that stresses interdisciplinary teaching and focuses on the learners' ability to develop an increased awareness of oneself and others, a stronger emphasis on learning to read and appreciate the *qualities* of written texts (McCarthy, 1998, p. 13) seems to be conspicuously absent in the document. This has led Tucker (2000) to raise the question "whether the new curriculum promotes the acquisition of interpretative skills necessary for literary exploration or whether it uses literature simply as a 'spring-board' for something else" (p. 55), such as linguistic production or historical-cultural lessons.

When taking a closer look at the "Standards", one finds that they *do* integrate the study of literature and its communicative purpose in their general language learning goals ("the use of a variety of print sources, including children's literature and publications, magazines, newspapers, *belles lettres*, everyday authentic documents...and library reference works", p. 36). The work further notes the student's engagement with written language sources as pertaining to the different standards (Standard 1.2. for German, p. 244). While the volume makes no claim to prescribe *what* or *how* to teach literature, it does serve as a guide for the preparation of foreign language programs, curricula, and course work (p. 245). The "Standards" use of phrases such as "significant works of literature and art" (p. 34), "appropriate forms of literature" (p. 60), or "works of great literature and art" (p. 64) are therefore somewhat ambiguous, because they appear to suggest a continued focus on canonical-oriented works while leaving out literary texts by

non-German authors, who nevertheless live in German-speaking countries and also write in German. On the other side one could argue that the "Standards" recommendation for a more dynamic use of literature already includes the integration of texts from various different sources and authors. When deciding on the types and kinds of literature that are being used in the FL classroom, it seems to be ultimately the responsibility of the teacher to select texts that lend themselves to invite reader-response views of the text and foster the students' critical thinking skills.

Outlining the main goals for each of the five standards – *Communication*, *Cultures*, *Connections*, *Comparisons*, and *Communities* – sample progress indicators describe what students should achieve for each of the respective areas. According to the "Standards" these goals are attainable by students, but only if they have studied the language in an extended sequence, beginning in their elementary grades, and continuing with the same language throughout High School and into the college level. Given the role (and ranking) that German has played as one of the foreign languages offered in the U.S., one needs to ask how truly achievable these goals are for students who start their German language classes (for the most part) at the High School or College level. The following progress indicators are examples for learning German at grade 16, which are related to the study of literature.

For the *Communication* goal, students "share their substantiated analyses and personal reactions to expository and literary texts...with both peers and speakers of German", (p. 253), or "analyze in detail the main plot, sub-plot, characters, their descriptions, roles, and significance in authentic texts (production of a *Brecht* play)", (p. 254).

For *Cultures*, students "analyze, interpret, and evaluate their experiences with expressive products of the various German-speaking cultures and historical periods (i.e., literary genres)", (p. 259).

To establish *Connections* between the target language and its culture with other academic disciplines, students "synthesize and evaluate information gathered in German language and culture study to enhance their understanding of another discipline (i.e., GDR literature), (p. 260).

To draw *Comparisons* between what they know with what they have learned, students "report on the relationship of word order and meaning...and hypothesize on how this may or may not reflect the ways in which cultures organize information...and view the world" (p. 263), or they "identify and analyze cultural perspectives as reflected in a variety of literary genres" (p.264).

Finally, for the *Communities* goal, students "analyze and evaluate cultural perspectives as reflected in a variety of literary genres (i.e., research a Turkish author who writes in German)", (p. 268).

At times, sample progress indicators for grades 12 and 16 are overlapping. For example: for Standard 1.1., "students [are] sharing their [*substantiated*, added for grade 16] analyses and personal reactions to expository and literary texts" (pp. 252-253), and for Standard 1.2., "students analyze [*in detail*, added for grade 16] the main plot, subplot, characters, their descriptions, roles, and significance in authentic texts" (p. 254). But by what means and in which ways do students acquire the knowledge to produce "substantiated" or more "detailed" literary analyses? If learners are to demonstrate a heightened sensitivity towards linguistic and stylistic text features that lead them to an

increased understanding and deeper appreciation of the literary work, what knowledge do they need in order to achieve the aforementioned goals?

Citing sample progress indicators for the Spanish Standard 1.2., Tucker (2000, p. 55) explains how this can work. Here the progress indicators for grade 16 note, that students "demonstrate an increased understanding of details of authentic oral and written textual sources, such as plays on words, social satire, and slapstick comedy; *demonstrating sensitivity to stylistic features such as word choice and level of formality*" (italics mine). Students also "*use textual evidence* (italics mine) to support interpretations of literary or journalistic works such as cultural perspective and stylistic conventions" (p. 443). Furnishing students with the necessary knowledge base and tools that assist them in *how* to read literary texts is thus a prerequisite to achieve the goals of the "Standards".

Swaffar's (1998) suggestions for foreign language instruction, especially at the third and fourth year college level further illustrate what this means: That there are increased demands on the profession to extend the cultural and literacy learning from the FL curriculum into the post-graduate, real world of students. Swaffar claims that the terminology used to signify the "American student" and presumptions about the knowledge base of that student audience have changed over time. Due to the technology and information explosion of the late 20th century, students who are entering colleges and universities today do so with a different knowledge base. Hence, Swaffar (1998) explains, they "possess command of factual data...they can use computers, access the Web, [and] recognize the stereotypes and spins of the postmodern condition" (p. 3).

What students do not have, the author argues, is the power to use that newly acquired knowledge, because it "has not been organized overtly or literately enough to

make it accessible as that organized in books" (p. 3). To bridge this gap between the student's knowledge and the foreign language and literature curriculum, Swaffar therefore calls on foreign language departments to teach *processes*, not products and to teach the *learner*, not the artifact. As the author notes:

...they [the FL departments] must adopt a language curriculum that identifies core topics from history, culture, and literatures – a limited number of literary works and a variety of texts that inform that literature; they must teach learning strategies with which to approach reading a text as a cultural artifact and reading as a historical practice; they must identify a range of roles of speaker positions from which students must articulate different intentionalities vis-à-vis text information" (Swaffar, 1998, p. 4).

Echoing Swaffar's (1999) definition of a foreign language discipline that poses the question, "How do individuals and groups use words and other sign systems in context to intend, negotiate, and create meanings?" (p. 7), Kern (2002) discusses how a literacy-based curriculum can offer the conceptual framework that accommodates both language and literature teaching. In his article, which focuses on the relationships between reading, writing, and communication, Kern stresses the importance of combining critical thinking and interpretation in a literacy-based curriculum that can assist in dissolving the language-literature split and connect language skills with academic content. He believes that "[T]exts...offer learners new aesthetic experiences as well as content to interpret and critique" (Kern, 2002, p. 23). Utilizing the various forms that texts can take (i.e., written, visual or audiovisual), Kern (2002) further states that students can "engage in the thoughtful and creative act of making connections among grammar, discourse, and meaning; between language and content; between language and culture; between another culture and their own" (p. 23).

The need to understand the teaching of foreign language, literature and culture as a whole concept is similarly expressed by Kadish (2000). Offering a holistic integration of language, literature and culture in a revised Standards-based curriculum that addresses in particular the communication and culture standards, Kadish (2000) coined the term "applied literature", referring to literature being "taught as a means rather than an end in itself" (p. 51). According to the author, the standards that one is trying to achieve in applied literature classes would be clear to both teacher and students, because they would include "communicative and cultural competence" (Kadish, 2000, p. 51), instead of assigning the language (only) to beginning, and culture to advanced-level courses.

Likewise, Essif (1998) argues that teaching the literary text as "culture-in-process" (p. 24) involves the application of "highly flexible structures of interpretation that tolerate difference as well as ambiguity" (p. 25). Scott and Huntington's (2002) study, which focused on using FL literature to develop "C2 competence" (competence in a second culture) also supports the notion that literary texts enhance "students' affective awareness and cognitive flexibility" (p. 622) and sensitize learners to "develop...empathy for and nonjudgmental evaluation of another culture" (p. 629).

It seems that a revised format of language learning and teaching could serve as a model that helps redefining progress indicators for upper-level classes by re-phrasing "Standards" goals in a more precise manner, so they reflect more accurately what students are able to accomplish in the FL literature class. Literature classes would thus greatly benefit from a design that takes into account a more systematic integration of the five dimensions known as the five C's. While the "Standards" theoretical framework already links the teaching and studying of literature with these five aspects, their practical

application and implementation in the literature classroom needs to be re-thought in terms of what Kramsch (1995) calls "language as a culturally construed social discourse" (pp. xvi-xxii).

Today's foreign language classrooms are no longer homogeneous or even all-American: students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and with different knowledge bases that have been shaped in and through different environments: personally, socially, academically, and socio-historically. Because learners do not necessarily share the knowledge or background of the same native language (in this case: English) any more, they also no longer partake in common conversational practices that speakers of the same language and culture possess. These cultural differences, established by the various cultural backgrounds that are represented in the foreign language classroom, require a new look at *how* communicative practices are conceived and carried out in the classroom. This also means that teachers need to contemplate the diversity their classrooms offer – in terms of ethnicity, gender, class, race or religion – when designing classroom activities.

If foreign language faculty wishes to incorporate the "Standards" into their literature curriculum, it is necessary that they synthesize the five C's in ways that evoke the individual voices of their students as members of their respective cultures and communities. In that respect the current study wishes to make a contribution to the field by applying a reader-response model that elicits the individual's voices.

The role of context for the creation of meaning

Foreign language pedagogy has been increasingly aware of the importance and need of teaching language in context. In order for students to access the multiple meanings that language can offer they need to understand the context in which the language is placed, or as Hymes (1972) notes, "the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language, but with context" (p. xix). Kramsch (1993a) in her exploration of the five dimensions of context (linguistic, situational, interactional, cultural, and intertextual) adopts Halliday's definition of context as "the total environment in which a text unfolds" (Halliday as cited in Kramsch, p. 67). Thus, she views context as always in relationship with *and* including a text. In terms of semiotics, language is regarded as only one type of sign system that coexists with other expressive systems, such as body gestures, or cultural and ritual practices, for example.

Context is also shaped, as Kramsch (1993a) asserts, by the many dialogues people have with one another, while taking on a variety of roles and statuses. Through these dialogues, they "exchange and negotiate meanings that belong to a community's stock of common knowledge and that draw on a variety of past and present texts" (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 46). Context can therefore not be seen as a natural given, but must be understood as a *social* construct that depends on the linguistic choices speakers make when interacting through language. Since any speech act inherently has a multiplicity of meanings (depending on the given circumstances and situations) the contexts of language utterances, whether spoken or written, are not fixed or stable entities, but rather constantly changing. As individual speakers (writers) or listeners (readers) re-create the spoken or written text, they manipulate and shape contexts to fit their own personal

needs, thus bringing forward their own meanings of the text. Therefore, allowing and enabling students to discover and explore as many potential meanings as possible would help them in shaping and re-shaping contexts while providing more creative and productive opportunities for learning.

The role of culture in teaching language and literature

The large body of research that has been devoted to the exploration of relationships between language, literature and culture has pointed out time and time again that the teaching of culture is inextricably linked with the teaching of language and literary-cultural studies³. In terms of how and what kind of culture is taught, the following picture emerges: The cultural instruction in beginning level FL classes concentrates mainly on everyday life information, such as foods, family life, travel or leisure time activities. Language study in these courses usually incorporates culture as the "fifth" language skill: in addition to listening, speaking, reading and writing, students learn about culture through culture capsules or English synopses of culturally relevant facts. In contrast, advanced-level FL courses place more importance on facts of civilization, literature and the arts as representative for the other culture. Courses with a particular focus on literature center on the interpretation and analysis of significant works, literary and non-literary, when discussing various perspectives of and in culture.

³ For a more detailed listing of articles discussing this issue see Byrnes & Kord, 2001; Essif, 1998; Fecteau, 1999; Feldman, 1990; Frantzen, 2002; Gee, 1998; Henning, 1993; Hewitt, 1990; Hoffmann & James, 1986; Kadish, 1999; Kempf, 1995; Kern, 2000; Kramsch, 1991a, 1992, 1998b; Maxim, 2000; Murti, 1996; Nance, 2002; Scott & Huntington, 2002; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991; Tesser, 1999; Tesser & Long, 2000.

The distinction between little "c" and big "C"-culture is thus still evident: While the first position of teaching culture includes more "utilitarian" or "commodified" (Kramsch, 1998b, p. 29) ways of thinking and talking in everyday life, the latter one remains linked with the literary and artistic canon of culture. However, a view of culture that favors facts over meaning will continue to keep learners unaware of the multiple facets of the target group's cultural identity, thus leaving them unable to understand foreign values and attitudes (cf. Kramsch 1993a, p. 24). Unfortunately, teaching culture in this split fashion does not only fuel the already existing separation between lower and upper division courses (language versus content, form versus meaning, spoken versus written language, modified versus authentic texts). It also presents students with a somewhat distorted picture of culture itself and the multiple facets that culture offers. Consequently, students "end up being exposed to two different views of cultures" (Maxim, 2000, p. 12).

Efforts that have been undertaken to link the teaching of foreign languages to the practical use outside the classroom have been concerned with the question about which aspects of the language should be taught, i.e. basic language skill development or general education competencies. Kramsch's (1991a) proposal to develop a cross-cultural approach to the teaching of what has later been defined as "linguaculture" (Attinasi & Friedrich, 1995), stresses the inseparability of language and culture (language *in* culture, language *as* culture). Kramsch (1991a) states that the issue is not so much by whom or in which domain of knowledge languages should be taught, but what kind of discourse worlds should be activated and how (p. 235). The teaching of literature would in that sense introduce only one of the many cultural discourses to learners of foreign languages;

while other conversations would for example include scientific, conversational, technical or political discourses. The benefit that Kramersch's proposal has for the integration of culture into the foreign language literature classroom is obvious. By embedding language and culture in a *cultural context*, the author includes here the following three components: the culture of text (oral or written), the culture of the participants themselves and their responses to the text as well as the culture of the classroom or environment itself.

Examining and expanding theoretical models for the inclusion of culture in the foreign language classroom (cf. Kramersch, 1993a; Byram, 1989), Lange (1999) echoes the notion that literature plays an integral part in the teaching of culture. Based on Kramersch's (1993b) findings in exploring the pedagogy of literary texts, Lange (1999) highlights the fact that literature presents itself as a rich medium which encourages the dynamic cultural interactions that foster higher level critical thinking skills:

Particularly in the teaching of literature, the voices of readers and the intended voice(s) of the text may not be the same. This intertextuality allows the reader to interact with the author's intended text. And when many readers exchange meaning with the text, the exchange offers a variability of interpretations, perceptions, and experiences to the dialogue with the text. As a result, the learner's world is opened to a variety of attitudes and values that make literature and culture inseparable. (p. 77).

Lange further supports his conclusions by citing Byram's (1989) argument that "the full integration of language and culture comes...with the examination of literature - not only in the unique representation of the culture by the author; but also as the author represents that culture in general - as well as through experience" (p. 84).

The latest research in both SLA and literary scholarship that has focused on utilizing the cultural significance that literature has in a coherent FL curriculum has

resulted in a number of practical models that stress this connection between language, literature and culture. Drawing on various theoretical frameworks, such as the "Standards" (Swaffar, 1999), the integrated content-based FL approach that is based on meaning-form relationships (Byrnes, 2000), or cultural studies approaches that focus on cultural literacy in FL teaching (Berman, 1996; Peck, 1992) these models have one common theme. They view literature *as* culture because literature *is* culture in the way that literary texts present a central aspect of a person's (or a nation's) culture. Neglecting this vital component of literature in the FL classroom would mean to neglect the transmission of a central aspect of one's culture (cf. Rippley, 1982; Klein 1987).

How to teach the literary text in the foreign language classroom? Towards a pedagogy of dialogue

If we don't want to see pedagogy get bogged down in conformism, it must at all times teach the refusal to conform. Constructive pedagogy is always untamed; true pedagogy scoffs at pedagogy. (Kramsch, 1993, p. 15).

To begin with the epigraph Claire Kramsch cited in her first chapter of "Context and Culture in Language Teaching", (quoted here in her own translation as given on page 31 of the book), might seem a little unorthodox in light of what this section is setting out to accomplish: Namely to establish a pedagogical model that can serve as the basis for teaching literature in the foreign language classroom. But before the question, "How do we teach literature in the foreign language classroom?" can be answered, a preceding set of questions needs to be addressed: *Whom* do we teach?, *What* do we teach (them)?, and *How* do we teach (what we teach them)?

To find out what should be taught to whom and in which format it is inevitable to take a look at the affective dimensions within literacy, such as reader engagement and interest, and reading purpose. The relative ease or difficulties that individual readers experience when approaching a text are related to both text-and reader based factors. While theoretical models of interactive reading in the first language are mostly described as either text-based or reader based, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes (1991, from here on referred to as "Swaffar et al.") presented a prototype that identifies both text-and reader processing features, calling it the "procedural model" (p. 73). The qualifying factors of this model can be summarized as follows:

1. A monitor is needed that links and synthesizes reader-and text-based processing stages.
2. Two sets of top-down and bottom-up processes form the basis of this model. One set is attributable to the text (i.e., text messages that exist), while the other is attributable to the reader (i.e., the reader can comprehend those text messages). The difference between the two sets is that the reader brings speculative meanings to the text, while the text informs those speculations.
3. The status of language and comprehension is relative rather than absolute. This means that the language that the text brings is offers one way of deriving meaning from the text, which then assumes, that there are other features in the text (other than language) that convey textual meaning. (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 74).

Already a decade ago an article by Kramsch and Nolden (1994) pointed out that the undergraduate literature classroom still had difficulty translating reader-centered literary research into a type of pedagogy that would allow students to respond to creative texts by

means other than analytical presentation, interpretive essays or book reports. The obstacle many foreign language students encounter when they move from elementary to intermediate and advance level classes presents itself in the readers' inability to progress from initial hands-on communicative activities to more text-bound readings, activities and discussions. Facing the extensive lexical and grammatical features that are inherent to authentic literary texts, students feel a lack of continuity in their language study that leaves them both disappointed and frustrated.

To help L2 learners overcome these feelings of disappointment it seems most logical to create an environment, which leads them to the understanding that reading can be a pleasurable and rewarding experience when achieved in form of a dialogue between the reader and the text. One approach that focuses on getting students to read in the second language and liking it is called *extensive reading*, which is "intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992, p. 133). The benefits this method has for the second or foreign language classroom have been pointed out by reading specialist in numerous studies (cf. Palmer, 1921/1964; West, 1926/1955; Simensen, 1987; Grabe, 1991; Krashen, 1993).

The particular value it holds for the FL literature classroom however, is that it can promote an attitude change in learners in respect to how they view a (literary) text. Instead of merely considering the wealth of information that is presented through the written words on a page (whether it is a poem, short story or novel), Simensen (1987) notes, that students might begin to regard the text as a "literary experience", deriving "simply pleasure, joy and delight" (p. 42) from reading it. In-class reading activities using

this approach require a specific time period that is set aside for "sustained silent reading" (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 7) during which students are encouraged to read anything they like. This "free voluntary reading" (Krashen, 1993) not only allows students to read what they want and how much they want, but it also fosters the individual engagement every reader can have with the text of his or her choice. It is during this time then that the reader might be able to locate the attraction a specific literary text holds for him or her, because this text represents the "particular voice of the writer among the many voices of his or her community and thus appeal to the particular in the reader" (Kramsch 1993a, p. 131).

With the arrival of the proficiency movement a more creative use of foreign languages has been stimulated that also conveyed a renewed interest in the individual voice and the creative utterance. In particular the work of Russian formalist critic Mikhail M. Bakhtin ("Speech genres and other late essays", 1986) needs to be cited here, whose theories of *dialogism* and *discourse analysis* have retained a significant impact upon the nature of contemporary literary and cultural criticism. When using the term "dialogism" Bakhtin points out that he refers here to a concept called "double-voicedness" (i.e., more than one voice in a text) rather than "related to dialogue" (i.e., the dialogue between the reader and the text).

Differentiating between *monologic* (single-voiced) works and *dialogic* (double-voiced or multi-voiced) texts, Bakhtin then suggests that there is actually a polyphonic play of different voices or discourses in any given text. The single-voiced text, as Bakhtin explains, centers on dominant convictions and beliefs of a given culture that oppose other subordinate voices of the text. In contrast, the dialogic discourse in double-voiced texts

acknowledges numerous voices to emerge and engage at the same time in a dialogic manner with each other. When Morson (1986) observes that "we are the voices that inhibit us" (p. 8) he draws on the following statement by Bakhtin:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions. It is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process. (Bakhtin, as cited in Cazden, 1989, p. 122).

Just as a text presents multiple voices, so does the speaker (writer) and listener (reader), when he or she participates in personal or textual discourse. Being influenced and shaped by the language that is used itself, and by historical and social roles that the reader or speaker takes on or anticipates, dialogism then appears to be the way in which meaning (of a text) is constructed, because it elicits the many different voices of both the text *and* the reader.

Foreign language learners who wish to acquire their own communicative competence and become the authors of their own words would consequently have to participate in a twofold dialogic process. First, they need to recognize how they reflect their own social environment, and then find new ways of expressing themselves in an understandable (and original) way. Morson (1986) describes this method by saying, that the reader (or listener) has to identify the writer's (or speaker's) apparent and concealed motives and intentions, and also anticipate the responses, that the writer (speaker) tries to invite or prevent (p. 6). The voices that the literary text can bring out offer multiple opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning:

The writer is a person who is able to work in a language while standing outside language, who has the gift of indirect speaking...To see and comprehend the author of a work means to see and comprehend another, alien consciousness and its world, that is, another subject ("Du"). With explanation there is only one

consciousness, one subject; with comprehension there are two consciousnesses and two subjects...Understanding is always dialogic to some degree. (Bakhtin, as cited in Cazden, 1989, pp. 110-111).

In an effort to capture this dialogic nature of reading and meaning-making, Kramersch's (1993b) call for a "dialogic pedagogy [that]...questions the traditional and social tenets of foreign language education" (p. 67) establishes new objectives for foreign language professionals. The issue here, as outlined earlier, is not so much what kind of literature is being taught in the FL classroom. Rather, teachers are asked to rethink their own teaching of literature and modify it, if necessary, so that they enable students "to explore, discover, and exchange" (Kramersch, 1993b, p. 67) the potential meanings of the text.

Problem Statement

While the debate between the teaching of language and literature in the FL classroom is still ongoing, numerous scholars from both sides of the spectrum have since joined this discussion and offered solutions and answers in hopes of bridging the divide⁴. Examples that include suggestions for a simultaneous approach to language and literature, which also offer practical implications for teaching, can be found for the foreign languages most commonly taught in today's college classrooms⁵. The frequent complaint, that foreign language students express when they move from the predominant

⁴ For selected articles on this subject see Barnett, 1991; Bernhardt, 1995; Gamel, 1984; Henning, 1993; Hoffmann & James, 1986; Kempf, 1995; Klein, 1987; Kramersch, 1985, 1993b; Kramersch & Kramersch, 2000; Kramersch & Nolden, 1994; McCarthy, 1998; Mueller, 1991; Murti, 1996; Nance, 1994; Rippley, 1982; Scott & Tucker, 2002; Shumway, 1990; Tesser, 1999; Tesser & Long, 2000; Tucker, 2000.

⁵ For examples in German see Kramersch, 1985; Kramersch & Nolden, 1994; Murti, 1996; in French see Keller, 1997; in Spanish see Nance, 1994; Tesser & Long, 2000.

use of oral language at the elementary level to a more literate mode of speech at the intermediate and advanced level, has its roots in a variety of factors.

Reading foreign language texts that oftentimes come with many unknown vocabulary words still presents a great challenge and difficulty for students learning a foreign language. Yet, it is not only the linguistic roadblock that stands between the reader and the reader's comprehension of a text. Oftentimes it is also the insufficient knowledge of specific cultural issues or the lack of appropriate literacy skills that cause students to misread and consequently misinterpret texts. Since the learners' understanding of underlying cultures, especially those they are unfamiliar with, is closely interrelated to their reading proficiency, it is crucial that FL readers possess reading skills that allow them to be culturally sensitive (cf. Feldman, 1990; Hewitt, 1990; Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes 1991).

The argument that students dislike teaching approaches to literature that are not challenging, interesting or engaging enough or that disassociate the literary work from its socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts raises questions about currently used teaching methods their suitability for the FL literature classroom. Are the teaching models that are employed in literature instruction designed to tap into the personal and intellectual interests of FL students? Do they consider the student's individual and socio-cultural background knowledge base of the individual reader? Moreover, do they take into account the individual differences (personally, academically, and socially) that distinguishes one learner from the next?

The role of background knowledge has been widely investigated and documented in L1 and L2 (for a detailed account of the research including examples see chapter 2).

However, earlier investigations have not yet examined the nature or extent of students' responses to FL literary texts that are based on significantly different experiences and backgrounds the students have had. The current investigation wishes to close this gap by offering insights into the kinds of background knowledge FL readers access when responding to selected German short stories. By analyzing the oral and written responses of four study participants (case studies) and providing a detailed description of the respondents' backgrounds the current study focused on highlighting the interactions that took place between the reader and the text in order to create the meaning.

L2 reading research and the role of social context

A difficulty in second language reading research as pointed out by Swaffar and Bacon (1993, p. 131), is the fact that L2 as well as Foreign Language Programs are often missing or simply ignoring the social role of the reader (or listener). In other words, the person's own "social context" (cf. Pennycook, 1989; Heap, 1991) is not being adequately considered in respect to the responses the reader (or listener) offers. Even in one's own language where social contexts and meanings support the important schematic intonation upon which new information is constructed, reading is a difficult enough task (Lyman-Hagar & Burnett, 1999). Reading in a foreign language however, becomes even more difficult, when the learner does not have the essential linguistic and cultural background information to build upon (Bernhardt, 1990; Hewitt, 1990).

A recent case study by Lyman-Hagar and Burnett (1999) provided new insights into how readers read while using technology as an analytical tool, which in turn allowed the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the learner's reading processes.

Showing that different types of learners will also require different approaches and materials that address the individual reader's needs pinpoints to a set of research questions that are related to how readers process and understand text which are written in a foreign language:

1. Will learners who have been introduced to a variety of good reading strategies become better readers of subsequent and more difficult texts presented later on in the curriculum?
2. Is there a relationship between certain types of learners and the type of reading strategy they choose?
3. If learners do not possess the necessary linguistic, cultural and socio-historical background knowledge for the reading of the text - will this lack of understanding lead to an incorrect global interpretation of the text or story?

Although the current investigation considered the different reading strategies and techniques that students used while progressing from one story to the next, the study was most concerned with providing answers that would explain the influence of reader's background knowledge for their individual understanding of the texts.

SLA research in language and literary studies: Intersections

Bernhardt (1995), in her enthusiastic response to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines for reading, defined the division between the language and the literature side as "precisely the conflict between the focus on *texts* and a focus on *students reading those texts*" (p. 5). Bernhardt therefore proposed that a clear definition of the dichotomy between language and literature could lead to a deeper understanding of the problem

itself and thus, help those who would mostly benefit from a solution, namely the students! The author's suggestion to shift the focus from the text to the students' knowledge not only touches on the professional responsibilities of language and literature instructors to teach "for the benefit of students as individuals" (Bernhardt, 1995, p. 6), it also reclaims the place of literature study within the foreign language curriculum.

Since then scholars from both sides of the spectrum have provided an excellent base for fostering the dialogue between language and literature teachers in an effort to overcome the divide between Second Language Acquisition research and the research conducted in literary studies. It is specifically the focus on the *language* and the *language learner* that the contributing scholars in Scott and Tuckers' (2002) volume have in common when they explore how existing SLA research can inform the teaching of literature and vice versa. Although devoted to different themes that reflect the collaborative spirit of literature and language teachers, all articles echo the same need - that literature belongs into the foreign language curriculum from beginning through advanced levels.

Focus on the learner

As the new paradigm in language learning emerged in the early 1970ies it disassociated itself from the theoretical framework that was based on a normative language use. The model further abandoned the notion that the teaching of comprehensive linguistic rules would eventually result in comprehensive foreign language skills. With a new goal that reflected the communicative objectives of the revised FL learning model the notion of what L2 learners should do in the classroom was

also redefined. They were no longer supposed to meet "an absolute standard of grammatical correctness" but instead trained to have the ability that allowed them to "operate within real-world situations, in order to perform real-world tasks" (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 8).

What the theory however neglected was the actual focus on the learner, more precisely learner cognition and affect. For example, how FL readers perceive a particular text, which background knowledge they access in the reading process, and which additional factors influence them when they are trying to make sense of what they have read – all these aspects were not addressed. Yet, it was precisely the learner whom Kramsch (1991b, p. 193) had in mind when she argued that foreign language teachers needed to expand their teaching responsibility. In addition to the teaching of linguistic skills that allowed students to function appropriately in a foreign speech community, instructors were also to include the teaching of academic literary skills, alternative socialization skills, and socio-cultural awareness of the student's native culture. In agreement with Swaffar (1989), who argues that "research too often looks at the learner without considering the learners variables" (p. 309), it would then seem that a focus on the learner's *personal* responses to a literary text would place the reader him- or herself right in the middle of the (reading) action.

To read a text as literature is quite a different activity than to read it in order to find some information, to develop or extend one's existing vocabulary or to draw certain analogies with other texts of a similar nature. When readers truly begin to engage with a text they start to express their personal beliefs, thoughts and opinions - not so much in an

abstract, but rather in an emotional or imaginal manner. Thus their responses reveal very personal insights about the readers themselves.

For example, a short story entitled "Ein Märchen" (which was used in this investigation) that opens with a description of a garden full of beautiful flowers might evoke responses from readers' that vary considerably in terms of content and meaning from each other. One reader might be reminded of a place from his childhood, another may recall a particular fairy tale she loved to read or hear, while for a third reader the experience of his latest allergy shots come to mind. Given these quite different, yet equally valid views of what the text *could* mean, the previous answers suggest that what readers think individually about a text and how the text "speaks" to them is directly linked to the kind of experience they might have when reading literature.

The role of the reader in the construction of meaning

Literary scholars (cf. Britton, 1984; Harste, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1938/1995) have repeatedly made the argument that meaning emerges in the transaction between the reader and the text. As one of the leading American reader response critics, Louise Rosenblatt (1978), who often highlighted the particular role of the reader in the reading process, notes that "the human being is not seen as a separate entity, acting upon the environment, nor the environment as acting on the organism, but both as parts or aspects of a total event" (p. 98). Rosenblatt (1938/1995) further describes that the generic reader or a generic literary work simply does not exist, but rather the potential millions of individual readers and the potential millions of individual literary works, which exist in the "live circuit set up between the reader and the text" (p. 24).

She considers the role of the reader "an active, not a passive, one" (p. 48), because as the reader approaches the text, he or she comes with a specific purpose in mind, and also has expectations and hypotheses about the text. Reading is therefore not viewed by Rosenblatt as a process in which the reader extracts a specific meaning that is already embedded in the text. Rather, it is defined as a "constructive, selective process over time in a particular context" in which 'interactions' – or more precisely, transactions-between individual readers and individual literary texts" occur (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 26). Thus pointing out the crucial role that the reader plays in the construction of meaning, the author concludes:

Meaning emerges as the reader carries on a give-and-take with the signs on the page. As the text unrolls before the reader's eyes, the meaning made of the early words influences what comes to mind, and is selected for the succeeding signs. But if these do not fit in with the meaning developed thus far, the reader may revise it to assimilate the new words or may start all over again with different expectations...[this] two-way reciprocal relation explains why meaning is not 'in' the text or 'in' the reader. Both reader and text are essential to the transactional process of making meaning. (pp. 26-27).

The individual reader's personality, shaped by a variety of prior and complex life experiences such as birth, love, death, age, sex, gender, nationality or occupation (to name a few), constitutes an increasingly important element in the construction of meaning. How the reader will respond to literature largely depends on whether he or she has established any sensitivity towards literature.

Although necessary for the understanding of a literary text, formal or textual elements alone do not guarantee that students will comprehend the multi-layered meanings that the text may offer. Therefore, helping students to primarily recognize various literary forms, genres, styles and patterns of selected authors, or recurrent themes, motifs and symbols without the knowledge and understanding of the "human" element of

the literary work would be an empty task. The reader's first, although still rudimentary response to a literary work will involuntarily produce his or her first meaning of the text. Once the reader will move towards a deeper involvement with the literary work, a greater sensitivity to the formal and social elements of the text can be developed, which in return would lead the reader to a more complex understanding of the human implications the text offers. To involve students in a personal understanding of the text and its complexities places an emphasis on literary discourse that can best be described as "aesthetic" in that it focuses on enabling students to personally experience the literary work.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how non-native, college-level readers of German with diverse backgrounds construct and negotiate meaning when responding to foreign language literary texts. Specifically, the study examined how these readers responded to selected, culturally authentic short stories from German-speaking authors. Although the investigation concentrated on the student's reading processes and their oral responses to selected texts, primary focus was given to the students' response journals and how these written entries facilitated the process of making and negotiating meaning for the individual students during the different phases of the reading process.

The present study aimed at highlighting the individual "voice(s)" of non-native readers of German who were both culturally and linguistically diverse, and who came from various personal, social, and academic backgrounds. The qualitative, descriptive research was undertaken to identify how the different background knowledge that

students possess can influence and shape the process of making and negotiating meaning when reading FL texts.

While the background information that was gathered through pre-reading questionnaires (see Appendix B, C, and D) revealed students' personal attitudes towards reading in L1 and L2, and disclosed their reading preferences in L1 and L2, it was in particular the use of their written journal entries that provided the most compelling data for this study. Valuing the students' very own experiences and their perspectives when reading and responding to FL texts presented not only a unique opportunity for the individual writer to express him- or herself in the foreign language. It also acknowledged the individual students personal interpretation of the literary work and made him or her an active participant (rather than a recipient) in the reading process. Furthermore, the journal entries offer suggestions in regards to the mental processes students apply and what linguistic and cultural challenges they encounter when reading and responding to FL literary texts.

Significance and Justification

A large body of research is available that examined the outcomes of teaching literature in the reader's first or native language (L1) by exploring the reader's responses to literary texts. Examples however, focus predominantly on the teaching of literature in the English-speaking K-12 classroom (Benton et al., 1988; Cox & Zarillo, 1990; Dias & Hayhoe, 1988; Fry, 1985; Karolides, 1997; Purves, Rogers & Soter, 1995). In recent years, an increasing number of studies have also been contributed to the inquiry and exploration of more interactive approaches to teaching literature in second or foreign

language classrooms (cf. Bernhardt, 1995; Esplugas & Landwehr, 1996; Friedman, 1992; Kauffmann, 1996; Nance, 1994).

Yet, only a few of these studies have probed the effects that the reader's individual' background knowledge has on their personal responses to FL literary texts. In other words, information on how student's personal backgrounds influence and shape their responses to FL literary texts has so far been largely neglected. By investigating how the readers' prior knowledge (including their academic, social, personal milieu) informs *why* and *how* they construct and negotiate meaning in a certain way provides valuable insights into how students view themselves as readers, communicators and participants in the FL classroom.

While the present study contributes to the existing body of research that has investigated the role of background knowledge in the comprehension of FL literary texts, it indicates how students with *different* cultural backgrounds approach and read literary fiction in the FL. The study also seeks to inform FL pedagogy about how a diverse body of students organizes the same text information, and most importantly, which personal literary experiences each of the participating students had during the different reading stages that prompted their individual responses to the texts.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this exploratory study are set by the methodology and data used therein. Conducted as a pilot study with two different groups of FL students all data was gathered by employing a qualitative-interpretive methodology and can therefore not serve as a generalization. While the results of this study were gained by examining a rather

small number of study participants, information necessary for conclusive evidence of how significant the role and influence of background knowledge is can not be obtained at this point. Based on its descriptive nature this research does however offer important insights based on the particular case studies.

Research Questions

Primary research questions

1. What role does the students' individual background knowledge play when non-native readers of German respond to foreign language literary texts?
2. How do student-readers create and negotiate meaning when reading FL literary texts?

Secondary research questions

The following set of secondary research questions were adapted from Rosenblatt (1995, p. 75) for individual reader-response questions that focused on the interpretation of selected literary works.

1. Why was one students' reaction towards the literary work different from those of the other students?
2. Why did the student choose one particular slant rather than another?
3. Why did certain words (sentences, phrases, paragraphs) of the reading (i.e., the short story) strike the student more forcibly than others?
4. Why did the student misinterpret or ignore certain elements of the story?
5. What could have led (in the student's mind) to a distorted or partial view of the work?

6. What part or issues related to the student's past experiences helped him or her understand the work more adequately?
7. What other questions and obscurities remain?

Methodological Overview

To collect the data for this study with objectivity and quality in mind, the study was divided into three phases. The first phase included a set of pre-reading questionnaires to determine students' background information on various levels (personal, academic, socio-economic and socio-cultural), students' reading experiences in both their first/native language (L1) and second/foreign language (L2), and students' reading response preferences.

During the second phase a set of open-ended guide questions for reader response activities was geared to identify how students verbalize their oral and written responses to foreign language literary texts. Students' responses to selected short stories were collected using in-class think aloud protocols and out-of-class written response journals.

In the final phase a post-reading questionnaire with open-ended guide questions directed the personal interview that was conducted with each study participants. The exit interview summarized how individual students experienced and accomplished the process of reading and the construction of meaning during the reading process. It also gave students a chance to revisit the texts and reflect upon their writing as a response to those texts.

The significant amount of data about the study participants (background questionnaires, personal profiles, and personal interviews) was included to help explain

in what way individual student background information played a role in the student's construction of meaning when reading and responding to Foreign Language literary texts.

The data for phases one and two of this study was collected in class, while data for phase three was collected in an out-of-class audio-taped interview between the instructor and individual students. For analysis purposes transcripts of both oral and written responses were used. All data was analyzed using preset criteria.

The short stories that were selected for the readings were specifically chosen to present socio-culturally diverse topics and voices from both native and non-native German writers to address the culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds of study participants, thus also drawing on the student's individual voices within the classroom.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the Reading Process: L1 versus L2

Beginning in the 1970ies researchers who studied the process of reading and reading comprehension in the first/native language (L1) and second language/foreign language (L2/FL) began to view reading as an interactive process⁶. Already three decades ago, Smith (1978) offered an explanation of second language reading that defined the process as "less a matter of extracting sound from print than of bringing meaning to print" (p. 2). From this point on, reading was no longer seen as merely understanding words and sentences, but also as "the creation of a model within the mind of the reader" (Ruiz-Funes, 1999, p. 515).

Reading, in the most general sense of the word, is a tool for personal growth and learning. But before any conclusions can be drawn from this statement that would apply for both L1 and L2 reading situations, it is necessary to take a look at the reading processes in the native and the foreign language, to determine how reading objectives, goals and purposes might differ.

To understand that first-language reading differs from second-language reading, one must recognize that there are various cognitive processes that take place during the *act of reading*. It should be noted here, that the term "L2" is often used when researchers refer to ESL (English as a Second Language) learners (Lee, 1986b, p. 86). This could be,

⁶ For a more detailed description of the reading processes see Barnett, 1989; Bernhardt, 1986b, 1991a; Carell & Eisterhold, 1983; Carell, Devine & Eskey, 1988; Grabe, 1991; Goodman, 1968; Rumelhart, 1977; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991.

because the largest amount of research that has been conducted so far involves ESL students. These are learners who are living and learning the second language in an English-speaking country.

The term Foreign Language (FL) on the other hand, refers to learners of *any* language other than their native, who are living and learning the foreign language in their home country, which means they are not immersed in the target language and/or culture. However, since a clear distinction between the reading process in L2 (Second Language) and FL (Foreign Language) has not been offered yet, the term "L2" will be used from here on to signify the reading process in both second and foreign languages.

While certain aspects of the L1 and L2 reading process display similar surface manifestations (for example, behaviors of fluency or observation of miscues), Bernhardt (2003) cautions researchers not to over-generalize the matter and simply assume, that first and second language reading processes are "essentially the 'same'" (p. 112). Using the argument that the overwhelming amount of L1 and L2 reading research is "almost exclusively 'English-language based'" can therefore not automatically lead to the conclusion that L1 and L2 reading are identical. Says Bernhardt (2003), "the mere existence of a *first*-language (regardless of whether it is only oral, or oral and literate) renders the *second*-language reading process considerably different from the first-language reading process because of the nature of information stored in memory" (p. 112). Yet, before a more detailed account of the different reading models used in L1 and L2 is provided it is necessary to explain the role that schema theory (a reader's schemata) plays in the reading process, since the reader's schema provides the foundation for the reader's comprehension of a text's ideas and content.

Schema Theory

Schema theory highlights the fact that background knowledge is critical for text comprehension, or as Lally (1998) puts it "there needs to be a union between the text and the reader's background knowledge in order for comprehension to occur" (p. 270). The concept of "schemata" refers to a reader's preexisting knowledge about the text and the world in general. Originally rooted in *Gestalt* psychology, Bartlett (1932) was one of the first to describe the notion of schema as "an active organization of past reactions or past experiences" (p. 201), which directs the way, information is stored before it is activated for further recall. Based on the idea that any such recall would need to be placed in the context of prior experiences, Bartlett used the term "schemata" to indicate how these experiences are organized in the brain.

Further developed by computer science and cognitive psychology, schema theory later emerged as a theoretical framework of its own (cf. Adams & Collins, 1979; Anderson, 1984/1994⁷; Anderson & Pearson, 1988; Bransford, 1984/1994⁸; Rumelhart, 1977, 1980; Schank & Abelson, 1977). Anderson and Pearson (1988) and Rumelhart (1977, 1980) for example believe that schemata are abstract knowledge constructions which are stored in the memory, and which can be altered and modified after they have been created. Schank and Abelson (1977) refer to schemata as "scripts" that describe a "predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well known situation" (p. 41). Carrell and Eisterhold (1988) maintain that every new incoming piece of information

⁷ As cited in the 1994 reprint version of *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, pp. 469-482.

⁸ As cited in the 1994 reprint version of *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, pp. 483-495.

must find an existing schema in the reader's mind and "all aspects of that schema must be compatible with the input information" (p. 76).

When describing how linguistic and discourse knowledge is being organized and arranged, Carrell (1984, 1987) uses terms such as "formal schemata" and "content schemata", while Swaffar (1988) speaks of "textual schemata". The fact, that schema theorists have rendered somewhat different views of the concept itself has led to confusion in the way schema theory is being understood and used. Nassaji (2002), addresses this problem by distinguishing between background knowledge ("what") and the theory of background knowledge ("how"), saying that the former is recognized as knowledge per sé, while the latter is "the way its representation and use is conceptualized and explained" (p. 441). But whatever terminology may be used, the underlying strength of this model is that it provides L2 researchers with deeper insights into the structure and representation of knowledge and its potential application for the L2 reading comprehension process.

Given the renewed interest in the role of the reader, the impact of the reader's background knowledge for the reading process, and the interactive relationship between the reader's knowledge and the text, schema theory proved to be particularly influential for L2 reading comprehension, which is documented by a large number of research (cf. Barry & Lazarte, 1995; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, 1988b; Carrell & Wise, 1998; Floyd & Carrell, 1987; Lee, 1986a; Roller & Matambo, 1992; Steffensen & Joag-Dev, 1984).

The most striking aspect of the theory, which has a pervasive influence on the reader's comprehension of the text, is that it calls up both linguistic and semantic associations in the reader's mind, which assist him or her in constructing meaning of

formerly incomprehensible language. If these mental connections are not made, comprehension will suffer or not be possible at all. Therefore, the reader needs to summon schemata (prior knowledge) that are relevant for the understanding of a text.

But what happens if readers do not possess the appropriate schemata that allow them to engage with the text? In that case it is the instructor's responsibility to provide the essential background information or supplemental experiences that add or complement the readers' prior knowledge. Instead of focusing on what the students do not know, Pearson and Spiro (1981) suggest that teachers should center on what the students *do* know and use that existing knowledge as "an anchor point – a bridge – to help develop the concepts that he or she needs" (p. 80).

Activities and actions that aid students in developing the required schemata, and thus help them to build bridges between their existing and new background knowledge can include the students' immersion in a specific topic through a variety of library and media materials (i.e., books, films, paintings, music, various works of art, presentations, personal stories, and field trips).

Defining Comprehension in the Reading Process

Comprehension is a critical component in assessing the reading process. The various reading strategies suggested by Hosenfeld (1977), Hosenfeld et al. (1981), Phillips (1984) and Block (1986, 1992) that guide students when approaching a text, may also enable them to process the text in a similar fashion. However, similar text processing does not necessarily mean that students also comprehend the text in the same way, which the following definitions of reading comprehension will document.

Described as a language-based activity the goal of reading is *comprehension*, which Lee (1997) defines as "the process of relating new or incoming information to information already stored in the memory" (p. 164). Bernhardt (1986a) claims, using Anderson's (1984/1994) definition of comprehension as the process of relating new or incoming information already stored in the reader's memory, that comprehension is a "conceptional and inferential" meaning-making process, which is "largely based on information in the cognitive network" (p. 26).

Bernhardt also suggests that "this associative process implies the taking of multiple linguistic and conceptual units and building them into 'understandings'" (Bernhardt, 1991b, p. 192; 1986a, p. 26). Similarly, Lee and Van Patten (1995) state that the reader "must allow the new information to enter and become a part of their knowledge store" (p. 192). They also refer to Anderson and Pearson (1988), asserting that the person who comprehends a text has found a "mental home for the information in the text" (Lee & Van Patten, 1995, p. 255), meaning that the reader is able to accommodate the new information in the existing knowledge base.

For Swaffar et al. (1991), reading comprehension is defined by readers who "comprehend the text when they construct a mental representation for incoming pieces of information" (p. 22). In a similar fashion Curtain and Pesola (1994) assert that comprehension involves the communication between the writer and the reader within meaningful contexts, and the reader's "drawing on experiences and information already stored in memory" (p. 125).

All of these definitions of reading comprehension share that reading is a complex procedure in which the reader interacts with the text. The reader comprehends the text by

approaching it with a set of prior information ("old" information). The text then provides "new" information that the reader adds to his or her pre-existing knowledge base. By combining old and new information and storing them in their permanent cognitive domain, readers are thus able to form and give (new) meaning to the text.

Factors influencing the readability of L2 texts

By reviewing the decisive implications that content, context and intent have on the comprehension process, Swaffar et al. (1991) argue that any given text only displays an "illocutionary force" (i.e., texts with a problem-solving intent) if it "influences readers to think about its meaning" (p. 115). Texts that exhibit problem-solving intent are therefore more stimulating to readers for two reasons: first, they get the readers attention, and secondly, they activate and persuade the reader to offer possible solutions to the problem presented in the text.

Locutionary texts that are purely descriptive lack such intent, because they present "information in terms of causality, contrast, or problem and solution" (p. 115) in a less memorable way. While students *may* have more success reading and comprehending texts that are persuasive or convincing (i.e., reading a newspaper review of a movie), it still needs to be explored whether texts of an entirely descriptive nature *always* pose more difficulties for readers.

For example, the descriptive passage in one of the short stories⁹ that was used in this investigation is qualitatively quite different from a newspaper text. It describes in great detail the vivid memories that an eight-year old boy had during his childhood

⁹ The story referred to here is *Das Judenauto* (1962) by Franz Fühmann.

(including memories of colors, smells, images, foods, stories, people, and events). The description may indeed present a challenge for less skilled readers in terms of some unknown vocabulary words.

However, the images rendered through the literary language create a very immediate effect through the words that are being used, which in turn can stimulate (rather personal) responses from the reader that a less descriptive text might not have offered. Moreover, the descriptive beginning of this story also furnishes readers with important background information about one of the main story characters, thus helping students to make further predictions or draw conclusions from the opening paragraph for the remainder of the text.

Context

The context (time and place) of a text, according to Swaffar et al. (1991), "is the framing for any reading" (p. 191). Through cursory reading (i.e., skimming or scanning) of the first few pages of a text, students can for the most part locate answers to so-called *wh*-questions (*who, what, where, when, why*). It should be noted here that in the process of grasping and understanding a text greater importance is oftentimes placed on content words (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives) than on function words (i.e., prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns).

Ulijn's (1984) investigation suggested for example, that concepts gained from content words were more significant than those from function words for text comprehension. Swaffar et al. (1991) however observed that this assumption may also depend on the way research is conducted and data is gathered. Regardless of the specific

goals that reading research has, providing pre-reading activities that help establishing the textual subject matter (content) is a necessary task to eliminate students' guesswork about a story's time and place (context), thus preventing initial misreadings and subsequent incorrect interpretations of a text.

Textual versus authorial intent

The intent of a text generally signifies the goal or objectives that are inherent to the reading. Textual intent can also be understood as the 'subtext' (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 192) that exposes the social and cultural implications of a text. A straightforward textual intent generally does not assert any additional motives other than those expressively stated in the surface language. Thus, the textual intent is relatively easy to recognize by the reader.

An unambiguous intent however exists in texts that introduce a particular topic from a different perspective (Swaffar et al., p. 139). This is the case, if an event or character behaviors and actions are described from a humorous, satirical, cynical, or ironical viewpoint. Now the implied meaning of the text changes, because the text *says* one thing, but *means* another. In order for students to be able to grasp the subtext of those readings, they need to be exposed to a number (and variety) of texts with similar intents.

To locate the authorial intent of a written work, the reader must find the "words and phrases that state what the authors say they want done and correlate such assertions with consequences" (Swaffar et al., p. 192). In other words, readers need to compare the information they find in the surface language with the subtextual messages. In an interactive reading approach, readers are required to distinguish between the various

perspectives that are part of the comprehension process: the viewpoint of the text, the author's perspective and, of course, the reader's very own point of view (Swaffar et al., p. 193).

Reading Models in L1 and L2

The following description of reading models as they have been used in L1 and L2 are provided to highlight the specific features of each one and outline their application and suitability for the L2 reading process. Since the late 1970ies, three types of reading models used for L1 comprehension have also been introduced to the L2 reading process. They can usually be placed in one of the following main categories: top-down, bottom-up, or interactive.

Offering a comprehensive review of these three prototypes Barnett (1989) asserts that the major distinction between these models lies in the emphasis that is placed on text-based and reader-based variables. While text-based variables are vocabulary, grammatical structures and syntax, reader-based variables include the reader's background knowledge of the subject matter and the world, the reading purpose, interest, cognitive processes and the use of reading strategies. Barnett's (1989) own description of a reading model reads as follows: "... [it] provides an imagined representation of the reading process that not only provokes new ideas about reading but also provides a paradigm against which aspects of the reading process may be tested" (p. 10).

Historically, reading competency and the development of reading skills received only little attention in second/foreign language instruction. Educators assumed that once

L1 reading skills were developed they would automatically transfer to L2 reading situations (Lally 1998).

More recent reading theories and especially research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have focused on the increased importance of the learner, as opposed to the material, or in this case, the text. Newer models of L2 reading comprehension have therefore emphasized the implications that reader-based variables have for the practical classroom. A more detailed description of the different models known as bottom-up, top-down, and interactive and their potential for the L2 reading process will be discussed in the following section.

Bottom-up models and their implications for L2 reading comprehension

In early reading theories the reading process was considered a passive or bottom-up activity. The main task to be performed in this type of reading was the "decoding" of small textual units, such as letters and words (Carrell, 1988a). The application of the bottom-up concept to the reading process was particularly well suited for the audio-lingual method of second language teaching, since the skill of deciphering sound-symbol relationships was seen as an essential part in the development of language learning.

Bottom-up models have therefore also been referred to as "skills models" or "text-based" (Kamil, 1986, p. 73) and are essentially "text-driven" (Omaggio Hadley, 1993, p. 195). Shrum and Glisan (2000) describe the skill-using phase as the moment when "students use the learned structures [vocabulary and grammatical rules, my comment] in communicative activities designed to focus their attention on meaningful interaction" (p.

33). Bottom-up models imply that the reader focuses primarily on the text, which is viewed as a sequence of words that need to be decoded by the reader.

With emphasis placed on *textual* decoding, the reader approaches the text by breaking it into smaller units "concentrating exclusively on the combination of letters and words in a purely linear manner" (Martinez-Lage, 1998, p. 70). The text-driven factors that assist in the decoding process include the recognition of syntactic features and words, and the decoding of graphemes and phonemes (Gascoigne, 2002b), referring to the smallest distinguishable units in written language and sound. By progressively building these smaller text segments into larger units, such as phrases and sentences, the reader then processes the text "through a word-for-word reading", (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 24).

While "lower-level" (Brown, 1998, p. 191) activities – letter and word recognition – are still dominating in this model, a progression toward "higher-level mental stages" (Barnett, 1989, p. 5), that may include sentence-level syntax and discourse-level analysis is possible. Once readers move from the understanding of basic information to a deeper comprehension of the text as a whole, they are eventually able to decode the entire text and can then begin to assign meaning to it.

Examples for bottom-up models can be found in Gough's (1972) text-based model, and LaBerges and Samuel's (1974) reader-based model¹⁰.

Although extensive and arduous, the bottom-up processing of text-based reading holds pedagogical advantages for the L2 classroom. Foreign language students with little or no extra language input outside the classroom can, for example comprehend textual structures by matching synonyms or cognates of English with L2. Students' reading

comprehension can also be assessed by answering "discrete-point questions" about the text, such as true/false and "wh"-questions *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why* (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 28). However, as evidence from L2 research has shown, the successful decoding of surface language (i.e., vocabulary and textual structures) does not automatically ensure the reader's understanding of the text¹¹.

Swaffar et al. (1991) use the term "decoding" (comprehension) to refer to the "reader replication of textual language without reference to reader or textual framework for meaning", while "encoding" (the articulation of comprehension) refers to the "reader construction of text meaning on the basis of multiple interactive factors" (p. 22). Inaccurate or even false comprehension can therefore occur if the reader relies too heavily on either text- or knowledge-based processing of information.

Top-down models and their implications for L2 reading comprehension

As a response to the text-based decoding activity in bottom-up models, top-down models concentrated on the impact the reader has on the reading process. Based on the research and results obtained through reading comprehension studies (cf. Barnett, 1989; Carrell, 1983b; Omaggio Hadley, 1979) that emerged in the 1980ies, these models were also known as "reader-based" or "holistic" (Kamil, 1986, p. 73).

In contrast to the former category, top-down models are not text-centered but emphasize "what the reader brings to the text in terms of world knowledge" (Lally, 1998, p. 268). Based on the belief that the reader initiates the reading process, these types of

¹⁰ Kamil (1986) outlines the purpose of reading models and examines some of the common models of reading in the native language (L1) with respect to their instructional implications. For more extensive information on these reading models see also Barnett (1989).

models are also referred to as "reader-driven" (Omaggio Hadley, 1993, p. 195), meaning that the reader brings schemata to the text to support the comprehension process.

Representative of the top-down category is Goodman's (1968) psycholinguistic model, in which the author describes the reading process as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (p. 126). This means that by predicting and sampling what might come next, the reader diminishes his or her dependency on the text and its formal features. By applying general knowledge (i.e., personal experiences or personal background knowledge), the reader is in a position that allows him or her to make "intelligent guesses about what might come next in the text and samples only enough of the text to confirm or reject these guesses" (Barnett, 1989, p. 13).

It is important to highlight that readers only decode the text amount they deem *necessary* in order to verify or discard their guesses, because the focus here is on a global comprehension of the reading, but not on understanding very specific or detailed information. In addition to activating prior knowledge for the text comprehension, Gascoigne's (2002b) reader-based variables include "intratextual perception" and "metacognition" (p. 344, based on Bernhardt's model). Among the better known top-down models are the ones by Goodman (1968) and Smith (1971/1978), who both equally stress the interaction between the reader and the text in their theories.

In order to stimulate readers' general or background knowledge and activate the schemata they bring to a text, the distribution of information prior to the student's interaction with the text become an essential part of the reading process. In other words, the more information the reader has prior to reading a text, the better he or she is able to

¹¹ For research on functional comprehension based on memory and recall in L1 see Perrig & Kintsch, 1985. Investigations in L2 show that these effects are also significant for L2 readers (cf. Cooper, 1984).

make guesses and predict what may come next, thus reducing uncertainty and supporting comprehension.

In Coady's (1979) psycholinguistic model for ESL readers, for example, which built on Goodman's (1968) concept, the reader's background knowledge interacts with conceptual abilities and processing strategies. According to Coady (1979), conceptual abilities refer to general intellectual skills, while processing strategies consist of "grapheme-morphophonemic correspondences, syllable-morpheme information, syntactic information (deep and surface), lexical meaning and contextual meaning, cognitive strategies, and affective mobilizers" (p. 7).

Given the additional linguistic challenge that foreign language texts present for L2 readers, the utilization of background knowledge in conjunction with conceptual abilities and processing strategies can be employed to keep readers interested in the material despite of complex textual structures (Coady, 1979; Lally, 1998). Furthermore, if reading is understood as a productive process in which meaning is actualized by the reader, then whole, meaningful language (rather than isolated words or phrases) should best facilitate the goal of creating meaning.

Although bottom-up and top-down models focus on different features (text-or reader-driven), researchers note that priority is given to the role of the reader in the comprehension process (Barnett, 1989; Eskey, 1986). Simple decoding skills are sufficient for students to access basic information from the text. But in order to make sense of this information the reader must combine it with prior (or background) knowledge of the subject matter, and consequently "create new structures of meaning" (Eskey, 1986, p. 9), which provide textual relationships. This perspective implies that

good readers are *so* proficient in using bottom-up skills that they start automatically interacting with top-down skills. Rather than existing as mutually exclusive models, bottom-up skills (focus on form) have thus been combined with top-down processing skills (focus on meaning) into interactive models.

Interactive models and their implications for L2 reading comprehension

The third major type of L1 reading models are called interactive or "balanced" (Kamil, 1986, p. 73), which share the common hypothesis that top-down as well as bottom-up processes are involved, thus placing value on both reader- and text-driven variables. Over time however, scholars have rendered various explanations of interactive reading models (among them Bernhardt, 1991a; Rumelhart, 1977; Swaffar et al., 1991), that also differ in the degree of significance assigned to the individual top-down and bottom-up processes.

Barnett (1989) asserts that decoding (i.e., processing of graphic, syntactic, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic information) and recoding of textual information operate simultaneously in interactive models. But for text comprehension to actually occur, Omaggio Hadley (1993) points out that an "interactive process between the reader and the text" is necessary, which "moves in a cyclical, rather than linear fashion between the reader's own mental activities and the textual features" (pp. 133-134).

Defining the relationship between text- and reader-based processes as "text messages [that interact] with reader perceptions", Swaffar et al. (1991, p. 24) divide these interactions into the following eight components:

Top-down factors: reader

1. Reader background (semantic knowledge)

2. Reader perspective (reading strategies)

Top-down factors: text

3. Text schema (topic)
4. Text structure (organizational pattern of the information)
5. Episodic sequence (scripts or story grammars)

Bottom-up factors: text and reader

6. Illustrative detail (micropropositions)
7. Surface language features of the text in letters, words, and individual sentences
8. Reader language proficiency

In an interactive reading of the German fairy tale "Der Froschkönig" (*The Frog King*) the application of top-down and bottom-up processes could then look like this. Using top-down strategies that focus on the readers' prior knowledge suggests that readers should be able to easily predict the semantic and rhetorical structure of the text.

For example, activating the students' background knowledge about fairy tales they have previously read, heard or been told, will allow readers to access both content and organizational schemata that can aid them in the comprehension process. Readers are then able to make certain assumptions about some of the major characters that will appear in the story (i.e., the frog king, a princess, a bad witch or sorcerer who cast a spell). They can also make predictions about the chronological order in which the events of the tale will unfold (i.e., description of the main characters, polarity between good and evil forces, hero/heroine solves the conflict or breaks the spell by performing specific tasks, victory of good over evil, a happy ending).

The more familiar students are with the subject matter of the text (in this case the formal structure and recurring elements that are typical for fairy tales), the more enhanced their understanding of the text will become, because they are linking existing background knowledge with new information the text offers.

While bottom-up strategies that involve a mere word-for-word-reading of the fairy tale or even surface language matching of synonyms (L2 and English) may help readers to decode words, sentences, or paragraphs, these strategies do not necessarily guarantee or verify the reader's comprehension of the text. Rather, a processing strategy that Carrell (1988b) has called "bidirectional", which combines text- and knowledge-based processing, seems to best support an interactive reading of the story, because it relies on the reader's inferences as they are informed by the text itself and the reader's prior linguistic knowledge. Although the knowledge of textual vocabulary and grammatical structures (i.e., the simple past form of verbs) is a necessary prerequisite for the comprehension of a story like *The Frog King*, it is the actual integration of textual language, grammar *and* meaning (i.e., through restating text messages, answering discrete-point questions, or analyzing text passages in the target language), that will aid readers in understanding the text.

The interactive reading model introduced by Swaffar et al. (1991) called "Procedural Model for Integrative Reading" (pp. 73-91) is not a theoretical one, like many of its peers. Instead, it focuses on the procedural stages in L2 reader processing that "*guide* reader behavior" (Swaffar et al., p. 75) while highlighting features from both text- and reader processing. The model clearly stresses the role of the individual reader, placing particular emphasis on the L2 readers' prior knowledge that is brought to the reading process. Yet, while the authors consider background knowledge and previously acquired schemata as principal components of their reading model, their approach differs from other theoretical reading concepts in the following three aspects:

1. reader and text interact with one another but are considered independent in their own right,
2. interactions between reader and text exhibit similar features of both bottom-up and top-down processing,
3. textual language, in addition to the text's intent, context and structure, assists reader comprehension.

According to this model, a text's comprehension and subsequent construction of meaning that leads to the reader's re-construction of the text can best be achieved if reader-text interactions progress in stages that connect textual language with the reader's background schemata.

When discussing the implications that interactive reading models (and here in particular Swaffar's et al., 1991) have for the comprehension of FL texts, one must highlight an important feature that Bernhardt's (1986b, 1990b) second language constructivist theory offers, called "metacognition". Of the various statements that have been rendered to define this term (cf. Flavell 1976, 1979, 1981) it can be said that metacognition essentially involves the thinking about one's own perceptions, understandings and memories (Garner, 1994, p. 716).

In general, Bernhardt's model stresses components that are similar to those cited by Goodman (1968) and Coady (1979). Where her concept differs, however is in the integration of both text-based and extratext-based variables. The text-based components include word recognition (defined as vocabulary knowledge), phonemic and graphemic features, and syntactic feature recognition (grammatical ability). The extratext-based elements are described as intratextual perceptions, which refer to "the reconciliation of

each part of the text with that which precedes and succeeds" (Bernhardt, 1990b, p. 25). It is precisely those perceptions that can be related to the reader's prior knowledge and metacognition¹².

The reason why this component is of such value for the FL reading process is, as Bernhardt states, because metacognition occurs when the reader is actually *thinking* about what he or she is reading. That means, that while readers are recognizing textual elements (such as letters and words), they simultaneously bring their prior knowledge to the text, and begin linking these elements together. Or, to use Barnett's (1989) formulation, the reader "thinks about how the reading process is working" (p. 47).

The importance of the use and training of metacognitive strategies in the foreign language class has been confirmed by Kusiak (2001), who investigated the effects that metacognitive strategy training had on the reading comprehension and metacognitive knowledge of Polish intermediate EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. The results suggested that "students who were taught to apply self-regulatory strategies while performing a task related to reading could enhance their metacognitive knowledge of themselves as readers, their perceptions of the reading process and reading strategies, and their motivation as well as self-evaluation of reading skills" (Kusiak, 2001, p. 255).

Of Swaffar's et al. (1991) procedural model, which assumes a synthesis of text- and reader-based features, and involves both bottom-up and top-down processes that occur simultaneously, it is in particular the application of the latter (reader background and reader perspective) that yield interpretations. Thus, especially for students with

¹² For further information on the relationship between L1 and L2 reading that specifically focus on the role of L2 vocabulary knowledge and grammatical skill in L2 reading comprehension see Brisbois (1995, p. 570).

insufficient language proficiency (at the introductory level for example), or those who lack the essential background knowledge to understand a text, the application of top-down strategies, which are geared towards "global processing of textual detail" (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 131) can help learners to fill these voids. Swaffar (2001) later elaborates on the importance of teaching top-down processing strategies to L2 readers, introducing an approach she calls "r+1", a reader variation of Krashen's (1985) *input hypothesis* "i+1":

The pedagogy involved presents students with an 'r+1' (the reconstruction made in the process of identifying the way the text arranges student-selected detail into consistent patterns)... The 'r' component assumes a reading process that reconstructs the macropatterns of a text out of recognizable details. The '+1' component is reflected in the discovery process that this reconstruction involves. (p. 133)

By locating and systematizing global, or "macropatterns" of a text, Swaffar (2001) argues, students engage in reconstructing the text in a "discovery process", which in turn leads them to create meaningful ways of reorganizing the text.

For example, macropatterns of a text that reflect reader responses of an Iserian¹³ nature would encourage FL students to draw on the actual text language as well as their own background knowledge and experience to give potential meanings to the text. While students might initially verbalize thoughts and ideas that are based on pure speculations, directed reading activities can guide readers to re-think and re-evaluate their previous statements when comparing them with the textual language presented in the reading.

Procedures that can be employed to facilitate the reader's text comprehension and meaning-making include predictions and hypotheses about the text's title, the first few

¹³ A detailed discussion of literary theories, including Wolfgang Iser's (1978) reader response model, and their implications for the second language reading and comprehension process is furnished in Chapter 3.

sentences or selected passages of the text. After voicing their immediate reactions to those parts of the text, students can be asked to pause for a moment before reading on. During the break readers are given the opportunity to reflect upon what they just read, adding comments or observations, and confirming or rejecting their statements while referring to the actual language of the text.

It is important though, as Swaffar (2001) stresses, that the instructor takes merely a guiding position in this process to avoid imposing his or her personal opinions, values, information or even interpretations of the reading onto the students. The value that "r+1" holds for the teaching of literary texts is, that students using this method learn to distinguish between their first emotional or speculative responses to a reading and what the literary information of the text actually say. Swaffar (2001) maintains that this approach does not focus on *one right* answer, nor can responses be false. In fact, it fosters students' active participation by asking them to express their hypotheses about the text, however varied those might be. This again does not mean that the doors are open for an "anything goes" kind of interpretation. Rather, students are encouraged to fill the blanks they encounter while reading (in an Iserian manner so to speak), thus focusing on the process of reading.

Levels of representation

Referring to the various cognitive and metacognitive processes that are involved in L1 and L2 reading Bernhardt's (2003) overview of these operations highlights the complexity of tasks that the reader has to carry out in order to comprehend the text. The suggested L1 reading models that have emerged over the past decades, whether they are

linear (Gough, 1972; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974) or interactive (Rumelhart, 1977), all include different processing stages.

Any given text can be read in a variety of ways. Depending on the reading model that is being examined, and depending on the route that the reader takes from decoding the printed material to arriving at the meaning of the text, different information-processing steps and components are involved. For example, the LaBerge-Samuels (1974) model of automatic information processing in reading initially employed the "concept of automaticity" to illustrate why skilled or fluent readers are better able to decode and comprehend a text than less skilled or beginning readers (Samuels, 1994, p. 816). The different processing stages of this reading model encompass the visual memory (VM), the phonological memory (PM), the episodic memory (EM), and the semantic memory (SM). All components are explained in great detail by Samuels (1994, pp. 824-829), but for the purpose of the current study and the sake of brevity a short description of the respective components will have to suffice.

The visual memory (VM) processes incoming information from printed words and letters on a page (i.e., recognizing the differences between letters such as *d*, *b*, *p* or *g*, which all share similar but also unique features in terms of how they are written). The phonological memory (PM) focuses on processing information that is related to acoustic signals and articulatory input. For example, distinctive features between the sounds of /*ga*/-/*ba*/-/*pa*/ are represented in the place of the articulation (i.e., back in the throat, with lips) and in the production of the sound itself. The episodic memory (EM) is related to storing information that refer to contextual details, such as time and place. It is recalled when the reader summons specific events or background knowledge from his or her past.

Items for this component are often categorized using *wh*-questions (i.e., *what*, *when*, *where*, *who*). Finally, the semantic memory (SM) accumulates all kinds of (abstract) knowledge that is related to the comprehension of the text. It is also during this processing stage that meaning is assigned to the individual word that has been read.

The actual processing of the respective information (memories) becomes more automatic if the skilled reader encounters familiar words, because he or she is able to decode those without paying too much attention to them. Thus, comprehension can also occur automatically. However, comprehension can only occur when *all* these components interact with one another, and when the visual and phonological information (predominantly bottom-up processes) are related and connected to the episodic and semantic memory (top-down processes).

The influence of socio-cultural aspects for memory representations

In order to process a text the reader needs to access information stored in his or her own memory. The reader's existing or prior knowledge therefore has to be matched with incoming text information before meaning can be assigned to the written word. It must be acknowledged though, that representations of memory from L2 readers differ from those of L1 readers, which may be advantageous and effective or impeding in the process of reading and subsequently comprehending a text. In other words, second language readers may not possess the necessary representations in their memory to match them with the text. For example, while the visual memory of a native French or Spanish speaker (or reader) can be matched up with an input text in German, the visual memory of a native speaker (or reader) of Russian does not find that match in the German input

text. Furthermore, the Russian reader also finds no match for syntax and phonology in German.

In relation to schema theory, the personal (and semantic) knowledge base of a reader who is familiar with certain cultural concepts can also strongly affect the comprehension of a text featuring those aspects. For example, a reader's unfamiliarity with the concept of soccer (i.e., insufficient or incomplete lexicon for soccer-related vocabulary words, or lack of knowledge about rules of the game) would suggest that the reader may experience greater difficulties when trying to decode the text. Samuels (1994) therefore concludes that there is "a strong relationship...between reading performance and prior knowledge" (p. 831), because familiarity with a subject matter and familiarity with the lexical base associated with that subject matter can (potentially) counterbalance for a reader's impoverished decoding skills.

Relevant Issues from L1 Reading Research for L2 Reading Comprehension

Concerned with relevant L1 text comprehension issues and their importance for L2 reading research, Brown (1998) discusses the impact that L1 research had on the L2 reading comprehension process, from schema theory to interactive ways of reading. Exploring the different levels of processing that Kintsch and van Dijk (1978, updated by van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983) identified for the L1 reading process (linguistic, textbase, and situation model), Brown (1998) focuses on the relevance that the situation model holds for L2 reading. In this model, according to van Dijk and Kintsch (1983, pp. 337-340), discourse structures are being merged with the reader's existing general background knowledge, which in turn is used by the reader to assign meaning to the text (p. 338). For

this to happen, the situation model must rely on a recurring interaction between the reader and the text, so that old information (which is stored in the memory) can be constantly blended with new information (coming in from the current situation), "thus generating an updated situation model" (Brown, 1998, p. 193).

The implications that these different levels of representation (in L1) have for the L2 reading classroom are such that they can help discover some of the problems L2 readers encounter. Students, who are able to understand the vocabulary and grammatical structures, can generally answer questions of a descriptive nature (*who, what, when, where*), that assist them in summarizing the plot of a story. However, responding to questions that focus on the analysis and interpretation of texts (*why, how*) proves to be the greater hurdle for these readers, because they usually "cannot attach any genuine 'meaning' to the text" (Bernhardt, 1991a, p. 181). Brown (1998) warns though, that the construction of a situation model in L2 reading without the establishment of a solid textbase (i.e., semantic information from the text, called "propositions") is not simply going to solve this problem. In other words, if students do not understand the words in the text they read, they will not be able to take the next step and process the information they just read.

Based on recent studies in L2 reading research that examined the effects of L2 language proficiency and comprehension skills on situation-model construction (cf. Zwaan & Brown, 1996) and representations of memory in translation during L2 reading (Kern, 1994), Brown (1998) makes the following suggestions for second language reading instruction:

1. Students need to build both solid and coherent text bases, and form "global mental representations" (p. 199), that include the activation of relevant background knowledge for the L2 comprehension process.
2. L2 reading instruction should involve pre-reading activities which emphasize vocabulary exercises and discussions that activate prior knowledge, as well as post-reading tasks that focus on lower-level and global processing skills.

In addition, one should add that while- and post-reading activities would *further* enhance the L2 comprehension process, because they stimulate lower-level processes and the construction of a consistent textbase, which can then be used as a platform for ensuing interpretations of the text.

This investigation does not intend to provide detailed accounts for all the different levels of representation that play a role in L2 reading comprehension. It does however attempt to answer some of the questions that explore to the impact that background knowledge has on the comprehension and interpretation of foreign language literary texts. With students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who have lived in various socio-cultural environments over extended periods of time, the impact that the socio-cultural aspects can have in memory representation, especially when those representations have been subject to change, is particularly relevant for the current study.

In summary of this section it should be emphasized that the main goal of reading is, whether in L1 or L2, the comprehension of text information and the construction of text meaning. The processes however, that readers apply in order to create this meaning can differ, because they depend on numerous factors that influence the comprehension process, such as features related to the text (i.e., topic, vocabulary, grammar, syntax) *and*

to the reader (i.e., reading purpose, background knowledge, expectations, perspective, language proficiency). For meaning to be established, these two components need to interact with one another.

Understood as an interactive process, reading ultimately requires the active participation of the reader as well as sufficient information from the respective text. Only relying on the information that the text provides though, would not enable the reader to assign meaning to the text. It is the reader's prior world and linguistic knowledge, individual background, expectations, and perspectives that need to be added for that. While the reader can draw conclusions from textual clues and background information the *text* provides, the comprehension process expands through the *reader's* particular knowledge about a specific topic or theme.

SLA Recommendations for the L2 Reading Process

In particular the research that has been conducted in the fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Applied Linguistics (AL) has given FL educators a better understanding of the learning and reading process in L2. Some of the suggestions that SLA experts have made for the L2 reading process have already been mentioned in Swaffar et al. (1991). To summarize, the authors assert that the focus in L2 reading has to remain on the reader, whose background knowledge needs to be activated during the reading process through visuals, advance-organizers, discussion or problem solving activities. Providing teachers with suggestions for the appropriate selection of L2 reading materials, Swaffar's et al. recommendations are predominantly based on their own research. However, literature and examples related to the selection of L2 texts that back

up the following claims can be found in Urquhart (1984), Collie and Slater (1987, pp. 11-15), Campbell (1996), Kramsch (1993b, 1996b) and Legutke (1996). According Swaffar's et al. (1991) guidelines, the following factors should be considered when selecting ideal L2 texts:

1. Have *topics that are familiar and of interest to L2 learners*, because "efforts to determine particular interests of L2 classes vis-à-vis subject matter probably will contribute to success in L2 reading (p. 137)
2. Have a *substantive, readily-discernible plot or message* that make the reading worthwhile and "offers readers an opportunity to think, to learn, and to enjoy themselves in the process" (p. 138)
3. Possess a *clear sequential development with well-marked episodes* that increase the reader's comprehension. Narratives such as fairy tales, for example, in which events occur in a sequential order, enriched with repetitions, "are easier to follow than prose in which a chronology has been reduced or pulled apart" (p. 138)
4. Have a *recognizable agent or concrete subject* (i.e., stories about "identifiable people or situations") that make the text more readable and less abstract (p. 138)
5. Have a *minimum amount of description* that contains necessary rhetorical features, which do not posit "excessive demands on the L2 reader. With their tendency toward highly differentiated and specialized vocabulary these texts require such a high level of reader investment in schematizing and language detail that they put the L2 reader at both a cognitive and linguistic disadvantage" (p. 138).

6. Should be *unambiguous in intent*, especially when it comes to introducing subtextual elements such as humor, irony, parody or satire, to decrease the element of confusion or possible misreadings for L2 readers (p. 139).
7. Should be *appropriate in length*, depending on the goals of instruction. That is not to say, though, that shorter texts should be favored, because they are better or easier. Both would not be the case, if they do not possess the required features and elements (as outlined above) that assist in making them accessible to students (p. 139).

More recent studies on reading in L1 and L2 have supported the research examining the relationship between first-language reading, second-language knowledge and second-language reading¹⁴.

A detailed account of the connections between L2 reading and the impact that reader-response criticism had on the reading and comprehension process in the second/foreign language will be provided in the following chapter. The application of selected reader-response models to the L2 reading process will also be discussed at that point.

Texttypes: Expository vs. Literary Texts

While context, content and intent are important factors in the reading and comprehension process in both L1 and L2, they are not always well defined, familiar or predictable for the second language reader. This is particularly true for literary text, which are often full of rich, cultural details and information. As two forms of discourse

¹⁴ For related articles see Alderson & Urquhart, 1984; Bernhardt, 1991b; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Brisbois, 1995; Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1988; Day & Bamford, 1998; Murtagh, 1989; Taillefer & Pugh, 1998; Ulijn & Salager-Meyer, 1998.

structure, literary and expository texts represent two different text types. Depending on the reading purpose of the individual reader a text can be read for enjoyment, pleasure or to simply obtain specific information about a particular topic.

While the term "literary texts" often refers to novels, short stories, dramas or poetry, "expository texts" usually define texts of a causal, persuasive, comparative or descriptive nature (cf. Beach & Appleman 1984, Sinha & Janisch, 1994). And although the definition of literary texts in this study is related to the genre *short story*, this text type is not only limited to so-called "classical" literature. Rather, both categories, literary as well as expository text types can include a broad range of various texts.

Most expository texts that deal with selected cultural, social or literary topics are embedded in background information, which guide the reader in the comprehension process. This suggests that, if the reader becomes familiar with the content and context of an expository text, he or she will be more able to predict what the reading will be about. However, the "structure of expository text types", as Sinha and Janisch (1994, p. 503) point out can also create problems for the reader. The insufficient quality of the writing, or the way in which information is presented in the text can actually cause the reader to carry away less from the text, thus hindering the learner's comprehension of the text.

Swaffar et al. (1991) on the other hand insist that expository texts, *because* they have familiar schemata, may be better suited for FL students when they are "reading for information" (p. 214). Literary text types that encompass a different complexity and structure than expository writing, "frequently challenge readers with discomfiting perspectives and linguistic techniques that deviate from standard use" (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 213). While this is often true, literary texts also offer a very different kind of

experiences for L2 readers, based on the entertainment or aesthetic values that the text holds for the reader.

By distinguishing popular (or entertainment) literature from the so-called "serious literature", Swaffar et al. maintain that the latter can cause problems for L2 readers, because it is not formulaic, and therefore does not contain fixed verbal formula or follow a predictable form or style. While student can apply certain inferences when grasping *light* or entertainment literature (a romance novel or a western, for example), they can not implement the same reasoning or deductions when trying to comprehend more difficult literary texts. Consequently, this makes it more difficult for them to understand what the text conveys in addition to what it (literally) says.

Justifying the Literary Text in the Foreign Language Classroom

If literary texts seem to be such a burden to L2 readers because they put additional requirements on them (i.e., familiarity with a specific genre, period, style or author), then why should they be used in the FL classroom after all? I argue, that it is the "dimension of particularity", to borrow Kramsch's (1993b, p. 106) phrase, that is inherent to the literary text, which allows L2 learners to enjoy different kinds of experiences in a whole-language context.

Exposing students to texts that break with known linguistic conventions and grammatical structures enriches their understanding about the language and its culture, because both are embedded in a new context that has yet to be explored. Collie and Slater (1987) in their practical resource book "Literature in the Language Classroom" offer a

wealth of student-centered activities that aid readers (and teachers) when integrating literature and language learning in the FL classroom.

While the authors highlight the linguistic and cultural benefits of literary texts for L2 readers, they stress in particular the *personal* enrichment that comes from reading these texts. Literature, they say, "which speaks to the heart as much as to the mind" of students contributes "material with some emotional colour, that can make fuller contact with the learner's own life" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 2). Thus, literary texts also provide L2 learners with a written language input that compensates the shortened or manipulated text versions that many FL textbooks feature.

Probably the most significant argument for teaching literature in the FL classroom is the fact that readers (both in L1 and L2) infer meaning based on their cultural perceptions. The events, characters and situations described in a narrative do not only allude to the overall intention of the text - they also point out a number of quite different and sometimes even conflicting meanings that arise out of the personal and cultural understanding the reader brings to the text.

When reading a short story, for example, readers focus essentially on two things when seeking to understand the text: the story's stylistic presentation and the reader's own cultural expectations (Donnerstag, 1996, p. 152). Next to observing the (linguistic) surface structure of the text, it is however mainly the reader's background knowledge that will force him or her to make the necessary semantic inferences, which allow for meaning to be constructed. While the more predictable schemata of expository texts control and thereby limit the reader's personal meaning making process (based on the writing style and composition of the text itself as indicated earlier in this section), literary

texts permit a deeper involvement and interaction between reader and text, also inviting a broader spectrum of alternative meanings.

In particular the genre of the short story, told from the perspective of a personal narrator, gives readers in the FL literature classroom the opportunity to increase their level of participation and activate their imagination, thus promoting a stronger personal involvement with the story. How a literary text will effect the reader depends largely on how he or she realizes the actual text language. The following opening lines from the short story "Ein netter Kerl" by Gabriele Wohmann (1987), which was used in this study, will illustrate this point:

Ich hab ja so wahnsinning gelacht, rief Ninni in einer Atempause. Genau wie du ihn beschrieben hast, entsetzlich.

Furchtbar fett für sein Alter, sagte die Mutter. Er sollte vielleicht Diät essen.

Übrigens, Rita, weißt du, ob er ganz gesund ist?

Rita setzte sich gerade und hielt sich mit den Händen am Sitz fest. Sie sagte: Ach, ich glaub' schon, daß er gesund ist.

While the story starts out with a dialogue between three women, most likely members of the same family, the reader can already get a clearly sense of the situation after reading the first few exchanges between the mother and her two daughters. The repetition of adjectives indicating exaggeration (*wahnsinning, entsetzlich, furchtbar fett*), used by Ninni and the mother to describe their encounter with an overweight man who apparently had just left, stands in sharp contrast to the nonverbal behavior Rita exhibits (*Rita setzte sich gerade und hielt sich mit den Händen am Sitz fest*).

The readers' responses might first signal surprise, astonishment or even shock about the fact that two family members obviously have no problem speaking with such disrespect about the man that Rita had introduced to them moments earlier. Questions might arise, in which readers express their confusion about Rita's somewhat passive

behavior. Why does she not stand up for herself, and for the man she introduced to her family? Why do her mother and sister treat Rita with such cruelty and rudeness? What will happen next?

As readers continue with the text, they will confirm or discard their initial hypotheses about the story, they will take sides with certain characters, and approve of their behaviors and actions while expressing feelings of empathy and compassion for them. They will also reject, even condemn the actions of other characters, expressing different emotions this time. Based on their prior knowledge and experiences, readers will make inferences that will later enable will them to construe the meaning of the story.

A FL literature environment that stimulates these creative engagements between readers and texts concentrates not so much on the subject matter of the text but more on the *process* of reading itself. Important is here, that the reader can *connect* with what he or she reads about. In other words, the text has to be relevant to the reader. Only then, if a story helps to illuminate the readers' personal situation will they be able to make connections between the textual world and their own life. This does not automatically mean that students will render interpretations of a text that focus merely on themselves, thus losing complete sight of the text. Instead, the reflection upon one's personal experiences and the impact of those experiences on the reader's understanding of a story can bring forth meanings of the text that might otherwise have remained hidden.

The *literary* language thus presents a unique situation for students, because it can evoke new experiences in the reader - experiences that were formerly not known or recognized, "casting new light on familiar sensations and opening up new dimensions of

perception in a way that can be exhilarating but also startling and even unsettling" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 5).

The Role of Cultural Background Knowledge for L2 Reading Comprehension

The role of prior (or background) knowledge has been widely investigated in both L1 and L2 reading research, as outlined earlier in this chapter. Results from research conducted in first (Afflerbach, 1990; Symons & Pressley, 1993) and second language reading (Carrell, 1983a, 1983b; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Gascoigne, 2002a; Hauptmann, 2000; Roller, 1990) confirmed that background knowledge significantly assists readers not only in finding, but especially in comprehending text information.

Tierney and Pearson (1994) pointed out that "a reader's background knowledge, including purposes, has an overriding influence upon the reader's development of meaning" and that "reading comprehension involves the activation, focusing, maintaining, and refining of ideas toward developing interpretations (models) that are plausible, interconnected, and complete" (p. 501).

More recently, Hauptmann (2000) reviewed both empirical and pedagogical literature on the concept of "difficulty" and "ease" in second language reading at the university level, and concluded that background knowledge should be considered the first primary ease factor in L2 reading.

How critical the role of *cultural* background knowledge is for L2 learners when comprehending L2 texts has repeatedly been pointed out by scholars from SLA, literary studies and cognitive science (Bernhardt, 1990a, 1991a; Graesser, Haberlandt & Koizumi, 1987; Johnston, 1983; Kornienko, 2000; Yekovich & Walker, 1987). Bernhardt

(1990a), who examined the role that knowledge-based inferencing plays in L2 reading research, cites that the majority of studies have investigated various knowledge structures that L2 learners bring to the reading comprehension process. Bernhardt categorized these into three groups: (1) topic background knowledge, (2) background knowledge that was specifically provided for readers to increase text comprehension, and (3) cultural background knowledge. Specifically the last group of studies focused on investigating the impact and effects that *cultural background knowledge* has on the reading process.

Research in this field has mainly been concerned with two forms of knowledge: knowledge that is related to one's own (native) culture versus knowledge that pertains to another or different (foreign) culture. Bernhardt (1990a) cautions however, that L2 reading research cannot simply assume that the existence or lack of certain knowledge structures is automatically linked to a reader's cultural or ethnic heritage (p. 274).

While it is this background knowledge base that helps the L2 reader to fill the "gaps in the text" (Iser, 1978), it is the reader's simultaneous operation on different levels that could actually prevent rather than assist him or her in comprehending the text. As Johnston (1983) observes, "[t]he qualitative mismatch between text and reader may...[cause] the reader to build a completely inappropriate model of the text meaning without becoming aware of the problem" (p. 31). This means that, although the reader *did* produce inferences, they were either unsuitable or unacceptable. If the reader continues to make these wrong inferences, based on his "generic knowledge structures" (Graesser, Haberlandt & Koizumi, 1987, p. 218), he will ultimately arrive at a text meaning that is defective.

Similarly, Kornienko (2000) states that the successful comprehension of a culturally foreign text can only be achieved "if the recipient [the reader, my comment]...will gain world knowledge adequate to the author's one" (p. 334).

In the past twenty-five years, a significant amount of studies has been produced that examined the role of *cultural* background knowledge in the reading comprehension process¹⁵. Based on their respective findings these studies share a common thread: text comprehension dramatically increases for readers, when they possess the cultural background for understanding the reading, or can at least closely align the text to their own cultural background.

A more detailed review of this research will follow in the next section. Although this discussion is not meant to be exhaustive, it outlines some of the significant findings that show the overwhelmingly positive influence, but also potential negative impact of cultural background knowledge in L2 comprehension. Furthermore, this overview is aimed at pointing out the need for future research endeavors focusing on advanced level L2 reading instruction and comprehension.

In a seminal cross-cultural investigation of L2 reading comprehension, undertaken by Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson in 1979, adult readers from different cultural backgrounds (India and the U.S.) were asked to read and recall two text passages: one describing an American, the other an Indian wedding. Both passages were written in English in form of a personal letter. The findings indicated, that subjects reading the passage they were culturally *familiar* with read not only faster, but also recalled far more

¹⁵ See for example Campbell, 1981; Carrell, 1987; Chen & Graves, 1995; Connor, 1984; Johnson, 1981a, 1981b; Levine & Haus, 1985; Parry, 1987; Perkins & Angelis, 1985; Pritchard, 1990; Steffensen & Joag-Dev, 1984; Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979.

information from it. Additionally, they were able to provide culturally relevant comments for the native-culture-oriented passage, which enhanced their understanding of the text. On the other hand, when recalling the foreign wedding text, readers' comprehension was hampered and the meaning of the text distorted because of the non-existent necessary cultural background knowledge. Concluding that their findings showed the "pervasive influence on comprehension and memory of schemata knowledge of the content of discourse" (p. 10) Steffensen et al. (1979) highlighted that differences in existing background and topic knowledge may provide important information for variances in L2 reading comprehension.

Shortly after, Johnson (1981b) examined how two groups with different cultural backgrounds – one Iranian and one American – comprehended folk tales they read from both respective cultures. Both folktales were written in English. The Iranian group consisted of intermediate to advanced level ESL students, while the second group of students spoke English as their native tongue. One half of the participants in each group read a syntactically simplified version of both folktales, the other half read the unsimplified rendition of each story. Similar to Steffensen's et al. (1979) findings, Johnson's (1981b) results indicated that subjects comprehended more of the story with which they were culturally familiar. In contrast, participants reading the culturally unfamiliar text performed less well in terms of content comprehension. Johnson's results confirmed that the readers' own cultural backgrounds had a greater influence on the comprehension of the stories than explicit semantic or syntactic structures.

Bridging the insufficient background knowledge for readers from different cultural backgrounds, Floyd and Carrell (1987) found that ESL readers' comprehension

improved when they were *given* the cultural background information that was important for the understanding of the text.

Levine and Haus (1985) corroborated these findings when they examined the effects that background knowledge had on American high-school students who studied Spanish as a Foreign Language. The students were given an authentic text from a Spanish newspaper, describing the report of a baseball game. While their individual language proficiency levels did not seem to aid students' understanding of the passage significantly, their cultural background knowledge about the game did. In fact, the extensive cultural background and topic knowledge helped decrease the L2 readers' comprehension difficulties.

More recently, Pritchard's (1990) research on the influence of cultural schemata on reading processing strategies in L2 generated similar data. Sixty high-school students (30 from the U.S. and 30 from the Pacific Island nation of Palau) were given two different reading passages – one culturally familiar and one culturally unfamiliar text – in their respective native language. The two passages for all students, written in form of a letter by one native speaker of English and one of Palauan, described typical funeral procedures and arrangements in both cultures. In retelling the passage after the reading, Pritchard (1990) found that subjects who recalled the culturally familiar passage contributed far more idea units and fewer distortions than their peers, who lacked the particular cultural and topic background knowledge of the text. In addition he found that the American readers used a wider variety of strategies and that they used them more frequently than the Palauans. The investigator contributed both these results to the different cultural backgrounds of the students and suggested "that reading is a content-

specific activity; that is, when the content of reading materials changes, processing behavior changes as well" (Pritchard, 1990, p. 291).

Comparable results were achieved by Chen and Graves (1995), who concluded from their study that the background knowledge of college-level students from Taiwan reading American short stories had a positive impact on their comprehension of the stories.

One of the most recent studies on the influence of background knowledge in L2 comprehension was conducted by Brantmeier (2003). Her investigation of the many complex factors that influence the L2 reading process included variables that go beyond linguistic challenges. By exploring individual differences of intermediate-level college students in Spanish, Brantmeier studied the effects of variables that are usually not included in L2 reading comprehension research, such as the reader's gender, interest level and enjoyment. The two reading passages from intermediate-level literary texts were not used in their entirety, but selected by the researcher. Students were then presented with a retyped and formatted version of each story. The first reading passage dealt with a frustrated housewife and mother, who visited her college roommate. The focus in the second story was on describing male spectators at a boxing match.

The first story ('housewife') had only female characters, while the second one ('boxing match') only portrayed men. Brantmeier's results indicated that male readers were more familiar with the topic of the male reading passage and also showed greater interest and enjoyment in the male-oriented text. Similar findings could be observed for the female readers in respect to the female-oriented reading passage. However, Brantmeier cautions that the predicted variables for this study only partially explain the

differences in L2 comprehension and written recall of the text passages based on gender. Although topic familiarity was an important factor in the L2 comprehension process, interest and enjoyment were not.

While cultural background knowledge has repeatedly been cited as having a positive influence on L2 reading comprehension, Kharbutli and Shakir's (1995) investigation has shown evidence that content familiarity can also backfire in reading comprehension. In their study, the researchers shifted the focus to examining the impact that a student's *native* cultural background knowledge has on reading culturally familiar texts. Attention was in particular given to the reader's *emotional* involvement with the subject matter of the text. A group of 45 students majoring in English (presumably non-native speakers of English, my comment) were given a reading passage in a course entitled "Islam in English Texts". Thirty-five of the study participants were Moslems, while the others were Christians. After the reading of the passage, subjects were asked to respond to six multiple-choice questions. The first two questions were dealing with information not explicitly stated in the text, while the remaining four were focusing on implicit text information that could be answered in a "right/wrong" format.

Kharbutli and Shakir's (1995) investigation revealed findings that have not only important consequences for teaching the reading of culturally unfamiliar texts, but especially for the introduction of culturally foreign concepts through (literary) texts. The researchers' results indicated that the students' interpretation (or misinterpretation for that matter) of the reading passage was strongly influenced by their emotional involvement with the subject matter of the text. Based on which cognitive schemata the subject matter of the reading activated in students (for example, deeply-rooted cultural beliefs,

emotional attitudes, preconceptions or historical-cultural backgrounds), readers formed opinions and biases toward the writer of the passage, which negatively affected their comprehension process.

Kharbutli and Shakir's (1995) findings suggest that the important aspect of a reader's emotional engagement with a text can not be overlooked. Texts that are charged with cultural and historical elements, which trigger strong emotions in readers, can thus produce the opposite effect: instead of aiding the understanding of the reading, cultural background knowledge can play havoc with the comprehension process. Due to their intimate knowledge of and familiarity with a particular topic (content familiarity), readers may lose sight of the text as an autonomously existing object, and rely more heavily (if not solely) on reading their own minds, which in turn leads to a projected reading of the text.

Consequently, if the reader's cognitive schemata about the subject matter are not compatible with those of the writer, misreadings or misinterpretations of the text are given way. Similarly to the influence that personal or cultural experiences have in L2 comprehension, content (or topic) knowledge has proven to be a greater predictor for the understanding of texts than linguistic proficiency (cf. Johnson, 1981a, 1981b; Campbell, 1981; Carrell, 1987).

Research investigating the role of general or specific topic knowledge has been contributed by a number of scholars¹⁶, who have found that topic familiarity greatly enhances the comprehension of texts, more so than other text-based linguistic factors (i.e., vocabulary knowledge or explicit knowledge of grammatical structures).

¹⁶ See for example Alderson & Urquhart, 1988; Hammadou, 1991; Krueger & Ryan, 1993; Mohammed & Swales, 1984; Nunan, 1985; Snow & Brinton, 1997; Zuck & Zuck, 1984.

The third group of studies examined different types of stimuli that were used to provide specific background knowledge, such as pictures or graphic organizers (Adams, 1982; Hudson, 1982; Omaggio Hadley, 1979). While all of these studies used illustrative aids (i.e., graphics, drawings, photographs) to supply background knowledge information, Hudson (1982) and Omaggio Hadley (1979) in particular presented evidence that pictorial representations aided comprehension in second language reading.

Recall in target language versus native language

Of particular interest for the current study were two reports by Carrell (1983b) and Lee (1986a) who investigated the effects that background knowledge has on native versus non-native speakers when reading, comprehending, and especially recalling a text. Looking at L2 comprehension as a process (Lee) versus a product (Carrell), the researchers' use of native versus target language in recall tasks had a significant impact on the readers' demonstration of comprehension. Carrell's (1983b) study examined three separate components of background knowledge – familiarity, context, and transparency – and focused on how individual and interactive effects of these three variables determined the text comprehension of English and ESL readers.

Of the three groups in this study, two were composed of ESL readers from different levels, while the third group consisted of native English speakers only. All three groups were asked to read the same two passages and recall from them as much as they could remember. The recalls were to be written in English by all subjects. Based on her findings, Carrell (1983b) suggested that "unlike native speakers...nonnative readers show

virtually no significant effects of background knowledge...[and]...appear not to have a good sense of how easy or difficult a text is for them to understand" (p. 183).

Questioning the reliability of these results, Lee (1986a) reproduced Carrell's (1983b) study and came to quite different conclusions, based on the language that was used to produce (i.e., to write or record) the recall. Prior research findings from L2 reading studies (Lee 1986b) prompted Lee to use native language recall tasks instead of Carrell's target language recall tasks. Lee explained his rationale by saying that "recall protocols written in the subjects native language contained statistically significantly more of the passage than recall protocols written in the subject's target language" (Lee, 1986a, p. 350).

In contrast to Carrell (1983b), Lee (1986a) asserts that when students recall an L2 text in their native language "a very complex interaction between reader and text is found" (p. 353). While reading comprehension in the FL classroom (and increasingly so in advanced-level FL literature courses) is assessed with recall tasks given in the target language, Lee's (1986a) results point out a number of important facts that need to be considered when teaching L2 reading and evaluating L2 comprehension:

- a) The use of native (versus target) language assessment alters the outcome of L2 comprehension significantly.
- b) The assessment of L2 comprehension in the target language may restrict the reader's ability to display his/her comprehension.
- c) The L2 reader can express and demonstrate actual comprehension unlike higher in his or her native tongue than in the foreign language – both in speaking, but even more so in writing.

- d) Native and non-native readers in the FL classroom do not interact with texts in the same way (due to different development and/or existence of background knowledge components, i.e. context, familiarity, transparency).

Each of the studies reviewed in this section investigated the influence that background knowledge has on L2 comprehension. The investigations cited here used specifically selected reading passages from different cultural backgrounds, with the majority of passages being manipulated for study purposes. Participants were members of different national cultures – thus equipped with culture-specific and content-specific forms of background knowledge – who placed into intermediate and advanced levels of second language instruction.

The need for culturally literate L2 readers

As emphasized by numerous scholars in the field and discussed earlier in this paper, the teaching of culture needs to be closely linked, not to, but *with* the teaching of language and literature. Swaffar et al. (1991), among others have made a powerful argument for FL readers to become culturally literate individuals, "who must be capable not only of reading the surface structures and signs of a culture, but also the underlying configuration of meanings from which those surface structures emanate" (p. 216). For this to happen, a kind of pedagogy is required, that does not deprive students of a true interaction with the text, but encourages and values individual interpretations, while at the same time allowing a plurality of possible meanings to emerge.

It can be assumed that L2 readers understand the cultural aspects and signs in their own (native) literature. However, this may not be a guarantee that readers can also

associate the various references made in the text to politics, art, or history. And it is even less to expect that L2 readers are able to comprehend these messages in a foreign language text. To help foster the development of cultural literacy in the FL literature class, Swaffar et al. (1991) believe that students can be *instructed* to look for so-called "cultural codes" (p. 217), a term the authors borrowed from Robert Scholes. This would imply that students can identify lexical and syntactical inferences, which in turn help them to establish schemata for the comprehension of culturally different texts.

To conclude, if FL students are to become culturally literate L2 readers, they first need to accumulate a socio-cultural knowledge base that reflects the foreign culture. Secondly, they must be presented with opportunities (through reading culturally versatile texts) that allow them to relate their socio-historical knowledge to the literary work they read. Thirdly, they must be competent enough to draw *connections* between the "then" and the "now", between the time in which the text was written and the time in which it is being received. And finally, they must recognize culturally significant characteristics of literary texts and analyze their deeper contextual meaning in order to comprehend the various systems of ideas, beliefs, or thoughts that are implicitly given in them. Interacting with the cultural messages that literature embraces can thus create more opportunities for FL students to also interact with the text, rather than just reacting to it.

Reader Response Theory in the Foreign Language Literature Course

When creating and negotiating meaning in the FL classroom, the learners' response to a text depends on a number of variables, from motivation to interest, from their level of language proficiency to the background knowledge that is available to them.

Kramersch (1983), citing works by Breen and Candlin (1980) and Halliday (1973), pointed out that FL learners "express and interpret meaning on three levels:

Level 1: The ideas and concepts about which they communicate (ideational level)

Level 2: Their own personal behavior (interpersonal behavior); and

Level 3: The formal rules of the language itself (textual level)", (Kramersch, 1983, p. 176).

Working with the assumption that language is never a fixed or closed set of predetermined signs or objects that elicits prearranged responses, but rather a *process* that involves continuous negotiation and re-negotiation between speaker/listeners and readers/writers - linguistically and culturally – it needs interaction. But because the way in which one interacts with others is always bound to individual personal and social-cultural attitudes, it is important that a learning atmosphere is created in which students feel comfortable to express their opinions, and negotiate their interpretations with others, just like they would in a natural situation.

A methodology that encourages students to apply their interactive abilities and helps them to create and negotiate meanings would first of all call for different roles of both students and instructors. Teaching literature in a way that facilitates the *process* of meaning-making by integrating the students' own needs, their individual background knowledge and their understanding and expectations of the written text (Brumfit, 1985, p. 119) must logically be designed in a process- not product-oriented fashion.

An approach that focuses on providing situations in which learners can create genuine responses to literary texts would also support the development of students' literary competence, which is defined by Elliot (1990) as "the ability to confer meaning from within" (p. 192). If Elliot is right, then neither the outdated transmission-model

approach nor a linguistic analysis of the literary text would help students to develop this competence. Both these methods are based on the assumption that meaning is predominantly established through other sources: either a 'handed-down' interpretation or a fixed meaning that is based on the arrangement of linguistic structures. Having an understanding of literature that works with the premise that language is "alive", I also believe that meaning in literature is flexible and dynamic, rather than solidly entrenched in either the work *or* the reader *or* the author.

Instead of "finding" or "locating" meaning, I opt for the term "discovery" of meaning, because it describes more precisely how I view the approach and negotiation of a text. Through negotiating and re-negotiating the literary work, its meaning unfolds in layers, emerges on different levels, and with different participants: between the reader and the text, the reader and the writer (author), and the reader and other readers. The value and benefit that various reader-response theories offer for the teaching of FL literature, in particular the possibility for students' cognitive and personal growth while they discover a text's meaning – these issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

LITERARY THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE L2 READING AND COMPREHENSION PROCESS

Focus on the Text, or Emphasis on the Reader: In Search of Creating the Dialogue

Shifting positions

The view of what the literary text is, and how the text's author and the text's recipient are defined has changed significantly during the 20th century. In his work "Literary Theory: An Introduction" Terry Eagelton (1983) maintains that modern critical theory has gone through three different stages, which define the particular relationship between author, text and reader. These stages shifted from "a preoccupation with the author (Romanticism and the 19th century)" to "an exclusive concern with the text (New Criticism)" to "a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years" (p. 74). Eagelton further outlines the examination of the reader's role in literature as the fundamental principle of reception theory, for "literary texts do not exist on bookshelves: they are processes of signification materialized only in the practice of reading...[f]or literature to happen, the reader is quite as vital as the author" (p. 74).

After an emphasis on the writer of literary texts (Old Criticism), New Criticism highlighted the autonomy of the text, also calling for "critiquing and judging" it (Blake & Blake, 2002, p. 215), and in direct opposition to the philosophy endorsed by the New Critics, reader response models were established.

As Tompkins (1980) observes in her anthology "Reader-Response Criticism", (which includes a review of books and articles by various response theorists, among them Fish, Holland, Bleich, and Iser), this theory is not a "unified critical position" (p. ix). Rather, it can be seen a concept that is affiliated with the works of literary critics who

make use of the words *reader*, *the reading process*, and *response* to establish their theories. Tompkins (1980) states that the common concern all of these works have is the *act of reading*. Iser's 1978 title of the same name describes this reading act as a process in which the reader responds to the black signs on a page by filling the "blanks" or "gaps" (p. 169) or "places of indeterminacy" (p. 173) that are in the text.

Interaction in the reading process

Reading, as outlined in chapter two, is a process that needs the interaction between the reader and the text. Based on this notion (i.e., the text itself does not have a real existence until it is read), meaning of a text is *in possé*, and is only made transparent by the reader, who completes the potential meaning through the actual reading process. The reader can therefore not play a passive role. On the contrary, he or she acts as an active agent in the creation of meaning. While different theories of reader response most commonly share the concern of "how readers make meaning from their experience with the text (Beach, 1993, p. 1), they do vary in their focus and interpretation of the act of reading. One of the distinctive elements between theorists is, as Beach (1993) describes, how they define "the relative influence of the reader, the text, and the reading situation on how the reading transaction is shaped" (p. 2).

Given the wide range of reader-response theories that evolved over time and were based on different theoretical foundations, the underlying tenet of the concept was that "a text's meaning and significance was intimately bound up with the activity of the reader" (Selden, 1989, p. 121). In agreement with this, Wolfreys, Robbins and Womack (2001) note that current definitions of reader response theories basically assume, that the

"responses of readers over a given period of time determine the various ways in which they find meaning and value through literary texts" (p. 135).

Most reader-response proponents agree that literary works do not function as independent, self-contained objects, but only gain validity once the reader makes use of them. These critics view the reading process as the product of phenomenology, which means that objects emerge from the text based on how readers perceive them.

To summarize, in reader-response models that focus predominantly on the reader and how the reader "sees" and understands a text, meaning originates through the interaction between reader and text in the process of reading. That this concept mandates a shift in the way literature is being understood and taught ought to be obvious. But that a reader-based approach can also have quite the influence and effect on the teaching of foreign languages literatures may be less apparent for some.

The rather extensive body of research¹⁷ that has been published on the "new view of literature and language"¹⁸ clearly outlines the pedagogical implications and potential benefits this concept has for the Foreign Language and Literature curriculum. Advocating a pedagogy that acknowledges the importance of the reader's response as it emerges through a dialogue between the reader and the text, I concur in particular with Delanoy's (1996) position, who maintains that teaching FL literature in a reader-response manner supports students in "developing complex identities" (p. 72). The teacher's task in this process is to facilitate and monitor the students' learning by unlocking "the text's, the individual's and the group's potential", as Legutke (1996, p. 102) asserts.

¹⁷ See also references in Chapter 1.

¹⁸ For examples see Byrnes, 1998, 1999; Davis, 1989, 1992; Delanoy, 1996; Lazar, 1996; Legutke, 1996; Schultz, 2002; Shanahan, 1997; Simpson, 1997.

The following section aims to illustrate how reader-response methodology has influenced and shaped the view and teaching of literature, and how the theoretical background can support my formerly stated position. A brief historical review describing the development of reader-response theory will also include suggestions for incorporating reader-based approaches in the FL Literature classroom.

The Development of Reader Response Criticism: An Overview

Of texts, readers and the interaction between them

Based on the different relationships that exist between texts and readers, and the ultimate question where (or with whom) the meaning of a literary text resides, Dias and Hayhoe (1988) distinguish between three main types of reader-response theory.

According to their view, the first group is concerned predominantly with the *text* (Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Michael Riffaterre), the second one emphasizes the role of the *reader* (Norman Holland, David Bleich, Stanley Fish), while the third group highlights the *interaction between the reader and the text* (Wolfgang Iser, Louise Rosenblatt). It must be said, however, that the lines between these three strands are somewhat blurred, since the theorists' thinking at times overlap or even extend into each other.

In the following section I will briefly examine a few members of these groups to emphasize some opposing and corresponding viewpoints of their respective hypotheses. Yet, before I do so I wish to declare my own theoretical position. To me, Iser and Rosenblatt describe best what happens, when the reader interacts with a text, for when readers engage with a *text*, a *dialogue* unfolds between the two of them. I believe that during this interactive process of reading both reader and text share authority in making

meaning. The hypothesis, that the reader's individual background knowledge (in terms of prior background information and personal convictions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences) is one of the essential components in this interactive process, will be further developed in the chapter devoted to the case studies.

Roland Barthes: The reader as a 'writer'

The distinction between the "readerly" and the "writerly" text that French structuralist and semiologist Roland Barthes made, refers to the assumption that the latter one invites the reader to be productive and to respond to the essentially 'open' (versus closed) text. This concept may serve as a starting point for the argument that a shift in understanding the literary text and the reader has also led to the creation of new roles for both in the foreign language and literature curriculum.

Barthes' theory is best described in two major publications that were also most influential for other reader response theorists. His definition on the constitution of the two text types ('readable' vs. 'writable') can be found in the "S/Z" (published 1970; used here in the translation by Richard Miller, 1974), while his rather radical position towards the role of the author is pronounced in "Death of the Author" (used here in the translation by Stephen Heath, 1977). By dismissing the author as "the origin of the text, the source of its meaning, and the only authority for interpretation" (Selden, 1985, p. 75), Barthes rejects traditional views of literary texts, thus 'freeing' the reader from the (explicitly stated) author's intention.

A simple abandonment of the author, however, would do injustice to the socio-historical, cultural and biographical connections that tie the author to his or her literary

work. It must therefore be added, that while Barthes' reader does not depend on the author's intention to create meaning of the text, he or she is still challenged to see the literary work as an "open and dynamic entity of plural meanings and multiple interpretative possibilities" (Schultz, 2001, p. 6).

Barthes outlines a view of literary texts that includes two different text types, called "readerly" (or "readable") and "writerly" (or "writable") texts. The first one is made to be read or consumed, while the second one is made to be written or produced (cf. Selden, 1985, p. 76; Eagleton, 1983, p. 137). The 'readable' text is basically closed to a plurality of meanings, because it leaves the reader to only passively 'consume' the text. The 'writable' text, on the other hand, encourages the reader to "transpose them [the texts, my comment] into different discourses, produce his or her [the reader's, my comment] semi-arbitrary play of meaning athwart the work itself" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 137). By inviting the reader to step out of his or her "consumer" role, and take on an active part as a "producer" in the reading process, Barthes views the reader as a writer – a position that is based on an entirely different concept of literature itself.

For Barthes, literature is "a message of the signification of things and not their meanings" (Selden, 1985, p. 74). His emphasis on the process of signification refers here to the process of making meaning, not meaning itself. Rejecting the notion of a fixed, intrinsic interpretation that is to be found somewhere within the text, he believes, that every reader has the ability to bring his or her own complex experiences to the text. Thus, the reader's " ... 'I' [or the "Self", my comment] which approaches the text is already a plurality of other texts, of codes, which are infinite" (Barthes, 1974, p. 10, as cited by Freund 1987, p. 80; cf. Schultz, 2001, p. 7).

The reader him- or herself is consequently seen by Barthes as an individual who already brings a multitude of ideas and thoughts, beliefs and attitudes, prior experiences and knowledge to the text. In short, it is this complexity of existent background knowledge that naturally differs from reader to reader, which allows for multiple interpretations of the text, thus re-writing it with every new reading.

Barthes' theory influenced many 20th century reader-response critics, for example Wolfgang Iser ("The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response", 1978), Louise Rosenblatt ("The Reader, the Text, the Poem", 1978), Stanley Fish ("Is there a Text in this Class", 1980a), and Hans Robert Jauss ("Towards an Aesthetic of Reception", [1974]/1982).

Applying Barthes' theory to the FL literature classroom means first and foremost to shift the reader's position from being a 'consumer' to becoming a 'producer' in the reading process. An approach to literature from the "writerly" stance (Schultz, 2002, p. 27), as stated earlier, will then have to evoke an act of writing by the reader, in addition to the act of reading itself. One way of letting this concept become a practical reality in the FL literature course is by asking students to *mark* what is of interest to them when they read. That could be a text passage, a sentence, a thought, a word - even a scribbled note on the edge of the page or a drawing. In short, some sort of (initial) response that creates a link between the reader's prior experiences and the text. By simply giving their individual responses to the text, readers demonstrate that they have engaged in a "dialogic relationship that is established among the author/text/reader/context" (Sumara, 1998, p. 206). And as the text is read and read again (to explore the development of different characters or viewpoints, for example), new or different text passages may

become important for the reader, possibly causing him/her to modify, adjust, or reverse the original marks.

Stanley Fish: From affective stylistics to interpretive communities

The reader-oriented perspective that American critic Stanley Fish (1980b) developed in his essay "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" focuses on "reading (and comprehension in general) as an event" (p. 48). Fish's main concern here is what the text *does* as opposed to what it means. He thus directs his attention to the "developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time" (Fish, 1980b, p. 27).

Meaning, as Fish concludes, is therefore not something to be extracted from a literary text. Rather, it is located "*in* the utterance" (p. 28), which in turn is to be experienced during the course of reading, or "[i]t is the experience of an utterance - *all* of it and not anything that could be said about it, including anything I could say - that *is* its meaning" (p. 32). Fish acknowledged that his arguments in "Literature in the Reader" were made on behalf of the reader (in particular the actions that are performed *by* the reader as he or she negotiates the text), and against the integrity of the text. It must be noted, though, that these claims were primarily based on his own experiences of reading, thus establishing his own personal norms and expectations.

While Fish's earlier writings lack the methodological substance required for an application in the foreign language literature classroom, his later formulated ideas about "interpretive communities" could have some merit for the L2 reading process.

In his book "Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities", Fish (1980a) stresses, that meaning can not be found within texts but only within readers, and that meaning is to some degree established within the norms of "interpretative communities". The notion of "interpretive communities" (of which Fish's reader is a member is defined as a group of readers that "produce meanings and are responsible for the emergence of formal features" (Fish, 1980a, p. 14). Authority, Fish says, is therefore no longer given to either the (individual) reader or the text, but to the "interpretive community", which he describes as follows:

[The interpretive community is] not objective because as a bundle of interests, of particular purposes and goals, its perspective is interested rather than neutral; but by the very same reasoning, the meanings and text produced by an interpretive community are not subjective because they do not proceed from an isolated individual but from a public and conventional point of view. (p. 14)

Fish places the question whether meaning resides within the text or within the reader in a different framework by proclaiming that "meaning *develops*...in a dynamic relationship with the reader's expectations, projections, conclusions, judgements, and assumptions", (Fish, 1980a, p. 2). Whatever the reader brings to the text and whatever he or she does to the text in order to extract meaning from it is therefore a vital activity in the reading process. In that sense, Fish concludes "the reader's response is not *to* the meaning; it *is* the meaning", (p. 3).

Although readers belonging to one interpretive community may share similar traditions, values and cultural norms, Fish believes they still read literary texts from the perspective of their individual backgrounds and personalities. It follows then, that readers will comprehend and perceive (and therefore interpret?) texts differently. Consequently, if no text is read in the same way, it is not possible to arrive at one

ultimate objective meaning or decide on one "correct" interpretation. Yet, despite the numerous different and even controvertible meanings of a text, Fish asserts that readers agree on different interpretations because they belong to specific interpretive communities.

Selden's (1985) interpretation of Fish's (1980a) 'interpretive community' concept is, that "[he, Fish] was trying to persuade readers to adopt 'a set of community assumptions, so that when they read they would do what I [here: Fish] did'" (Selden, 1985, p. 118). Similarly, Freund (1987) also questions the "interpretive strategies" Fish's readers have in common, which govern their individual responses. Freund's argument is that these "interpretive communities" are not a group of individuals but rather "a bundle of strategies of norms of interpretation that we hold in common and which regulate the way we think and perceive", (Freund, 1987, p. 107).

The question then remains, do the members who belong to these interpretive communities offer unique, or "normed" interpretations because they are no longer regarded as individuals? If the latter is the case, do they not merely adhere to yet another authority? Except for, this time it would not be the authority of the text or the authority of the academic institution (i.e., the literature professor), but the demands of the community's norms of interpretation. Defending his position, Fish (1980a) argues that members of the same community would be in agreement [in terms of meaning making, my comment], because they would share goals and purposes that are similar to those of their community. On the flip side, members of different communities would disagree, because they would approach the text from their respective viewpoints - something the other interpretive community could or would not "see".

By acknowledging that, what is real and normative for members of one interpretive community can easily be seen as abnormal or even inexplicable by members of another interpretive community, Fish also concedes that there is no "correct", but rather numerous ways of reading a literary text, which are developed within (each) interpretive community.

In the public domain, students' personal experiences must first find a comfortable space within the larger (here, the classroom) community. In other words, the behaviors that students display prior to their (oral or written) reactions to a text are already clues to their later emerging responses. To "read" these clues students need to be given adequate time that allows them to experience their *own* feelings towards the reading. After carefully observing the non-verbal signs readers are displaying, they then need to be encouraged to *voice* their initial reactions. It is likely, that students will only do so, if they feel confident enough that their response is valued just as much as that of others in the class - not in a "right-or-wrong" fashion, but as a true and valid way of reading the text.

By sharing their viewpoints, students not only gain a greater awareness of their own thought processes as they establish meaning, but the individual meanings themselves are shifted and altered during that process as well.

Hans Robert Jauss: Horizons of expectation

The theories known as "reception theory" or "reception aesthetics" which are rooted in the philosophical hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg

Gadamer¹⁹ are closely linked with the works of German literary critics Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. Both Iser and Jauss maintain that the reader draws upon his or her individual experiences during the reading process, and that these experiences effect how the reader constructs meaning of the literary work. While Jauss' theory will not be explored in detail here, because its implications for the current study were limited due to the design of the investigation, I wish to point the importance that his concept holds for the aesthetic reception of a literary work.

Jauss' (1982) main argument is, as expressed in his work "Toward an Aesthetic of Reception" that the interaction between reader and text includes an important historical dimension, because of the "horizons of expectations" that the former brings to the text. Jauss uses this term to describe the criteria that readers apply when reading and judging literary texts in any given historical period. He further explains that any disagreements readers may have over the meaning and interpretation of a particular text lie within their different approaches to that text over a historical period of time. In other words, 17th century readers brought a different set of assumptions, conventions and beliefs ("horizons of expectations") to a poem from the Baroque period than would, for example contemporary readers of the 21st century. While the original horizon of expectations – as rendered by readers at the time when the literary work first appeared – provides

¹⁹ It was Martin Heidegger (1962) who proposed in his work "Being and Time" that meaning is historical. He argued that the distinctive quality about being human is the human existence itself, or, what Heidegger calls, its "Dasein". Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) elaborates on Heidegger's theory, arguing in his book "Truth and Method", that the literary work does not simply come with a meaning that is already "pre-packaged" into the text. Instead, Gadamer maintains that meaning depends on the historical and cultural situatedness of the interpreter. He believes that the reader's understanding and interpretation of texts (in particular historical ones) arises from a dialogue between the past and the present. Gadamer's description of what happens when understanding actually takes place in the mind of the reader has greatly influenced both Iser's and Jauss' theories (cf. Eagleton 1983, Selden 1985, Thomas, 2000).

information about the works value and meaning at that time, they do not, however, conclusively or finally establish the significance of the work.

By turning attention away from the literary work that was considered a historical entity, Jauss (1982) removed literary canon texts from their pedestal where they were regarded as "monumental" objects that had a once-and-for-all fixed meaning. Opposing this view, Jauss does not see the literary work as an 'object', which stands by itself and offers the same, eternal truth to each reader in each period. Instead, he *situates* the literary work in its historical contexts, thereby exploring how it was received and interpreted by different historical readers over time, including the norms and expectations that readers brought to the text.

Based on this historically contextualized view of literature, it is then not the literary text itself that remains constant and unchanged while only its interpretations may vary. Rather, "texts and literary traditions are themselves actively altered according to the various historical 'horizons' within which they are received" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 83). In view of that, Jauss (1982) posed a new question for the field of literary-historical research - by seeking a "new understanding of the history of literature as a communicative process" (p. 118) between literary history, the history of literary works and their authors, *and* the reader's reception and interpretation of those works.

The potential benefits that Jauss' reception aesthetics (or better, certain aspects of it) holds for the second language classroom shall be briefly illustrated here. While reading Goethe's (1774) "Die Leiden des jungen Werther" in an introductory German Literature course, emphasis can be placed on the effects that a change of the 'horizon of expectations' would have on students' reception of the novel. Werther's failing attempt of trying to integrate himself into the hierarchical bourgeois society of his time were already by 18th-century readers greeted with either fanatic enthusiasm and utter contempt. Idolized by his admirers for his search to form his own identity as an intellectual and an artist, "Werther's" opponents dismissed the work because of its presumed glorification of suicide.

Exploring Goethe's novel in today's literature classroom still provides readers with new insights into a young person's search for individuality, the meaning of one's own individualism, and the many sensual aspects that are parts of a human's existence. It is imperative however, for students to understand the historical and sociological references the work offers, if they are to grasp the work within that context. To understand historically determined reactions that readers of past times (and cultures) had toward "Werther" would allow contemporary readers to see the interplay that continues to exist between the text and the readers, in which the former is transformed by the latter (Thompson, 1980).

Responding to "Werther" in an aesthetic manner would furthermore imply that students possess the ability to identify with the novel's characters by expressing an array of emotions toward them - ranging from admiration, to sympathy to disdain. The youthful and sensitive person, Werther, seen in stark contrast to the rational, business-like and

responsible character of his opponent, Albert, can easily be rejected by today's college age reader, who is historically removed from the text and also comes with a completely different set of expectations and assumptions to it. The text will thus become 'unreadable' for the present day reader, because he or she cannot or does not share the socio-historical conventions and beliefs of an 18th century audience.

An application of Jauss' (1982) theory to the FL literature course would in that sense require that students temporarily "shut out their primary worlds" as Delanoy (1996, p. 65) phrases it, while at the same time becoming more and more absorbed in the literary work. This is, when readers truly engage in an aesthetic way of reading, because they "detach themselves from the demands and pressure of the world around them and commit themselves to the virtual world that the text offers" (Benton, 1992, p. 15). Once students permit themselves to let their primary here-and-now world be influenced by the secondary worlds they explore during the reading process, they would put into reality what Jauss (1975) defines as the social function of aesthetic discourse.

Wolfgang Iser: The 'actual' and the 'implied' reader

Considered the leading reception theorist, Iser's (1978) view of reading the literary work involves "the interaction between the structure [text, my comment] and the reader" (p. 20). In his major work "The Act of Reading", Iser (1978) explains in great detail which mental operations the reader performs when reading a literary text, and that it is the text's *significance* (rather than its *meaning*) that has a potential effect on the reader. Already in his preface to "Act" he clearly makes his point, that the literary work in and of itself will not produce much of any response from the reader, unless the act of

reading is considered very carefully. Says Iser, "As a literary text can only produce a response when it is read, it is virtually impossible to describe this response without analyzing the reading process" (Act, p. ix).

Further describing what a "response" to a text actually *is*, Iser differentiates between two components, *effect* and *response*, that are in his opinion already included in the German word *Wirkung*. According to Iser, neither one of the English terms defines precisely what is really conveyed by *Wirkung*, since effect is "at times too weak" and response "a little confusing" (Act, p. ix). He decides, however, to keep using the word "response" throughout his book.

Similarly influenced by Gadamer²⁰ as Jauss was, Iser challenges "the traditional form of interpretation, based on the search for a single meaning", which "set out to instruct the reader" (Act, p. 22). He is less concerned with the validity of interpretations or safe-guarding the literary work against possible misinterpretations - instead, he suggests that it should be "the interpreter's task...to elucidate the potential meanings of a text, and not to restrict himself to just one" (Act, p. 22).

To be clear: Iser did not claim to describe every single act of reading. In fact, his focus was mainly on describing the reading process that placed emphasis on the *effects* that a text has upon a reader, and the *experience* that a reader has during that act of reading. It is important to distinguish between these two sides, as Thomas (2000) notes, because this helps to explain some of the distraction and misapprehension that Iser's work apparently has provoked among American literary theorists (cf. Eagleton, 1983; Fish, 1981; Holub, 1984; Mailloux, 1981, 1982.)

²⁰ See footnote 19.

For Iser it is primarily the aesthetic experience that can cause the reader to encounter something "new", precisely at the moment when something "happens to the reader" during the reading. He thereby places the act of the reading in the center of the literary process. Based on his concern with the history of responses (in terms of the potential effects that the literary text has), Iser identifies two types of readers, calling them the "real" and the "hypothetical" reader. While the 'real' (or actual) reader "is known... by his documented reactions", the 'hypothetical' (or implied) reader is the one who is *created by the text*, and "upon whom all possible actualizations of the text may be projected" (Act, p. 27).

Given these definitions, the 'implied reader' is not to be mistaken for any 'real' reader, because she is a *concept* that is deeply rooted in the structure of the text. And it is then this same concept of the implied reader, that allocates a "network of response-inviting structures, which impel the ['actual' or 'real', my comment] reader to grasp the text" (Act, p. 34). Stressing the essential function that his concept of the implied reader has, Iser seems more concerned with the influence of socially determined aspects that occur during the reading process, than with the reader's historical position (as Jauss was) while she is reading. According to Iser, meaning is neither a given external reality, nor does it exist as an imitation of the intended reader's actual world. Instead, it has to be *created* by the mind of the reader. Seen as a transcendental model, the concept of the implied reader thus provides "a link between all the historical and individual actualizations of the text" (Act, p. 38).

As stated earlier, Iser believes that "a literary text can only produce a response when it is read" (Act, p. ix), which clearly places emphasis on literature as an experience rather than an object.

Defending his position of assigning an approximately equal role for the reader *and* the text – a view that earned him in particular Fish's (1981) critique for not taking clear sides, but has later also been discussed by Wright (1995) and Hamilton (2002) – Iser argues that "central to the reading of every literary work is the *interaction* between its structure [the text, my comment] and its recipient [the reader, my comment]" (Act, p. 20). The study of literature for Iser should therefore not merely be concerned with the actual written text, but in particular the reader's actions that are involved in responding to that text, for "it is virtually impossible to describe this response without also analyzing the reading process", he says (Act, p. ix).

The aesthetic aspect of Iser's reader-response theory, as it is also stated in his book's subtitle, "A Theory of Aesthetic Response", refers namely to this "dialectic relationship between text, reader, and their interaction" (Act, p. x). Further clarifying this term, Iser writes:

It is called aesthetic response because, although it is brought about by the text, it brings into play the imaginative and perceptive faculties of the reader, in order to make him adjust and even differentiate his own focus. (Act, p. x)

Thus, he highlights the reader's role as an active participant in the reading process, and concludes that his reader is one who co-creates the literary work by completing the "blanks" or "gaps" (*Leerstellen*) within the written text.

One reason that Iser's theory has been criticized (primarily from American literary theorists) might stem from his opponents' inability to pin him down on either side of the

spectrum. Arguing that Iser does not take a clear stand on whether he assigns priority to the reader or the text, his critics claim that he was on both sides at once.

But why was Iser's work received so differently by U.S. scholars in comparison to the unwaivering popularity it still enjoys in Germany? Thomas' (2002) argumentative essay on Iser's early reception in the United States suggests that – in the Anglo-American context – Iser's theory may not only be linked to a critique of his *Wirkungsästhetik*, but more likely entailed different kinds of "political criticism" (p. 14).

Thomas cites other scholars' perception of Iser's work, which range from being not "fun to read" (Wright, 1995, p. 540, which Fish apparently is to Wright), to lacking persuasive power (Mailloux, 1981, p. 72). Iser has also been portrayed as a hopeless conservative whose theory offers "something for everyone, and denies legitimacy to no one" (Fish, 1981, p. 6), and has been critiqued for his plural liberalism (Eagleton, 1983, p. 79). Thomas (2000) believes however, that Iser's method has been largely misinterpreted when he was characterized as a "cultural conservative" (p. 39).

Especially those, who are interested in the function of literature and its ability should be encouraged to employ Iser's method, Thomas (1991) asserts in an earlier essay, because literature, seen the Iserian way, is a "rhetorical means to question the adequacy of present constructions of rhetoric" (p. 214). The function of literature, according to Iser (2000) "is by no means entirely covered by its interaction with its readers and with its referential realities...if a literary text does something to its readers, it simultaneously tells us something about them" (p. 313).

If the potential that Iser subscribes to literature is the reader's experience of something "new", or to "fashion new identities" as Thomas (2000, p. 28) says, then it

follows that readers (who are all different) need to address their own beliefs and values (which are also all different) before they can construct their *new* world(s).

Defining literature in an anthropological sense²¹, a concept Iser (1989) started to pursue in his later work, he continued objective is to explore the reasons for the existence of literature. His assessment of why literature is important in peoples' lives reads as follows: Human beings need to have fictions, because this allows them to imagine new ideas, beliefs and opinions. Moreover, it enables them to "extend themselves [so they can] satisfy their inveterate urge to be simultaneously *with* themselves and *outside* themselves (Iser, 2000, p. 314, italics mine).

A familiar observation in the FL literature classroom is to have the reader's (initial) reaction to a text expressed in this form: "And what is this supposed to mean?" – a question that is obviously geared toward the student's attempt to make sense of the text, or find the 'hidden' meaning of what has been written or said. But as Iser has claimed, meaning is neither elicited by forcing it from the text in a 'digging-for-meaning' approach, nor is it made explicit by the text itself and can therefore be exposed through skillful interpretation²².

One might conclude from this that it is ultimately the meaning (of the text) that Iser's reader is after and that this is the most important objective for him/her when reading. But instead, Iser determines that it is the "reader's desire to comprehend the

²¹ For further reading on Iser's (1989) notion of literary anthropology and the importance that literature has in the production of fictions see the author's essay "Towards a literary anthropology".

²² Here, Iser (1978) cites Henry James' (1896) short story "The Figure in the Carpet", in reference to the kind of interpretation that is mainly concerned with the meaning of a literary work. Referring to James in the context of a 19th century concept of literature, Iser reveals the norms that were characteristic for understanding and interpreting literature during that time. Namely from the viewpoint of the critic, who was "searching for truth" (James, p. 281) that existed independently of the text, meaning was a 'thing' to be extracted from the text, not produced by the text. (Iser, 1978, pp. 3-5)

significance of the meaning" (Act, p. 150). Meaning and significance can therefore not refer to the same thing – although the reader may grasp the texts' meaning, s/he may not have understood its significance. Applying this particular aspect of Iser's theory to the FL literature classroom confirms the important role that the reader's individual background knowledge plays for the reading process, because students need a framework of references if they are to comprehend a text and moreover, the significance of its meaning. Based on Iser's suggestion, readers would then comprehend a text in two stages: the "stage of meaning"-making, and "the stage of 'significance', which represents the active take-over of the meaning by the reader – i.e., the meaning taking effect in existence" (Act, p. 151).

While aesthetic response theory favors the role of the reader in the reading process it must be observed that the reader's subjective views and perspectives can bring forth a certain bias or one-sidedness to the comprehension of the text which puts the literary work in danger of being deprived of its own identity. This is precisely why the reading process *itself* needs to be examined carefully, if any information regarding the reader's response to a literary text is to be given. Recalling Iser, "effects and responses are properties neither of the text nor of the reader; the text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process" (Act, p. ix), the reader must therefore engage in a reading process, that "bring[s] to light the elementary options which the text activates within the reader. The fact that the latter must carry out the instructions shows implicitly that the meaning of the text is something that he [the reader, my comment] has to assemble" (Act, p. ix).

In order to fill the *gaps* or *blanks* that have been referred to earlier, which are embedded within the text, the reader needs to access experiences from his or her own background knowledge. By doing so, she adjusts the "fundamental asymmetry" that exists between her and the text, and attains the balance between textual structure and recipient. Iser cautions though, that the reader's own projections should not "superimpose themselves unimpeded upon the text" (Act, p. 167), because this would oppose the dyadic interaction between text and reader, which subsequently would lead to failure in filling the blanks and thus, the creation of meaning. Due to the text's nature – the text itself cannot change, but only *provoke* the reader to adjust or re-adjust his or her projections – the reader is consequently put in a situation where she needs to question or correct personal viewpoints. This in return allows her to experience something she has not or could not have encountered before: a so-called "new" experience of the literary text, which does not exist in the pragmatic world, but in the mind and imagination of the reader.

Although earlier described as an active participant in the reading process, Iser's reader is still only an "implied reader", not an actual one. The concept of the implied reader²³ designates the role of the reader in terms of textual structures and structured acts, which means, that the text itself presents a particular viewpoint, which guides the reader in finding his or her very own standpoint. Focusing primarily on narratives, Iser cites four main perspectives of the text that serve as guidelines originating from different

²³ Outlining his definition of "the implied reader", Iser (1974) asserts that the active participation of this reader is central for the realization of literary meaning. As Iser explains, this terms "incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process" (p. xvii). In his survey of novels from the 17th through 20th century, Iser attempts to show how readers *discover* the meaning and respond to these texts. At the same time, Iser claims, readers will find that the reality of their own world differs (at least partially) from that of fiction, thus highlighting the "historically changing contents of this discovery" (Iser, 1974, p. xiii).

viewpoints: a) the narrator, b) the characters, c) the plot, and d) the fictitious reader (Act, p. 35). Since these textual perspectives are prone to shift based on how the action changes throughout the story it is the reader's role to "occupy shifting vantage points that are geared to a pre-structured activity and to fit the diverse perspectives into a gradually evolving pattern" (Act, p. 35).

In other words, the reader's role in the reading process is threefold: first, he needs to recognize the different perspectives as they are represented in the text; secondly, take on a position from which these perspectives can be joined, and finally, combine the new experiences with previous information to assign meaning to the text. This is also what Iser calls the "wandering viewpoint" (Act, p. 108), a perspective that allows the reader move in stages through the literary work. Iser argues, that the literary text (unlike other objects, such as a painting), cannot be perceived by the reader at any one time or as a whole, but rather in segments or parts, which begin to appear through the different phases of reading. The subject [reader, my comment]–object [text, my comment] relationship is therefore defined by a "moving viewpoint which travels along *inside*" (Act, p. 109) the text. As the reader proceeds through the various perspectives offered by the text, relates them to one another and associates them with her own perspectives and viewpoints, she sets the work and herself in motion.

In sum, Iser's theory describes that the meaning of a text can only be constituted when something "happens to the reader" (Act, p. 152), because "[t]he significance of the work...does not lie in the meaning sealed within the text, but [in, added] the fact that meaning brings out what had previously been sealed within us" (Act, p. 157). The reader's understanding of the text is therefore governed by the interacting operations

between reader and text during the reading process. Yet, participating in the text and feeling "that we are living another life" (Act, p. 127) while reading is only possible, if next to the focus on the reader-text-interface the relationship between text and context text is being considered. Drawing upon personal perspectives and past experiences during the reading process, the reader is asked to modify and adjust these individual viewpoints, thus filling the 'gaps' within the text. These structured blanks in the text are therefore the essence around which the reader-text-relationship revolves.

Of course, the situation in the L2 classroom is quite different, because foreign language readers do not necessarily share common background knowledge features. In addition, they are still "readers-in training" (Barnes-Karol, 2003, p. 23) who face numerous linguistic, cultural and conceptual challenges when engaging in the reading of foreign literature. So, what about the foreign language readers who encounter literary works not in their native, but in their second or third (foreign) language? Which personal experiences will the individual reader now recall? What background knowledge and stored information will s/he be able to access when reading a foreign language text and trying to "find" its meaning?

I believe that Iser's response theory provides the framework needed for the teaching of foreign language literature, because it draws on the important role that background knowledge plays in the reading and comprehension process. Furthermore, by having a strong focus on the active role of the reader who fills in the *gaps* (or *elements of indeterminacy*) in the text, Iser's model makes it possible for L2 readers to actively use their imagination, thus allowing for alternative readings and multiple ways of interpretations. While the argument can be made, that Iser's model was intended for

native speakers, who (for the most part) possess the required background knowledge that helps them to bridge the gaps in the text, I suggest that the specific socio-cultural consciousness that FL students bring to the reading process, informs and guides them when they respond to literary texts.

I am not proposing that a stronger emphasis on the role that personal cultural background knowledge plays in the L2 comprehension process can be used as the sole substitute for the basic linguistic competence, literary, and historical knowledge that is needed to understand a text. Instead, I am concerned with fulfilling the reader's role in a different way, according to his or her individual socio-cultural circumstances. Since the mental images that the reader develops during the process of reading are irrevocably connected to his or her "existing stock of experience" (Act, p. 38), I see the reader's socio-cultural actualizations of the text as having great potential for FL readers in their quest for meaning.

Another, even stronger motivation to apply Iser's model was inspired by the role that literature can play in arriving at *new* actualizations of a text that were formerly not known or not accessible²⁴. Literature never provides the reader with a *true* representation of reality but rather existing *constructions* thereof, or as Iser says "models or concepts of reality" (Act, p. 70). Presented with these constructions the reader can thus get in touch with reality without actually experiencing true reality. This is where I see the most significant contribution of Iser's reading model to the FL literature classroom: being confronted with concepts or constructed realities through the literary text, Iser's paradigm

²⁴ In his essay "The current situation of literary theory: Key concepts and the imaginary", Iser (1979) explores the concepts of structure, function and communication for literary theory, and in particular explains the concept of reality, as rendered *through* the literary work (in this case, the novel).

can motivate, even push readers to think of new ways how to construct meaning of the text.

By taking into account their own existence as socially and culturally changing human beings, readers of various backgrounds are therefore not resisting (actual) reality. Rather, they can now encounter formerly inaccessible realities through the imaginary. This is also the point, when the active take-over of the meaning by the reader can begin: the effect of the text upon the reader (the so-called actualization of the text) has been crystallized in the significance that the text now has for the reader. "*Meaning* is the referential totality which is implied by the aspects contained in the text and which must be assembled in the course of reading. *Significance* is the reader's absorption of the meaning into his own existence" (Act, p. 151, italics mine). It is impossible, argues Iser, to achieve an effective experience unless both components are together, because only then can the reader create him/herself "by constituting a reality hitherto unfamiliar to himself" (Act, p. 151).

Louise Rosenblatt: Transactional theory

Rosenblatt's (1938/1995) groundbreaking work "Literature as exploration" deals mainly with how students actually respond to literary texts. In her definition of reading literature, Rosenblatt describes the relationship between the reader and the text as a dynamic transaction, hence the term transactional theory. Noteworthy is that Rosenblatt's choice of word – exploration – already explains her understanding of the literary experience: "[the] word exploration is designed to suggest primarily that the experience of literature, far from being for the reader a process of passive absorption, is a form of

intense personal activity" (1995, p. x). Several scholars (Asselin, 2000; Blake, 1998; Britton, 1984; Courtland et al., 1998; Grisham, 2001; Harste, 1985; Smagorinsky, 2001; Sumara, 1998) have reiterated Rosenblatt's (1995) argument, that meaning emerges in the transaction between the reader and the text: "The reader, too [like the author] is creative ... the literary experience must be phrased as a transaction between the reader and the text" (p. 33).

In her probably second most influential work, entitled "The Reader, the Text and the Poem", Rosenblatt (1978) accentuates the three main ideas that her theory is based on:

1. that there is a transactional relationship between the reader and the text during the process of reading literature,
2. that the reader adopts a different stance when reading literature, which can be either "aesthetic" or "efferent", and
3. that the reader's first (even if rudimentary) responses to the literature reveal important information about how the reader interacts with the text in order to create meaning

Transaction is defined by Rosenblatt (1978) as "an ongoing process in which the elements and factors are...aspects of a total situation, each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (p. 17). The reader then, is not seen as a separate entity, who acts upon the text, nor is the text solely acting upon the reader, but both reader and text are part or aspects of the total reading "event" (p. 22).

The Reader's Stance: Aesthetic versus Efferent Reading

There are two ways of reading a text, Rosenblatt (1978) explains, that guide readers in their experience with and their interpretation of the reading. Rosenblatt refers to these types of reading as "aesthetic" and "efferent"(p. 24). While efferent responses to literature highlight the reader's transaction with the text to extract information, the reader is primarily concerned with what s/he can take away or learn from the reading (Latin: "efferre", to carry away). This type of reading is geared more toward finding information or concepts that are based on the literary elements of a text (for example plot, characters, theme, motif), and will thus lead to more critical or analytical responses (Grisham, 2000).

The aesthetic way of reading, in contrast, focuses on the reader's personal experiences during the actual reading event. Explains Rosenblatt (1978), "[i]n aesthetic reading the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (p. 25). Providing examples of different aesthetic responses, Grisham (2000) distinguishes between "personal" and "intertextual" (p. 212) connections that readers make with the text when responding to it. For example, in answering the question, "How did you like this book (or story)?" the readers' *personal* response could be one in which she compares a given situation in the story with something that happened in her own life. The reader's *intertextual* response might be to compare one story with another one, locating possible similarities or differences. While an efferent reading approach can produce a meaningful and deep understanding of the text (cf. Menke & Pressley, 1994), Grisham (2000) argues, that "aesthetic responses to literature should be viewed as equally important" (p. 212).

According to Rosenblatt (1982), aesthetic reading offers "a much broader range of elements [that] will be allowed to rise into consciousness, not simply the abstract concepts that words point to, but also what those objects or referents stir up of personal feelings, ideas, and attitudes" (p. 269). Dias (1994) echoes this perspective:

Each reading of a literary work is a unique event; it is not an entity existing apart from the reader and the particular occasion of its reading. That event is imbued with the circumstances of its reading, the reader's personal associations, and recalled events from other readings. (p. 184)

Aesthetic reading responses then transform the literary experience into a much more subjective activity by drawing upon the individual reader's emotions, opinions, beliefs and viewpoints. In other words, the reader's background knowledge – or what the reader brings to the text in form of personal experiences, knowledge, and expectations – allow for a more introspective interaction between reader and text.

The Place of Reader Response in the Foreign Language Literature Classroom

As outlined by the different theorists cited above, the process of making meaning is essentially an internal one. While readers' beliefs, attitudes, life styles, education, assumptions, and cultural heritage – in short their socio-cultural background – shape their own experiences and responses to literature, one reader's creation of meaning will still differ from that of another one. That is, of course, because no reader is like the other. This individuality of response within the larger community of readers is based on every person's own specific socio-cultural and socio-historic contexts. Naturally though, there may be similarities in response within a community of readers, because readers share some common linguistic or cultural proprieties.

The generic reader or a generic literary work, as Rosenblatt (1995) states simply does not exist, but rather the potential millions of individual readers and the potential millions of individual literary works, which exist in the "live circuit set up between the reader and the text" (p. 24). The role of the reader in this process is "an active, not a passive, one" (p. 48). As the reader approaches the text, he or she comes with a specific purpose in mind, and also has expectations and hypotheses about the text.

Rejecting the notion that reading has been viewed as an interactive process in which the reader extracts a specific meaning that is already embedded in the text, Rosenblatt (1995) further argues that reading is a "constructive, selective process over time in a particular context" (p. 26), thus pointing out the crucial role that the reader plays in the construction of meaning:

Meaning emerges as the reader carries on a give-and-take with the signs on the page. As the text unrolls before the reader's eyes, the meaning made of the early words influences what comes to mind, and is selected for the succeeding signs. But if these do not fit in with the meaning developed thus far, the reader may revise it to assimilate the new words or may start all over again with different expectations. [This] two-way reciprocal relation explains why meaning is not "in" the text or "in" the reader. Both reader and text are essential to the transactional process of making meaning. (pp. 26-27)

The individual reader's personality is shaped by a variety of prior and complex life experiences such as birth, love, death, age, sex, gender, social status, nationality or occupation. These factors constitute an increasingly important element in the construction of meaning. How the reader will respond to literature largely depends on the question whether any sensitivity toward literature has earlier been established by the reader.

Helping students to primarily recognize various literary forms or genres, styles and patterns of selected authors, or recurrent themes, motifs and symbols without the knowledge and understanding of the "human" element of the literary work would

therefore be an empty task. The reader's first, although still rudimentary response to a literary work will involuntarily produce his or her first meaning of the text. Once the reader will move towards a deeper involvement with the literary work, a greater sensitivity to the formal and social elements of the text can be developed, which in return would lead the reader to a more complex understanding of the human implications the text offers. To involve students in a personal understanding of the text and its complexities places an emphasis on literary discourse that can best be described as aesthetic in that it focuses on enabling students to personally experience the literary work (cf. Many, Wiseman & Altieri, 1996).

Having earlier discussed some of the perspectives and views held within reader-response theory, why should such a model be employed in the FL literature classroom? The complexities of reader-response theory as pointed out in contributions from several scholars and researchers in the field (Beach, 1993, 1997; Purves, Rogers & Soter, 1995; Rogers & Soter, 1997) encompass both positive and negative aspects, which need to be considered when implementing this method into the FL Literature Classroom. Focusing on four major results that were identified by Purves, Rogers, and Soter (1995) when teaching (English) literature with a response-based approach, these outcomes accentuate benefits and values that are also desirable for the FL literature course:

1. Students' trust and self-confidence in themselves increases, because they can feel assured that their individual response to the text is being valued, and they are not parroting someone else's, or "the correct" interpretation

2. Students develop a deeper understanding of themselves, because they recognize what caused them personally to respond in a certain way, and also know which parts in the text instigated them to respond in that manner.
3. Students learn to appreciate the similarities and differences they share with one another in a larger reading community, because they respect other readers' responses to literature as bearing just as much validity as their own.
4. Students develop an increased awareness and understanding for socio-cultural and socio-historic elements of the text, because they recognize similarities and differences with other people, places, and times, which in turn allows them to form connections between their own, the writers, and other readers' culture(s).

Reader-response as seen from this perspective allows for great flexibility in the FL literature class, although it certainly depends on the skills, knowledge and personal background experiences that students bring with them. But because learners are unique and different (based on the aforementioned terms), it is to be expected that a text would yield just as many different responses and interpretations as there are readers.

Yet, the sole responsibility to achieve reader-response transactions as described above does not only rest with the reader, as Boyd (2002) points out. Referring in particular to the teaching of multicultural literature and adolescent's responses to it, Boyd claims that it is also the teacher's "knowledge and expertise" (p. 60) that is needed to encourage and foster such replies. The teacher's choice regarding which literary texts to incorporate in the teaching of particular social or ethical concerns, can thus become – depending on the instructor's goal – an important source and vehicle for sensitizing readers to biases and inequities within a given society.

Reader Response Theory in L1 and L2: Previous Results

Applying reader-response criticism to the teaching of reading literature in the English-speaking as well as in the ESL classroom has long been common practice. Numerous research articles and studies, published in journals like *Research in the Teaching of English* or *The Reading Teacher* also cite the influence that reader response theory has on the instruction and discussion of literary text in elementary through post-secondary level English classes.

Whether applied in the elementary and secondary classroom (Asselin, 2000; Blake, 1998; Sumara, 1998; Werderich, 2002) or at university level courses (Beach, 1998; Courtland et al., 1998; Grisham 2001), the benefits of reader-based approaches for the teaching and reading of literature are many. It must be noted, though, that the following research findings are based primarily on the application of reader response theory in L1 courses with native speakers and readers of English.

In her summary of the advantages that reader-response theory holds for the K-12 literature classroom, Asselin (2000) points out helpful ideas and strategies that teacher-librarians can use to promote reader-response based experiences with literature in various school environments. Based on Rosenblatt's (1978) view of how readers make meaning (as explained in her transactional theory), Asselin (2000) notes that the application of reader-response theory to the instruction of reading and literature per sé has led to an "increased motivation to read, higher levels of response, and improved reading ability" (p. 62). Asselin further asserts that multiple and diverse responses within and between readers are based on individually and socially constructed replies to literature.

In Grisham's (2001) study the focus was placed on how students' (here a group of adult pre-service teachers) responses influenced their motivation for reading and engagement with the text. Highlighting strategies that facilitated the reader's active engagement with the text, Grisham (2001) employed various instances of transmediation, a technique that is defined as "using one medium, such as writing, to deepen understanding of, elaborate, or extend another medium, such as reading (p. 211). Using several response types (i.e., dialectical journal, role sheets, written response of choice, p. 213-214), which aided the development of their critical thinking skills, participating readers were thus able to interact on various levels with the literary texts.

Courtland's et al. (1998) action research study describes the investigation of teachers (one instructor and three graduate students) responding to children's and youth literature while implementing a strategy called "reading focal practice" (Sumara, 1995). The study's results were as follows: when readers engaged in an aesthetic reading of the literary text (Rosenblatt, 1982), while at the same time establishing "intertextual relationships" (Sumara, 1995), they accomplished a deeper understanding of themselves. These intertextual relationships are formed when the reader makes connections between the currently read text and past experiences from other, previously read texts.

According to Sumara (1995) it is precisely this complex, dynamic interchange between "our previous experience, our reading experience, new thoughts that emerge from these, and our projected experience" (p. 5) that forms a characteristic outcome of any relationship between reader and text:

The literary text...allows the reader to engage in a type of personal reflection within the experience of reading the text – a way for us to come to know ourselves. It appears, then, that the way in which we come to know ourselves is

not embedded in the work, but rather emerges from our own interaction with the work. (Sumara, 1995, p. 159)

Employing Sumara's strategy of "focal practice" within reader response helped making interpersonal and intertextual relationships visible that would usually go unnoticed or remain invisible. This in turn enabled the reader/researcher team "to experience our engagement with and response to a literary text in a way that led to a deeper understanding of the text, our personal relationships with the text, and the power of shared response in interpreting and re-interpreting the text in our own lived experience", (Courtland et al., 1998, p. 340), thus holding great potential for significant personal insight and growth.

Despite the many advantages that reader-response theory holds for the literature classroom, Rogers and Soter (1997) claimed that response-oriented approaches have so far insufficiently addressed the social complexity of increasingly diverse classrooms: that is, communities with students from varying backgrounds, and with different abilities and experiences.

The "critical" reader response model offered by Blake (1998) seeks to fill this void by specifically focusing on "letting the student speak". Extending Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional approach "to make the diverse reader visible", Blake (1998) presented samples from texts that urban, diverse middle school students had created and responded to, partially even in critical ways. The author herself defines the *critical* model as one that "helps the teacher encourage diverse readers to generate their own text, so that they can engage with text more interesting than the traditional canon and thus become more willing and able to respond" (p. 238). Outlining the major outcomes of this investigation, Blake (1998) concludes that,

1. an extended reader response theory with a focus on a critical reader response to the text presents readers from diverse backgrounds with opportunities to create their own cultural texts,
2. through the study of meaningful literature, readers have the opportunity to critique and transform culture through their own (re-written) texts,
3. by applying this critical reader-response model teachers can assist their diverse student population to make connections between the reading and their own cultural identities (p. 243).

These examples present only a small fraction of the many studies that have focused on the application of reader response theory to the L1 reading and comprehension process (here: native English speakers or readers).

In comparison, a rather small body of research has reported the use of reader-response type approaches to literature in the L2 setting, since only few foreign or second language educators seem to have embraced reader-response theory in their courses (cf. Ali, 1994; Davis, 1989, 1992; Elliot, 1990; Hirvela, 1996; Ibsen, 1990; Liaw, 2001; Long, 1991; Papalia, 1987). While the majority of studies in L2 reading are still being conducted within the context of ESL classes (Eskey, 2002; Liaw, 2001), only a few are within the foreign language setting that deal with the nature and treatment of the FL reading process.

Of particular interest here are the studies by Gascoigne (2002b) on the influence of SLA research on L2 reading, Hauptmann (2000) on the concept of "difficulty" and "ease" in L2 reading within the framework of schema theory; Godev, Martinez-Gibson

and Toris (2002) on using student's L1 to test L2 reading comprehension, and Brantmeier (2003) on the influence and effects of reader's variables in L2 reading.

With so little research about how reader response criticism has effected the foreign language reading process, the question must be posed, why this theory has been used so sparsely in the foreign language literature classroom? As reader-response theory stresses in particular the active role for the individual reader, why has this approach not seen a more frequent use in FL literature classrooms?

Davis (1992) suggests that one of the reasons why reader-response seems to have less of an impact on FL literature instruction may lie in the pedagogy that is applied in the FL literature classroom. He claims, that if students' understanding of foreign language literature (texts that are for the most part linguistically as well as culturally "foreign" to them) is still assessed by measuring how accurately they summarize or restate the texts' content, or whether they can render a so-called 'correct' interpretation of the work, it seems less likely that the individual's response to the text is important.

The effects of reader-response theory for FL literature are described in an earlier study by Davis (1989), in which he documents how an Iserian reading of a passage in an intermediate-level class can provide "a coherent framework for interpreting and teaching narratives in a foreign language" (pp. 425-426). Davis argues that, while the prerequisites for text comprehension and understanding – linguistic, socio-historical, cultural and literary knowledge resources – are already embodied in Iser's (1978) theory, the particular production of meaning can only be achieved, "when something *happens* to the reader" (Act, p. 153). Careful to point out, that even if readers possess the necessary schemata they can match with text information, Davis (1989) notes that that this might

still not enable FL students to fully understand a text. In his investigation he focuses on two specific aspects of Iser's theory (readers' background knowledge and attitude), and asserts, that the intermediate-level FL student (and possibly at other levels as well) is less likely to be compared to Iser's concept of the "implied reader" (Iser, 1974).

As stated earlier, the 'implied reader' is one, who is able to fill the gaps (*Leerstellen*) in order to produce meaning. Instead, says Davis (1989) readers in this study were still considered novices "at reading literature as at reading in the foreign language" (p. 422) or, as Barnes-Karol (2003) states, "readers-in training" (p. 23).

In Davis' (1989) investigation 55 subjects were asked to read a brief text passage from a popular intermediate-level French reader, without receiving any prior background information or additional vocabulary for the story. After the reading, students were asked to produce written recalls in English, based on their memory of the story. Citing three examples from students that for Davis served as representative for the typical misreadings of the narrative, the researcher explains, that the different recalls students presented were closely linked to their incomplete linguistic, literary or historical-cultural background knowledge. Proposing a sample lesson plan that highlights the reading process "as a dynamic interaction between text and reader" (Iser, 1978, p. 107), Davis proposes that through self-questioning of a reading passage, thus allowing students to form more meaningful contributions to foreign languages literary texts.

Not the best-suited example for the application of reader response theory in a FL setting, but nevertheless an insightful contribution in terms of the potential this method can offer for comparative literature studies, Deeney's (1991) investigation focuses on the comparison of Chinese-English translations in order to teach comparative literature to

Chinese undergraduate students. Deeney's use of reader-response theory, as he admits, is limited to a more or less general adaptation of the theory. In an attempt to "offset their [the students'] subservient attitude to the authority of their teachers or the printed word of commentators" (p. 128), the author stresses the particular relevance that "reader-response criticism and its emphasis on what aspects of a given text shape a reader's reaction" (p. 132) has for the translator-comparativist.

In Deeney's (1991) study, conducted at the Chinese University at Hong Kong, all students were native Chinese speakers, majoring in English Literature. The subjects had a good foundation in the English language as well as a consistent exposure to the East-West cultural flair of Hong Kong. The goal of Deeney's investigation was, to examine the students' ability to compare different translations of a Chinese poem with one another as well as with the original, "according to relevant translation and comparative literature methodologies" (p. 128). Given the larger theoretical and methodological issues that are involved in the translation of literary texts and the task to be in compliance with *all* the major methodologies of comparative literary studies, the study unfortunately offers few examples of concepts from reader-response theory, focusing instead on a variety of comparative literary elements. Deeney is quick to point out how comparative translation is an "exercise" in showing how readers have been influenced by the various translations of an original work. He maintains furthermore, that this could have a substantial effect on reception theory. But in the end, although encouraging his students to come up with their own "ideal" translation, Deeney dismisses the individual responses his students could have offered when asking them to "at least...pick out several translations in order to arrive at a kind of composite-compromise solution" (Deeney, 1991, p. 130).

While the translator in Deeney's study can act as a "kind of interlocutor", he or she needs to interact on different levels: between the original text and the original text's author, and between the different translations of the original text and their authors. One is left to wonder whether the translator/reader (having to function from this multidimensional position) can truly engage in the dialectic relationship between the reader, the text and their interaction. Furthermore, if the students have been influenced by a number of English translations after they read and "systematically examined" (Deeney 1991, p. 128) the original poem, it is unclear to which literary work the students initially and actually responded – the Chinese original or one of the English translations?

The findings in Ali's (1994) investigation are based on the notion that a reader-response approach to teaching literature in the L2 classroom can provide both interesting and purposeful opportunities for students to engage with literary texts. In this study, a group of fifteen, second-year Engineering students from Malaysia participated in a semesterlong, advanced *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) course. The main objective of this course was to increase the students' comprehension in English while at the same time raising their appreciation for literary materials in the target language.

Employing Thompson's (1987) developmental model of reader-response to teaching literature, Ali (1994) developed a framework for the methodology that consisted of five features: a) invoking a schema, b) sharing of initial responses, c) repeated reflection in a reading diary, d) teacher intervention through group tasks, and e) a project, pp. 291-293). Each of these components were chosen, so that the instruction would "allow for the natural sequence of response to take place" and give students the chance to explore the "response journey" (Ali, 1994, p. 293) in its entirety.

The results of the study suggest two main outcomes that underscore the particular value of reader-response for the foreign language classroom:

1. Through their participation in class activities, class discussions, and individual projects, students revealed a high level of maturity and creativity in their responses to the text, thus demonstrating a deeper understanding of themselves as active readers.
2. Teaching literature in the foreign language classroom in a response-based manner, shifts the emphasis from literatures a mere tool for language teaching and learning to a "form of aesthetic enlightenment that enhances further the experience of reading in a second language" (p. 294).

Another example (Hirvela, 1996) that corroborates Ali's (1994) findings highlights the values of reader response for literature instruction in *Exploratory Language Teaching* (ELT). Hirvela maintains that a reader-response approach in ELT not only increases the meaningful engagement that students have with literary texts, but also extends the role and amplifies the contributions of literature in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Challenging the personal-response approach to literature in CLT, Hirvela (1996) argues that with this method readers' usually generate responses that are "heavily text-based", thus assigning authority mainly to the text instead of the reader (p. 128). By comparing personal response and reader response approaches for their benefits in CLT, Hirvela outlines four distinguishing components for both methods: view of the text, role of discourse production, conceptualization of tasks, and view of reading.

In contrast to the personal-response approach (focus on the text, passive reading experience, reader responds to "authorial intention and meaning within the text", Hirvela, 1996, p.132), the reader-response approach places emphasis on the reader (rather than the

text), and acknowledges the reader's cumulative inventory of experiences in the interactive reading process. Based on the set of questions that facilitate a reader-response type of interaction with the literary text (in this case a poem), Hirvela then convincingly demonstrates, how learners are enabled to engage in a more meaningful and significant discourse by creating "genuine responses" (cf. Elliot, 1990, p. 191) to the text. Re-creating the text in ways that allow readers to tell their own story holds a particular incentive for the foreign language class: It encourages students to draw on their personal experiences, and motivates them to use the target language in more creative and original ways when sharing "their" stories.

Pedagogical Implications of Reader Response Theory for this Study

As described by Schultz (2002), the development of modern literary criticism, especially reader-response theory and semiotics, has ushered a "new view of literature and language" (p. 6). By outlining the notion, that literary text are now "no longer seen only as a closed historical and socio-cultural artifact", but as "autonomous and as an open and dynamic entity of plural meanings and multiple interpretative possibilities" (p. 6)

Schultz has in particular highlighted the role of the reader in the reading process. Instead of repeating pre-conceived interpretations of canonical works that had to be read and understood by the student in a certain (right) way, the reader's own personal experiences and intellectual abilities started playing a significant role in generating multiple, diverse and original interpretations of a literary work.

If L2 teachers are concerned with their student's development as "independent makers of meaning" (Hirvela, 1996, p. 296), it cannot be the goal of the FL literature

class to instruct students in finding the "right answer" or the "correct interpretation".

Instead, the teaching of literature as a vital part in the FL curriculum can greatly benefit from offering models that incorporate reader-response methods, which assist in stimulating students' motivation, fostering their critical and analytical thinking skills, and thus aiding the development of a person in a holistic way.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how non-native readers of German who can be characterized as mid-intermediate to low-advanced level speakers, construct and negotiate meaning when responding to literary texts, both orally and in writing. In search for a better understanding into the nature of how and why selected students responded in a particular way to short literary fiction in German, I conducted a fifteen-week long observational study over the period of one semester.

To allow for broader latitude in field exploration, the study was administered simultaneously in two groups, one *treatment* (or experimental) group and one *contrast* (or control) group). Both groups were taught by the same instructor who also functioned as the main researcher on site for data collection in the respective groups. While specific assignments were at times similar in both groups, variations were established, adjusted and measured for the treatment group only. To avoid a comparative analysis of data that was collected from study participants in the treatment group (a three-credit course) with those from the control group (a four-credit course) all four case studies for this investigation were exclusively taken from the treatment group.

Summary of methodologies used for this study

My decision to employ an interdisciplinary approach for this study that would also facilitate intercultural learning experiences was instigated by my desire to

incorporate the various insights from language, literary and cultural studies. I believe that these three components holds the key to any study of foreign language as well as to any further progression in the development of FL curricula.

Earlier research that has focused on the influence of cultural background aspects on responses to literature (Squire, 1964; Purves, 1973; Purves & Beach, 1972) documents that a shift from emphasis in comprehension to affective response took place, which was eventually replaced by a focus on cross-cultural understanding. Studies that examined the effects that cultural background has on text comprehension have been conducted with readers from English-speaking (Reynolds et al., 1982) and non-English speaking backgrounds (Harten, 1978).

Reynolds et al. (1982) investigated how two groups (one white, one African-American) of English-speaking middle school students' who responded to a reading passage describing an African-American verbal cultural ritual. The white respondents came from a Midwestern rural area, while the African-American readers were from an urban, working class area located in the southeast of the U.S. In analyzing the students' responses to the text Reynolds et al. found that the differences in text comprehension were *largely* affected by students' personal cultural backgrounds: what the white students understood as physically aggressive behavior, the African-American readers interpreted as verbal play.

Harten's (1978) study analyzed the responses of native English and non-native English speaking readers to short stories written in Hebrew (Israelis, Jewish Americans and non-Jewish Americans). Harten concluded that the readers' cultural background was even more influential on the responses they gave than their individual language

background. In fact, readers that were culturally unfamiliar with the text content encountered also more difficulties in comprehending it, which also led to misreadings. Similar results were achieved in Noda's (1980) investigation, who compared a Japanese and an American reader's oral responses to selected Japanese short stories written in English. Noda's data suggests that while both readers responded similarly to universal features of the text, they differed substantially in their affective responses. Based on the personal cultural schemata that both readers had (related to their personal, family or cultural background), the Japanese reader's background knowledge was found to enrich the responses he offered, while the American reader's responses were hampered due to his insufficient or lack of that knowledge.

A more recent study exploring the impact that cultural background knowledge has on internal children's responses to diverse texts was undertaken by Sinha (1995). Sinha found that children's responses in respect to components such as liking, identifying and comprehending were very complex and versatile. However, no particular connections could be established between the children's interest level and their identification with a text from their specific cultural background, because the readers did not "classify" themselves or the texts as belonging to a particular culture. While Sinha ascribed this to *intracultural* differences that would be located within the reader's personal cultural background, it might also be possible that the reader's perspective was influenced by a more *intercultural* viewpoint which can be characterized as mediating between different cultures.

A growing number of scholars have in recent years joined the discussion about approaching foreign language learning from an intercultural perspective. The newly

associated term with this viewpoint, called "intercultural-communicative competence" was coined by Byram (1997). Some critics argued however that this view more or less only replaced its predecessor "communicative competence" from the 1970ies. Proponents of intercultural learning models on the other side (cf. Bredella, 1996; Bredella & Delanoy, 1996, 1999; Christ, 1996, 1999; Kramsch, 1996, 1998b; Krumm, 1994, 1995) claim, that intercultural competence should really be understood as the *connecting* element between linguistic and communicative competence. It is, so to speak, a complex conglomerate of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which pertains to the learner's critical reflection of his or her native and foreign culture (Byram, 1997, p. 73; Kramer, 1999, pp. 59-61). In contrast to this view, Edmonson and House (1996) dismiss the terminology "intercultural" altogether while Kurtz (1997) even volunteers a futuristic mockery of the *catchy slogan*, suggesting that it might merely serve to keep boredom (in scholarly research?) away.

In the meantime, supporters of an intercultural view of language learning acknowledge that the study of FL *is* already intercultural per sé – yet, they argue that FL classrooms have not yet provided sufficient opportunities and situations in which intercultural learning can actually occur. While it appears, that the majority of contributions defending the *necessity* of an intercultural view in foreign language learning come predominantly from scholars who are located and teaching within the European context²⁵, it needs to be pointed out, that classroom situations in Europe can differ quite substantially from the one encountered in the American FL learning

²⁵ For various articles on the topic of intercultural language learning see Bredella & Delanoy's (1999) anthology "Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht", Bredella & Delanoy (1996), "Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom", and numerous essays in *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht 1996-2004*.

environment. In fact, if one takes a good look at today's FL classrooms in the U.S. it can be easily discerned that the "homogeneous" classroom (if there ever really was one) has been replaced by a hybrid of learners from bi-or multilingual as well as bi-or multicultural backgrounds.

The hallmark of intercultural foreign language education can thus be summarized as follows: it considers the cultural identity of the individual learner and seeks to promote a deeper understanding between one's own and other perspectives, "dem Eigenen und dem Fremden" (Bredella & Delanoy, 1999, p. 12) in this process. At the same time it aspires to connect the practical and pedagogical goals in FL instruction (Kramsch, 1995, 1998a; Krumm, 1995).

However widely hailed in European EFL (*English as a Foreign Language*) or DaF (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache*) classrooms, intercultural language learning has not necessarily been embraced in most American college-level courses teaching Foreign Languages. Seletzky's (1999) essay may help explain this phenomenon to a certain degree. The project "Multiculturalism in the German Classroom" (1993-1997), a cooperation between the *American Association of Teachers for German* (AATG) and *The Committee for German as a Foreign Language*, focused on an increased availability of German programs for minorities while simultaneously considering the changing demographics in the U.S. that occurred during the late 1980ies and early to mid-1990ies. While the concept of the "multicultural learner" usually encompasses various ethnic and cultural groups within a society, it must be acknowledged that this concept cannot be understood as a "fixed one", but one that experiences modifications, and can also undergone some significant changes over time.

For example, the war in the former Yugoslavia did not only cause a demographic shift in Europe, but also influenced and changed the way current FL classrooms in the U.S. are composed. A large number of refugees and asylum seekers from the republics of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, while trying to escape the war, had temporarily settled in Germany or Switzerland before they moved again in the mid- to late 1990ies, this time arriving in the U.S. The young and adolescent children of these European families came thus with a very different cultural (and linguistic) "baggage" than their native English-speaking peers would or could possess. If – as a result of this – FL programs have seen an increasingly diverse student population with different cultural backgrounds enrolling in language classes (as was the case in the current study), it would only seem appropriate to acknowledge this phenomenon by asking if current FL instruction is adequately responding to these new needs and challenges.

The following description is offered to provide an example of a student's path, who came from the former Yugoslavia via Germany to the U.S. While living in her native country before the conflict, this student grew up speaking her first/native language during the early years of her life. After her family's first move (to Germany) she would *acquire* German as a second language, almost in a similar fashion as she did her first language, because of her relative young age (between the age of 7 and 12) and her immersion-like experiences within the target language and culture. This in turn would allow the student in due time to switch more easily back and forth between her first and second language and culture. As a young adolescent (between the age of 13 and 16), the student's family moved again – this time to the United States, where she encountered yet another linguistic and cultural environment. English thus became her third, and

sometimes maybe fourth foreign language, depending on which other additional languages she had studied in Germany (for example, French or Spanish).

The difficulty that learners (such as the one described) faced were now located within the framework of an intercultural language learning concept. While they were still in search of establishing their personal identity within their new environment, these students defined and described themselves (for the most part) as being deeply rooted in their original heritage and first/ native language. At the same time however, they became increasingly aware of the strong cultural connections they had to their self-pronounced "second home", which they identified as Germany (culture, language, family and friends, school life, leisure activities). It was therefore important that the present investigation considered these bi-(or even multi-) cultural identities of learners by trying to provide an intercultural learning environment that would allow *all learners* to critically reflect upon their dialectic relationship between the "personal" (*dem Eigenen*) and the "other" (*dem Fremden*).

Based on these premises, the current study did not apply one single methodology. Rather, it sought to combine certain theoretical aspects from the fields of SLA (as applied to reading comprehension in L2), literary theory (as applied to reader-response) and cultural studies (as applied to intercultural foreign language learning) that seemed pedagogically appropriate and feasible for the research in question. Guided by these methodological considerations, I arrived at a model that was firmly grounded in the literary theories focusing on reader reception as proposed by Iser ("filling the gap") and Jauss ("horizon of expectations").

Emphasis was consequently placed on the readers' interactions *with* and reactions *to* the texts. These were reflected in readers' oral and written responses, which served to illustrate the potential meanings that students assigned to texts they read. Exploring the function of these literary texts in an Iserian way will then not only tell about the texts, but also about the readers. This in turn can provide some of the answers to the question *why* readers reacted in a specific way to the texts. Since the transition from "creating *meaning*" to "understanding the *significance* of that meaning" for the individual reader personalizes the act of reading, this then marks the exact point at which the reader is truly affected by the reading.

In focusing on the aforementioned literary theories, I also considered aspects from second language acquisition research, which were relevant for the L2 reading and comprehension process. The application of Rumelhart's (1977) schema theory, which emphasizes the importance of previously acquired knowledge that comes into play when the reader tries to make sense of a text, was used in this study to make learners *aware* of their own concepts and assumptions. The interactive model of reading as outlined by Swaffar et al. (1991), which blends reader- and text-based processing served as a guiding principle to determine how students' comprehended the L2 texts they were reading. Successful comprehension, according to this model, can only occur when the ramifications between the reader's and the text's views have been resolved, meaning that the reader's speculations about a text can be confirmed by the texts' language, context and intent (p. 74).

To locate the nexus between reader response and interactive reading, where reader-response theory can actually be situated within the interactive reading model, one

must again return to the relationship that exists between reader and text. While Iser (1978) describes it as "text and reader [being] linked together, the one permeating the other" (p. 150), Swaffar et al. (1991) use a similar language when they view "text and reader as independent interactors" (p. 75). The (literary) journey that both Iser and Swaffar et al. send their readers on to comprehend a text or make sense of it is therefore determined by *how* reader and text interact during the reading process. Ultimately, though, it is still the reader who initiates and concludes this "journey", based on his or her decision *how* and *why* to interact with the text in a specific way.

The overarching framework that connected the literary and linguistic components of this study in a rather harmonious way was provided by the pedagogically driven cultural studies approach as exhibited in the work by Kramsch (1993b) and Weber (1996). Essentially it is the socio-cultural dimension of foreign language and literary study that this study set out to explore. By paying closer attention to the "cultural baggage" to use Trommler's (2002, p. 56) term, that FL readers bring when they meet the text, and exploring how that baggage could be used in the meaning-making process, the cultural studies approach also seeks to empower the non-native speakers to express their own voice.

Prior research: Purpose and relevant findings

The present research was preceded by a pilot study (fall 2002) and an informal survey (spring 2003), which were both conducted in upper-level German courses. The pilot study was explorative in nature, and concentrated on finding out which individual reading strategies students employed when comprehending literary and non-

literary texts in the FL. For this study readers' responses were limited to summarizing and retelling story events, and answering specific questions about the texts, while class discussions centered on interpretive attempts of the selected stories. The informal survey explored readers' interest level and motivation when reading FL literary texts.

In reviewing the data I collected through recall protocols and oral class contributions during the fall of 2002 I arrived at the following preliminary conclusions:

1. L2 readers processed texts primarily in a "bottom-up" manner, focusing on surface structure features (decoding of single words or phrases) in order to build comprehension.
2. L2 readers reportedly used specific strategies such as word recognition and inferring the meaning of unknown words to aid them in text comprehension.

The informal survey exploring students' interest level and motivation when reading FL texts was administered to gain more detailed information and insights about students' reading habits in the L2. It must be said, though that while all students who participated in this survey had studied German for at least five semesters, their respective reading skills still varied significantly. The purpose of my inquiry was therefore linked to the following question: How was the development of students' reading skills related to a variety of factors that influenced individual reading behavior in the FL? The categories I established to find answers to this question were: a) the student's interest level in the subject area, b) the student's motivation to read in the FL, and c) the amount of time the students spent on reading in the FL.

Although the results I gathered in this survey were still inconclusive, they highlighted relevant details that informed my future planning of advanced-level undergraduate course work, and also instigated the current research project.

Results indicated that students' interest level in the subject area was closely related to their motivation to read in the FL. For example, students who marked only a low to moderate level of interest in the subject area also scored low or moderate when asked about their motivation to read in the foreign language.

Results further suggested that students who admitted to spending smaller amounts of time on reading in the foreign language (for example, between one and four hours per week) displayed lower reading skills. These students could also be characterized as poor readers. In contrast, students who spent approximately twice as much time on reading in the foreign language (for example, between five and eight hours per week or more) exhibited stronger reading skills and could be rated as good readers.

Overall, students who participated in this survey displayed a stronger interest and motivation in reading and responding to texts they were personally and culturally familiar with. This could be confirmed through text discussions in class and informal conversations with survey participants outside of class. Both indicated that L2 readers found texts more appealing and interesting if the texts' content was closely linked to the readers' personal experiences and/or background knowledge.

Current investigation: Purpose and significance

Based on my findings in the aforementioned exploratory study and the survey, the decision to conduct a qualitative research was aimed at achieving the following goal – to

examine and analyze how individual background knowledge (and background information) would influence the way study participants responded to German literary texts. More specifically, the purpose of the current investigation could be framed by three questions:

1. How do FL students approach literary texts that are written in the target language while they are reading these texts (i.e., which strategies, techniques, skills and resources do students use when establishing what they perceive to be the meaning of the text)?
2. Which schemata (predominantly cultural ones) do FL students access in order to establish meaning of a literary text?
3. How do FL students use their background knowledge to assist them in negotiating different and sometimes conflicting meanings of a literary text?

In exploring how readers in an upper-level FL class apply their individual background knowledge when reading literary texts, this study is geared to provide specific and detailed examples of how readers' sociocultural backgrounds can influence the way they establish and negotiate the meaning of texts. Analyzing the interactions between reader and text as available and illustrated in oral and written responses, this investigation may provide an impetus for further change and/or modification of the FL curriculum at the college level. The study's particular value lies therefore in its practical perspective and implications for teaching literary texts in undergraduate FL courses. If one believes, that FL readers do not merely absorb a literary work but are able to actively imagine it, and that they are furthermore capable of creating a construct of that text that 'makes sense to

them' – it naturally follows that one should create a FL learning environment that grants readers those experiences.

The amount of data provided here – the background information about selected case study participants, the intensive examination of their responses (think aloud protocols, response journals), and the individual interviews I conducted with each study participant – has been included to help explain what role the individual student's background knowledge played in his/her construction of meaning. While this information supplies the necessary material for triangulation of the data analysis, it also gives a detailed account of the reader's world and how it is related to the personal experiences he or she had during the reading and comprehension process.

Finally, this study seeks promote the inclusion of various forms of student responses when reading FL texts (i.e., thinks aloud protocols, written journals, interviews). Due to their nature, these responses invite and foster students' personal and intimate reactions to literature, which can help furnish the instructor with distinct and diverse insights regarding students' viewpoints to FL texts, that may otherwise not have been revealed (for example, in an open classroom discussion).

Research Questions

Based on my interest to find out how upper-level students of German with different social and cultural backgrounds created meaning in the FL literature classroom, and my belief, that these meanings might differ substantially, depending on how individual background knowledge influenced the reader's responses to the texts, I began the current investigation.

Through students' discussions of literary works (i.e., narrative prose, poetry), I learned that some of the questions and comments they offered in response to the texts also brought to the surface *why* they reacted and responded in a certain way. While I did not find it particularly unusual that students would display their individual perspectives in the literature classroom, which were of course influenced by their different upbringings and experiences, I noticed that their sociocultural backgrounds played at times a significant role when trying to establish the meaning of a particular work.

For example, the reading of Lessing's (1779) parable of the three rings of "Nathan der Weise" (*Nathan, the Wise*) with a group of third-year students revealed how substantial differences among learners' cultural background knowledge impacted their understanding of the story. The parable, structurally positioned in the center of the play, evokes essentially the major issues and concerns in "Nathan". When asked by sultan Saladin which religion – Christian, Jewish, or Moslem – is the most true (*die Frage nach der wahren Religion*), Nathan responds to Saladin's question with a story of a father who is supposed to pass on his ring (symbolic for the true religion) to his most beloved one of his three sons. Yet, because the father loves his sons equally, he is unable to select one over the other two. Therefore, he has two additional and identical rings made, giving each of his sons a ring on his deathbed. The sons, however, who argue after the father's death about which of the three rings is indeed the true one, refer their quarrel to a judge, who advises them to act as if each of them is the bearer of the true ring.

Lessings' ideal reader would have learned, that religious tolerance is at the core of this story, and would not continue to assume that his or her religious belief was the exclusively true one.

Although students acknowledged the utopian model that Nathan suggests, which does not allow nor does it call for a reasonable answer that would single out *the* true religion, their opinions differed when it came to interpreting the underlying *Enlightenment* message of Lessing's play. While Nathan sees beyond the apparently insurmountable religious differences, and illustrates with his story how violence and hatred between various religious could be overcome, the students raised a number of issues that questioned a too optimistic outlook of tolerance over religious fanaticism, war and prejudice, which they based on their own individual experiences.

The reader's reception of this story is but one example that led me to form tentative assumptions about how students' background knowledge would manifest itself when they were reading, discussing and interpreting literature. I wanted to know more about how students' different cultural backgrounds would connect with the readings and how it could possibly determine the way students assigned meaning to a text. The overall purpose of this study was therefore to examine how students' background knowledge would come into play when they responded to literary texts in order to 'make sense' and create meaning of the text, and furthermore, how they would arrange to negotiate that meaning. The main research questions for this investigation were thus formulated as follows:

1. How do students' individual and sociocultural background knowledge influence their responses to authentic foreign language literary texts?
2. Based on those responses, how do students create and negotiate meaning when reading FL literary texts?

The unique situation for this study in terms of the research questions was presented through the following two factors: a) a group of non-native speakers of German who were also non-native speakers of English, and b) the level of language proficiency these students exhibited. All of the non-native speakers (German and English) have a European background and speak a Slavic language as their first or native language (Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian). The inconsistent level of language and reading proficiency *all* study participants exhibited in their foreign or second language, ranged from what could be compared to a mid-intermediate to high advanced levels. The answers to these questions were explored through various reader-response activities, such as background knowledge questionnaires (Appendix B, C, and D), pre-reading questions (Appendix E), response journals (Appendix G) and personal interviews (Appendix H).

Methodology

Qualitative versus quantitative research

Although quantitative research designs differ considerably from qualitative ones, Jones (1989) suggests that there are also some overlapping also features that both approaches share. *Qualitative research* implies that emphasis is given to processes and how meanings are developed and interpreted. Researchers applying this method stress the socially constructed nature of reality, and seek to give answers to how social experiences are constructed and what meanings these experiences have. Quantitative studies, in contrast, highlight causal relationships (not processes) between variables, which are rigorously measured and analyzed. One of the major distinguishing elements between *quantitative* and *qualitative* research is thus, that quantitative investigations refer to

information that indicate "countable" data (i.e., test scores, word counts), while qualitative studies refer to data that cannot be counted (i.e., ethnographic descriptions, journal or diary entries).

The data collected in quantitative studies usually emphasizes generalizability, and operates on the assumption that the topic of study is independent of the researcher. Thus, test results are not influenced by the person conducting the investigation. Categories that are employed in this kind of research have to be established based on theoretical deductions rather than empirical observations or experience. Hypotheses need to be formulated prior to the study and paraphrased into precise research questions. These presumptions are then systematically tested and either confirmed or rejected. The purpose of quantitative studies is ultimately to investigate cause-effect-relationships and isolate specific components that are part of a larger system by repeating and sampling procedures, thus demonstrating a certain degree of reliability and validity. The goal of this research approach is finally to reach conclusions based on comprehending the individual.

While the qualitative paradigm has evolved from a diverse body of research traditions, it is not characterized by a unified position, and thus more difficult to describe than the quantitative approach (Schreier, 2001; Tesch, 1990; Vidich & Lyman, 2000). In contrast to quantitative methods, qualitative research stresses personal and individual motivations in search of assigning meanings that belong to certain groups or communities.

Conducting the research from an *emic* (researcher as participant) rather than an *etic* (researcher as observer) perspective clearly removes the researcher from a detached

position and places him or her right in the middle of the examination itself, making him or her a "participant-observer". However, as Ray (1996) observes, this viewpoint also "raises its own forms of ethical and representational issues" (p. 292), because the investigator needs to carefully balance conflicting positions and obligations as the research is carried out.

Fleischer (1995) addresses some of the concerns related to the numerous roles and responsibilities that the researcher occupies while conducting the examination (for example, the "neutral" observer, the "participant", the "friend", the "professional", the "writer" of the study, pp. 28-29). Being in that way an integral part of the study itself allows for the researcher to employ a holistic perspective which focuses on understanding the individual as interconnected and explicable only in reference to the whole. In that respect, hypotheses are also not explicitly articulated, because they evolve and emerge from participants (including the researcher) as the study proceeds. Holliday (2002), for example, who defines qualitative research from an applied linguists' perspective who situates his work within "cross-cultural matters" (p. x), describes qualitative research as "open-ended studies...that lead the researcher into unforeseen lives of the areas of discovery within the lives of people she²⁶ is investigating" (p. 5).

Qualitative methods and designs

Used as an umbrella term for a large number of research methodologies, which include different (and admittedly at times confusing) sets of strategies, Denzin and

²⁶ Holliday (2002) uses the female pronoun "she" (p. 23) exclusively to refer to people in the abstract, instead of using the more politically correct "he/she" form to signal his departure from the usual discourse of placing male before female.

Lincoln (2000) state that numerous approaches with their respective sets of guidelines can be used in qualitative research. Among those are: Oral history, analysis of historical documents, participatory action research, case studies, conversation analysis or ethnography.

While certain categories vary from one method to the next, Denzin and Lincoln clarify that they are not rigidly confined to one particular approach only, but allow for some flexibility. For example, the researcher who wishes to examine selected case studies may apply an ethnographic approach or not. While case studies are often associated with ethnographic traits such as *participant observation*, the argument has been made that all social research is in a way a form of participant observation, because the social world cannot be studied without being a part of that world (cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The commonalities that these different strategies share, as Holliday (2002, p. 18) points out, seem to culminate in finding out how people make sense of or give meaning to their world(s), and how that meaning comes forth – a concept that is also the key element in reader response theories.

Although qualitative methods differ in some aspects, there are a few particular features that all share. Qualitative approaches are, for example more interested in seeking to *understand* particular phenomena and *describing* them in detail, instead of explaining them. They focus on *individual* instead of large numbers of cases, and provide a more *depth-oriented analysis* of single cases, rather than emphasizing the breath of the overall study. Because theoretical hypotheses are usually not tested in this approach, the structure of qualitative research is considered to be *inductive* and *iterative*. Hypotheses *emerge* as the research process develops, thus establishing new hypotheses, or informing and

modifying prior ones. Finally, qualitative research studies are conducted in a *natural* environment, and collect data that is primarily of verbal nature, such as interviews (Schreier 2001, pp. 38-39).

Based on the various influences that have impacted the development of qualitative research, a number of designs (Tesch, 1990) and methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) for this approach can also be distinguished. Depending on the type of research design (for example: case study, field study, grounded theory or analytic induction), a different framework of methods needs to be applied that regulates how the research is organized and conducted. Within these methods again, there are operational definitions guiding data collection (i.e., think-aloud protocols, interviews, diaries, journals) and analytical methods propelling data analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) distinguish in their handbook of qualitative methodologies between three approaches that are used for qualitative data analysis: *interpretivism* (hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, semiotics), *social anthropology* (ethnography, ecological psychology, grounded theory), and *collaborative social research* (critical ethnography, action research, pp. 8-9). Since methods for data analysis focus predominantly on *interpreting* the collected data, they draw on various theories of interpretation, such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, or conversation and discourse analysis (Schreier, 2001, p. 39, Tesch, 1990, pp. 77-145).

Prior studies in qualitative research

While reviewing the most current guidelines for conducting both quantitative and qualitative research conducted in TESOL (*Teaching English as a Second and Other*

Language) and SLA (*Second Language Acquisition*), it was quite obvious that fewer articles had been written and submitted about qualitative than quantitative research methods (Chapelle & Duff, 2003).

Lazaraton (1995), for example, stated in her analysis of the some 332 data-based articles that had been published in the field of applied linguistics between 1991 and 1997, that only 10% of those studies were qualitative and interpretive in nature, which leaves the overwhelming amount of research still dedicated to submitting quantitative-driven inquiries. One reason for this could lie in the contrasting terminology that scholars use to characterize qualitative ("subjective", "observational", "reliable") and quantitative ("objective", "experimental", "valid") studies. This may also provide some insights into the question why qualitative studies may not have been favored in applied linguistics so far (cf. Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991; Nunan, 1991, 1992). Johnson (1993) cites additional reasons that may help explain why foreign language researchers in particular shy away from conducting qualitative studies. Investigations of this nature usually require a carefully designed preparation phase, which must be guided by two principles: (1) while the research methodology has to be developed in relation to the research questions it must (2) stay somewhat flexible, so that necessary adjustments or modifications which may arise during the course of the study can be incorporated (Johnson, 1993, pp. 11-12). In addition, qualitative studies are usually very time-consuming, because they need to be directed over weeks, months and sometimes years in order to draw conclusions that are significant.

The fact that academic journals in the field of foreign language instruction do not necessarily offer a wealth of information on how to carry out qualitative studies also

demands that scholars who are interested in this kind of research need to consult other sources (i.e., from ESL or bilingual studies). Finally, foreign language professionals (like myself), who were not specifically trained in applying the qualitative research tradition may experience, that it can be an arduous process to address the many methodological issues involved in carrying out this type of research. This pertains to the flexible research design, the multiple data collection procedures, the credibility and validity of collected information, and the writing a rich descriptive report of individual case studies.

Considering Schreier's (2001) proposal, that quantitative research terms like "objectivity" and "reliability" in respect to qualitative research should not be completely discarded, but – based on the particular context that exists for every research study – more clearly defined, seems to be a step in the right direction. Depending on the kind of information that is being collected, say from a think-aloud protocol or an interview, this would mean that the researcher needs to always keep in mind that he or she is an *integral* part of the social context in every situation. Questions that have to be asked in this context are, for example: *Who* is conducting the activity? *How* is the activity structured? How does one think-aloud protocol differ from another, how does one interview situation vary from the next and why? Pure objectivity, in that sense, cannot be an attainable goal, because the researcher in qualitative studies serves as an "observer-participant". Validity in qualitative research, as Schreier (2001) suggests "informs the qualitative methodological demands of staying close to the phenomenon of interest, studying it in its natural environment, and disrupting and thus changing it in the course of data collection" (p. 40).

Nunan's (1991) analysis of 51 classroom-based studies further suggests that the rationale researchers apply when thinking about the purpose and intention of their qualitative investigation is closely tied to their intended audience. For example, if the research is designed with primarily pedagogical issues in mind the study has a *primary* pedagogic rationale (P1). On the other hand, studies with a focus on language acquisition processes would, according to Nunan, have a *secondary* pedagogic rationale (P2).

Case study research and ethnography

Based on the latest qualitative research guidelines published in *TESOL Quarterly* (Chapelle & Duff, 2003), the current investigation combines selected features of two qualitative approaches – *case study and ethnography*²⁷ – for the collection and analysis of data. While both methods display some overlapping principles, they do show significant distinctions (see Table 1).

Table 1

Important characteristics of Case Study Research (CSR) and Ethnography

Case Study Research		Ethnography
Disciplinary Roots	Psychology, Linguistics	Cultural anthropology
Goals	Identification of important patterns and themes	Disclosure of <i>emic</i> (internal) aspects of cultural phenomena

²⁷ For an overview of these and other qualitative methods, including examples, see Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Flick, 2002; Holliday, 2002; Schreier, 2001. Applications of these two approaches can be found in Davis, 1995; Feldman, 1995; Hopper, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Keating & Sherzer, 2003; Lazaraton, 1995, 2003; Nunan, 1992; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 2000; Stewart, 1998.

Stance	Subjective, interpretive	Regards binary constructs (i.e., theory-method; subjective-objective; interpretation-data) as interconnected, not separated
Emphasis	On in-depth and holistic Examination of single or multiple cases	On diversity of perspectives (<i>How is knowledge shaped by values of human representatives?</i>) Theoretical orientation towards Culture
Context	Extensive background Information (i.e. social, biographical)	Socio-cultural context is: Constantly re-created through interactions Naturalistic Emic Questions binary constructs
Data Collection Procedures	From primary (i.e., oral interviews, journals, essays) or multiple sources, e.g. background information interviews observations field notes think-aloud protocols transcripts	From primary and multiple sources, e.g. participant observation and extended interaction with participants, life histories narrative analysis photography audio and/or video recordings of actual interaction, written documents questionnaires surveys
	May incorporate natural or artificial sources	May incorporate quantitative and qualitative procedures
Data Representation	Careful sampling of cases Detailed account of cases Cross-comparison of cases	Thick description Excerpts of interaction Field notes

Analytic Procedures	Inductive analysis Triangulation	Emic analysis (participants' behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, beliefs, practices) Triangulation
Interpretation of Data	Descriptive Interpretive	Critical Descriptive Interpretive
Not acceptable	A priori hypotheses Generalization	Brief engagement with study participants Fixed category observations

Note. From "Some Guidelines for Conducting Quantitative and Qualitative Research in TESOL," by C.A. Chapelle and P.A. Duff, 2003, *TESOL Quarterly*, 37, pp. 157-178. Copyright 1993 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission of the author.

The rationale for applying these research traditions to the current investigation are discussed in the following section.

Ethnography. Rooted in anthropology and sociology, ethnography has recently also been extended into other scholarly fields, such as literary theory, cultural studies or women's studies, as Tedlock (2000, p. 455) observes. This approach is mainly concerned with the description and interpretation of cultural behaviors, and can be characterized by an "ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context" (p. 455). Because of the primary goal that ethnography pursues – namely to find out *how* people see things and *what* kind of sociocultural practices they engage in – Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) define this method as a form of social research that relies for the most part on *participant observation*. The authors define the following features of this qualitative procedure:

[A] strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena...using 'unstructured' data, that...have not been coded...in terms of a closed set of analytic categories, investigation of a small number of cases...in detail [and] analysis of data that involved explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations. (pp. 110-111)

Ethnographic studies are usually conducted over an extended period of time, sometimes lasting a number of months or even years. Data collection and analysis for this procedure entails fieldwork that is usually achieved by observing or interviewing study participants in various settings. Analyzed data is then presented in form of a "thick description", a term first introduced by Geertz (1973, p. 26), which entails a detailed written report or comprehensive description of particular events or customs within their respective cultural context. For researchers interested in using the ethnographic method it is important to remember that Geertz defined this approach from a new, more pluralistic and open-ended perspective that suggested that anthropological writings of any kind are always interpretations of (other, prior) interpretations.

Applying this approach also includes that the investigator uses predetermined or fixed categories to carry out the study. The ethnographer's goal in describing another culture or language is to reveal or disclose internal (*emic*) aspects of that particular culture or language and their functioning. It must be remembered though, that the researcher's very own position (his or her personal, subjective background and views) is always represented as well during the entire course of the investigation. Tedlock's (2000) comprehensive account of the development of the ethnographic approach therefore calls on researchers to be acutely aware of "both ethical and authorial issues" (p. 464) that need to be considered when collecting, interpreting and publishing ethnographic information. Discussions about the particular role of the researcher-author have lead to a

shift from "participant observation" to "the observation of participation" as Tedlock (1991) notes. This ultimately opened up the possibility of presenting two components in the written narrative: the ethnographer's experiences and observations of "the other" (i.e., the topic of the research) as well as his or her own co-participation in this dialogic process.

While the ethnographic research method has lately enjoyed an increased application in elementary-level ESL classrooms, it has only been sparsely used with adult learners in the L2 context. One has to wonder why, because it seems that a method involving the holistic study of social and cultural issues is not only beneficial yet crucial for research in the field of foreign (and second) language learning.

Case studies. A very comprehensive description of what case studies are and which components they entail has been rendered by Stake (2000, pp. 435-454), who identifies three different approaches – *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective* – and also outlines applications, varieties and problematic issues of this method (i.e., bias, case selection, telling the story, triangulation, sampling, ethics).

Every case study – disregarding of whom or what is being studied – ultimately involves the illustration of phenomena or social processes. As Stake asserts, the difference between the three types of case studies lies in the detail and structure of the investigated matter. For example, in *intrinsic* case studies the focus is on examining a single case in detail (i.e., a classroom) to gain a better understanding of this particular case. *Instrumental* case studies, in contrast do not focus primarily on the individual case itself. In fact, the singular case is actually of secondary interest, because it serves mainly

to provide further insights into theoretical issues or refining the theory. The process-orientation of the study takes priority insofar as it is displayed in various case studies. The third group, called *collective* case studies, bears similarities to the *instrumental* study, with the exception, that the former is now extended to include several cases. This does not mean that cases are studied in a collective manner, but rather that the understanding of individual cases (as parts of the collection) is believed to lead to a more comprehensive understanding of a larger compilation of cases.

Newkirk (1992) argues that case studies, which have traditionally been regarded as good for isolating variables and suggesting hypotheses but were not necessarily considered the best research techniques, *do* hold an enormous value when it comes to "telling the story". Referring to case stories as "transformative narratives", Newkirk (1992, p. 134) emphasizes that these written accounts are deeply embedded in cultural beliefs, which would most likely not have been identified or recognized, had they not been put into the form of narratives. In agreement with Newkirk, Johnson (1993) stresses the importance of case studies for L2 research, claiming that they are a valuable tool for scholars who seek "more adequate sociocultural and contextual explanations of learning and teaching processes and outcomes" (p. 7).

In a similar way, referring to case studies from Terry (1994) and Schwalm (1995), Harris (2002) states that "[these cases] not only offer descriptions of processes for others to try, they also narrate patterns that, by their heightening in the flow of the story, are informative. These narratives tell us about the cultures we work in" (p. 81). Whether the researcher chooses to focus on individual cases or the comparison of a small number of

cases, the very essence of the case study approach remains the same: to explore particular phenomena in their natural environment.

After careful and extensive observation of specific issues (which are determined by the research questions), the researcher seeks to provide explanations for the outcomes, always viewing single events and happenings from a holistic perspective, or as integral parts of a whole system (Stake, 1988, 2000). Case studies, as Stake maintains, are less defined by their methods of inquiry, but by the researcher's interest in individual cases. It is therefore specifically this interest that guides the researcher's main question in the investigation: What can be learned from this (single) case?

A specific feature of qualitative casework is "triangulation", an approach that refers to bringing various sources and data together by using multiple methods and then drawing conclusions from them. This process is not only used to clarify meaning, but also to confirm that observations and procedures are repeatable. Of course, no situation can ever be an exact replica of the original. Therefore, by employing triangulation researchers also highlight the various circumstances of individual cases, which help explain why particular phenomena are seen and interpreted a certain way (Stake, 2000, pp. 443-444).

Denzin (1989) initially defined four different types of triangulation (data, investigator, theory, and methodological triangulation), to which Janesick (1998) added a fifth, calling it "interdisciplinary triangulation" (p. 47), which focuses on the inclusion of other disciplines, such as art, architecture, music, sociology, history or anthropology that aid in the understanding of this method (cf. Janesick, 2000).

Further characterized by an extended period of time, qualitative case studies require the researcher to spend a considerable amount of weeks, months or years on site,

frequently interacting with study participants, reflecting about what is happening, and possibly revising the plan of action, if necessary. Every case, simple or complex as it may be, is therefore also considered a "bounded system" (Stake, 2000, p. 436) that exhibits certain behavior patterns. While the boundedness of an individual case indicates that it belongs to an integrated system, typical behavior patterns of case studies are *consistency* and the *series of sequential steps*. Both are also essential components in understanding the case.

In contrast to research in child language acquisition where case studies have been widely used and documented²⁸, this approach has not enjoyed the same appeal for classroom-oriented L2 research at the post-secondary level. Yet, when paying closer attention to the multiple components that affect L2 learning and teaching, it appears that case studies not only offer a lucrative, but especially practicable approach through which new personal, social, and cultural aspects in L2 learning can be gained.

Relevance of case study type for the current study. In the current research I have chosen to apply two case study types out of the three that Stake (2000) identifies as the *intrinsic*, *instrumental* and *collective* case study approach (p. 437). While I had an *intrinsic* interest in every individual case, because I found each one in its own right to be a highly intriguing and fascinating matter for research, I did not focus exclusively on one particular case only. It was furthermore not the purpose or intention of this research to establish a generic phenomenon that would eventually result in a theoretical construct,

²⁸ For the development of second/bilingual oral language in children see Hakuta, 1976, 1986; Hatch, 1978; for the development of literacy in children see Hudelson, 1989; Peyton & Seyoum, 1989.

nor did I wish to obtain generalization regarding any particular case or cases. Instead, I was mainly interested in the student's revelation of his or her story, and how their stories could help illuminate the individual case, thereby also assisting me in gaining a deeper understanding of the study participant's meaning-making process.

My decision to apply an *instrumental* case study design was influenced by my perspective and consideration of all individual cases. The four cases that were selected for this study were in and of themselves however of secondary interest. Still treated as an individual phenomenon and researched in depth, its contexts scrutinized, the single case was seen as aiding the researcher in understanding the larger picture at hand. While each case is playing an important and supportive role in advancing the researcher's (and reader's) knowledge and comprehension of it, the question remains: can (or should) one or more of the cases be seen as representative of other cases or not? In that sense then, the line between intrinsic and instrumental case study is for the current researcher almost nonexistent.

Since emphasis was placed on a number of case studies, thus not highlighting one single case, I partly applied the collective case study approach, which refers to analyzing the group of cases in terms of the specific and generic features they displayed. Stake (2000) also calls this the "instrumental study extended into several cases" (p. 437). The reason again, for choosing a collection of cases was based on my belief that these cases, however small the group was, could facilitate a better understanding of even larger groups of cases in future research studies.

Evaluative criteria for qualitative research: Advantages and limitations

Mathewson (1994) noted in his examination of a model that explored the influence of attitude on reading and learning to read, that "[q]ualitative methods require...researchers [to] strive more consistently for objectivity than do quantitative methods" (p. 1153). Qualitative investigators will invariably be asked to answer questions about the credibility of their research.

Addressing issues that revolve around validity, reliability and generalizability in qualitative studies, I agree with Janesick (2000) and Flick (2002) that these questions also need to be framed in the context of qualitative research. For Janesick (2000), validity "has to do with description and explanation [of persons, places or events, my comment], and whether or not the explanation fits the description" (p. 393). Validity, as Flick (2002) asserts, can also be achieved if the researcher acts sensitively and responsibly during the entire research process. Among the necessary steps that Wolcott (1990) cites to ensure validity in ethnography – key components that are also applicable for the current study – are for example:

1. the production of ample data that allow readers to make their own inferences, and also enable them to follow those made by the researcher
2. the diligent and exact collection of notes, and the early and continuous write up of reports during the various stages of the research process, both of which should allow the reader to draw their own conclusions from the writings
3. the balanced and accurate presentation of the research
4. the complete and unswerving report of the findings

The advantages of a qualitative study design can especially be seen when social or cultural issues are being investigated, as is the case with the current study. In particular a study concerned with the reception of literary texts demands a methodology that adequately addresses individual reader responses by allowing readers to describe relevant aspects of their interactions and experiences with a text in their own words. Research involving reader-response issues therefore not only benefits, but requires the application of a qualitative method design. Additionally, a rich (or thick) description of the gathered data could be provided, because the researcher had the opportunity to illustrate in detail individual backgrounds of participating students, their environments, reading characteristics and preferences, and reading behaviors in L1 and L2.

Due to the labor-intensive work that goes into the preparation and implementation of a qualitative study, and the substantial amount of time required to conduct and oversee this investigation (i.e., administer questionnaires, observe study participants over an extended period of time, interact with study participants based on the objectives of the study, transcribe think-aloud protocols and interviews, and identify and describe different behaviors and responses to selected texts), the study was restricted to a small number of participants.

To address pertinent methodological issues, that would need to be raised in light of the limited number of study participants, the researcher has treated the individual student responses as case studies. This has further implications for the understanding of the study, which does not allow for generalization. Rather, the number of individual cases should be understood as a collection of single studies that contribute valid and reliable information for individual informants.

Procedure

Design of study

Responding to Bernhardt's (2003) call for more research and new investigations in second language reading that "examine how learners try to get meaning from text" (p. 116), the main objective of this study was threefold:

1. to explore what sort of impact components from social life have on the process of meaning-making (i.e. personal interests, perceptions, backgrounds)
2. to examine how FL learners' backgrounds influence and shape their individual process of making and negotiating meaning when studying literary texts, and
3. to contribute a study in L2 research that acknowledges the complexities of the reading– and meaning-making processes for students in the foreign language classroom.

Based on the two main questions that guided and informed this research, it was important to design this study with a certain amount of flexibility in mind, which was done to accommodate modifications (if necessary), and allow for a richer interpretation of the study participants' perspective on the process of meaning-making. Strategies that were selected for this investigation were therefore based on their suitability for data collection and their intimate connection to the purpose of the research.

The following section describes the design of the study, including specific considerations that guided the rationale, selection of research site, setting, study participants and literary texts. Additionally, the role of the researcher as an observer-participant and the methodological principles that were applied for the collection, treatment and analysis of data will also be discussed.

Rationale

The decision to implement a qualitative research design for the current study was directed by my intention and purpose of the inquiry and by the research questions I wanted to answer. Using a qualitative paradigm provided me with the appropriate and necessary framework that placed the study in a "situated" context and involved an "interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). While not all of the elements typical for qualitative research as cited below would prove to be relevant for this study, the following paragraph succinctly describes my intentions and closely resembles the purpose of my study:

[qualitative researchers] turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them...

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual's lives. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 3-4)

In addition to these factors Lazaraton (2003) points out, that a tendency toward "situating research in a sociopolitical context" (p. 3) has lately been noticed. However, the author asserts, a researcher's sociopolitical agenda is neither a necessity for conducting qualitative research, nor does it exclude quantitative research.

Using a qualitative design for this study responded to the kind and amount of data collected in this research, which involved both oral and written responses. Initially, data were collected from all study participants, who were members of two different groups (*treatment* and *control*). Both groups were then carefully sampled to determine which cases should be selected for further and detailed analysis

The research questions, while serving as a guiding principle in the selection of appropriate qualitative strategies techniques, also allowed the researcher to analyze and present a rather larger amount of data from a small group of informants. Furthermore, the qualitative approach helped define the role of the researcher as "observer-participant" in this study, an issue that encompasses the role and representation of the researcher as well as the study informants. Claiming however, that this role did not have much use for the observer in a naturalistic setting, Adler and Adler (1998) suggest a term that describes the investigator's role as a "peripheral-member-researcher" (pp. 84-85), thus acknowledging the tendency in qualitative research to focus on a greater involvement of the researcher (cf. Flick, 2002, pp. 54-55). The authors work with the assumption, that a researcher's insider perspective is an essential component for establishing "an accurate appraisal of human group life" (p. 85). Therefore, they stress the importance of observing *and* interacting "closely enough with members [of a group, my comment] to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership" (p. 85).

Taking a peripheral membership role in the current study meant that during the observation periods (i.e., think-alouds and interviews) the researcher circulated mainly as a facilitator, who provided guidance when necessary. By occupying the peripheral membership position, the researcher's awareness of the study context served also as an important constituent in the various stages of gathering and interpreting, evaluating and presenting the collected data. One of the characteristics of qualitative research as well as a requirement for the present investigation is ample fieldwork, which had to be carried

out on site. This methodology also allowed the researcher to be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.

Description of site and setting

The current study was conducted during the fall semester of 2003 at a small four-year liberal arts college in the Midwest with approximately 2,200 students. The majority of students at this academic institution are traditional age students between the ages of 18 and 23. All data for this qualitative research was collected during the fall semester, and obtained through classroom work in two upper-level German courses focusing on the study of short literary fiction. Both courses were taught by the same instructor (i.e., the researcher) in a sixteen-week format and met twice a week for ninety and seventy-five minutes, respectively.

Courses and groups. Designed as a classroom-based study, the investigation was conducted in two groups simultaneously. The course with study participants from the *control group* (CG) will be referred to as "C1", while the course with informants from the quasi-experimental *treatment group* (TG) will be called "C2". The term "quasi-experimental" (Nunan, 1992) is being used here to indicate an experiment, which is not on all accounts a "true" experiment. Emphasis in both groups was clearly placed on reader response activities to FL literary texts, although pedagogical objectives for the treatment group differed from those of the control group, based on course design and course goals.

Both classes had a similar theme, revolving around the question how outsiders are depicted in a variety of German literary texts. But while the control group was genre-bound (studying the portrayal of outsiders in German short stories exclusively) the experimental group had access to a variety of print, audio, video and computer-generated materials.

In terms of content, emphasis in course "C1" was placed on reviewing particular grammatical structures in contextualized activities with the goal to improve student's written composition skills, while course "C2" focused predominantly on reading, responding to and interpreting the literary narratives. The selection of both courses for the current study was based on two factors:

1. the representation of a diverse student population, based on students' individual socio-cultural backgrounds, and
2. the representation of students who had attained a level of language proficiency that would be comparable to a mid-intermediate speaker of the target language.

Control versus experimental group

Control Group ("C1"). The course "C1" is offered every fall semester as a four-credit class and meets twice weekly for one hour and forty-five minutes. The class is required of every student who wishes to pursue a German major or minor, and who has successfully completed four semesters of German. The majority of students enrolling in this course have already completed a semester-long study abroad program. However, students who enter the college level and have passed the required Language Entrance Exam with a high

enough score are also eligible to enroll in this class. They will usually participate in study abroad program during their Junior Year.

Study participants in the control group ("C1") were all of Caucasian ethnic background and non-native speakers of German. All students in this group were native English speakers, except one, whose native language was Bosnian (L1), and who had studied German (L2), English (L3) and French (L4). Of this group, only two students had completed a semester in Germany prior to enrolling in the course, while the others had not. The class was a mixed gender-group of traditional college age students, between 19 and 23 years old.

Experimental or treatment group ("C2"). Taught as a *Seminar in German Literature*, "C2" is offered in alternate years only. The content and focus of this course, which can be subject to change and modification, is largely influenced and directed by students' interests, needs and motivations. Based on the prerequisite that students must have successfully complete five consecutive semesters of German before enrolling, the course is designed for an audience that would be comparable to high-intermediate (or low-advanced) non-native speakers of German. Listed as a three-credit course, the class meets twice a week for one hour and fifteen minutes.

The informants in this group participated in an uncontrolled study environment. They were all of Caucasian ethnic background and non-native speakers of German. The majority of students in this group also spoke English as their first or native tongue, and had studied German as a foreign language for at least four or five semesters. The non-native English speakers in this study were natives of Eastern European countries, who

had lived in Germany between two and five years, and who spoke Bosnian as their first language (L1), and English and/or German as their second (L2) and/or third (L3) language, respectively. Coming to Germany mainly during their adolescent years (between age 8 and 12), these students had acquired German while attending public schools in the German Educational System (*Haupt- or Realschule*). They did, however, maintain their first/native language by speaking it primarily at home (i.e., with family members) or in culturally familiar environments (i.e., with friends, or fellow students from their native country). After leaving Germany, these students had moved with their families to the U.S., where they have been living now between four and seven years, respectively.

With the exception of the non-native speakers of English, all learners in this group had participated in a semester-long study abroad program during their sophomore year. Some students had even multiple experiences studying (additional four-to-six week long summer language programs) and working (internships that lasted several weeks) in a German-speaking environment. The class was a mixed gender-group of traditional college age, between 20 and 23 years old.

The researcher was informed of the fact that the non-native speakers of English in both groups kept strong personal, social and cultural ties to Germany, because these students would stay in close contact with their extended families and (school) friends who lived in Germany. However, the researcher did not know at the time of this investigation, to which degree these study participants still engaged in traditions, customs, or beliefs from their respective cultural and ethnic backgrounds while they were living in the U.S.

Selection of literary texts

The rationale for selecting the following texts was both methodologically and pedagogically motivated. The methodological rationale was grounded in Iser's (1978) reader-response model by "filling the gaps" in the text to create meaning, while the pedagogical reasons for selecting these short stories were based on information collected in the exploratory study (fall 2002) and survey (spring 2003) which were administered prior to this investigation. Out of the nine short stories that were read during the course of the semester, the following were selected for data analysis. All texts²⁹ were distributed to students in form of Xerox copies on the day they were to be read.

Wolfdietrich Schnurre, *Jenö war mein Freund* (1958)

Franz Fühmann, *Das Judenauto* (1962)

Reiner Kunze, *Element* (1978)

Gabriele Wohmann, *Ein netter Kerl* (1980)

Marianne Gruber, *Der Mongo* (1987)

Bertolt Brecht, *Die unwürdige Greisin* (1939/1949)

SAID, *Ein Märchen* (1985)

The rationale for selecting these texts was based on two criteria: the first one was theoretical in nature and based on Iser's explanation and description of the act of reading. In accordance with Iser's view that the reader's actions should be involved in responding to the text (see chapter two), the short stories that were chosen for analysis are particularly well suited to bring out the reader's "imaginative and perceptive faculties" (Iser, 1978, p. x). Furthermore, the function of the literary texts that were selected for this study is that they allow the reader to experience something new, to "fashion new

²⁹ A complete list of references for the short stories can be found in the reference section.

identities" as Thomas (2000, p. 28) said. Students must address their own individual beliefs and values, if they want to comprehend the *significance* of the text's meaning.

These short stories have also been chosen, because they give readers the opportunity to comprehend and respond to them in two stages – the stage of meaning-making, and the stage of significance. It is the latter one, however that captures the moment when the reader is actually "taking over" the meaning so it can have an effect on his or her life (Iser, 1978, p. 151). The second principle was guided by the pedagogical rationale that was connected to the theme of this course, which was entitled "The Stranger(s) Among Us: Experiencing *The Other* in German Culture and Society". The following description is included to provide a brief overview of the course objectives:

In this course we will examine how *The Other* has been represented in selected German literary texts written by Germans, German feature films, and contemporary literary texts by non-native (foreign-born) authors writing in German.

Through the study of literary and cultural artifacts from different historical periods we will explore how German perceptions of *The Other* and *Otherness* have been developed over time.

Attention will be given to works that take as their chief subject the portrayal of individuals or groups that have been marked as 'outsiders' who belong to German C/culture (for example, handicapped people, Jews, minorities, gypsies, overweight people, immigrants, gays/lesbians, guest workers, old people etc.)

To guide students in their literary and cultural readings, class discussions will focus on and around three primary questions:

1. The outsiders' role within society and their community.
2. The outsiders' thoughts, attitudes and beliefs.
3. The outsiders' position within the social, political, historical and cultural contexts of their time.

The syllabus further entailed this information pertaining to the *Written Response*

Journals:

As part of the requirements for this course you are asked to keep a *Response Journal* in which you will write your responses to the individual short stories we will be reading this semester.

During the first week of classes, you will also be receiving a set of guide questions for your response journal, which you may find helpful during the process of writing your responses.

Please keep in mind that *Response Journals* are not finished products, but rather evolve over a period of time, usually including entries that are made at different stages of the reading, for example:

- a) while you are in the process of reading the text
- b) immediately after you finished reading the text
- c) a short/ little while after you read the text
- d) after you re-read the text (i.e., you read it again a few days or weeks later)

Therefore, think of your *Response Journal* as a "continuous work in progress" and write down your responses (thoughts, ideas, experiences, questions, comments etc.) to the texts at different times. Feel free to go back to the text at any time and re-read it as many times as you wish.

Personal interest and motivation

The majority of students who participated in this study had also been enrolled in previous German courses I taught at the intermediate (third and fourth semester) and advanced levels (fifth and sixth semester). The materials incorporated in these courses included a variety of readings that had been taken from German newspapers, magazines, Internet articles and the main textbooks, (*Kaleidoskop* for the intermediate level and *Was ist deutsch?* for the advanced level). While teaching these courses, I noticed that in particular readings that were culturally rich and diverse sparked students' interests. This in turn encouraged their responses to the texts, and elicited engaging comments from most of the learners during class discussions.

For example, the compilation of stories in *Was ist deutsch?*, the textbook used for the sixth semester course, presented students with a mosaic picture of Germany that

indicated a multicultural society with an abundance of different attitudes, beliefs and perspectives. By questioning the "notion of German identity as an absolute and a Germany that is homogenous in cultural, linguistic, social, ethnic, and racial terms" (*Was ist deutsch?*, 2000, p. ix) the authors' aim is to present students with a different picture of contemporary Germany: One that may not necessarily be discussed to this extent in secondary FL classes. The readings that include many unique perspectives and different voices, which clearly move beyond German mainstream culture, focus instead on "the other" or "the social outsider".

For instance, through discussing texts like "Roskastanien" (*Chestnuts*) or "Bürger Erdem—Eine Fallstudie" (*Citizen Erdem—A Case Study*) students gained deeper insights into the status and personal experiences of foreigners in Germany. They learned about the personal adjustments that both East and West Germans had to make after the fall of the Wall in 1989, and also found out how differently the story writers had perceived and experienced the *Wendezeit*³⁰ in Germany. Students also read texts that depicted religious education and religious tolerance³¹, and learned about young people's quest for a personal future and identity while experiencing social and environmental problems³² in Germany.

In a conversation I had with students at the end of the semester, in which I asked them to evaluate the textbook, most learners expressed that, while they found the majority of topics interesting, they did not always understand the texts. They attributed

³⁰ All texts are taken from *Was ist deutsch?* Examples are "Die Grenze ist offen" (The border is open), "Von Deutschland nach Deutschland: Endstation Eisenach" (From Germany to Germany: Terminal Eisenach), or "Ich war stolz auf dieses Land" (I was proud of this country)

³¹ "Besuch eines Mittagsgebets in einer Moschee" (Visit of a Midday Prayer in a Mosque), "Sarah's Stein" (Sarah's Stone)

³² "das geht mir auf'n sack" (that's getting on my nerves), "Die Jungen beißen zurück" (The young ones fight back)

this to "the many unknown vocabulary words", "the difficult grammar" and their "personal unfamiliarity with the text's content". Students also stated that they enjoyed readings with familiar contexts more (i.e., situations that they had either come in contact with or personally lived through), because they could draw on previous experiences.

The students' comments thus confirmed what L2 reading research has pointed out repeatedly – that L2 readers' text comprehension is enhanced when readers are enabled to build schemata by accessing existent background information. Once students had accumulated the schemata *before* they were reading the texts (prior knowledge), they could match the old with the new information from the story. Texts with familiar contents were not only more interesting and motivating for students, but also led readers to research additional information about the topics. This survey also highlighted the evident link between student's interest and motivation when reading in the second language (cf. Day & Bamford, 1998).

Based on students' comments I further concluded that the texts selected for the current investigation needed to reflect that the material adequately addressed students' needs and capabilities in terms of linguistic difficulty and content familiarity. At the same time the texts had to be interesting, stimulating and motivating, making the students want to interact with the readings and thus providing opportunities for genuine discourse in the FL class.

Familiarity with text genre

To familiarize students with the genre of the short story, I had adopted the textbook "Der treffende Ausdruck" by Brigitte Turneure (1996) a year earlier, and used

it in the fifth semester German course. Since all students who participated in this investigation had also completed that course, I could assume that they were familiar with the genre to a certain extent. By reading and discussing selected contemporary prose that was taken from "Der treffende Ausdruck", students had developed a basic understanding of the purpose, form and elements of a short story (i.e., narrative fiction with a simple plot that aims at the unity of characterization, theme and effect, matter-of-fact description of a particular event or moment in life, little action, hardly any character development).

Genre: Short story

This text type was chosen, because it not only presents an ideal way to introduce students to literature in the foreign language classroom, but also offers an appropriate medium that invites personal reader responses. According to Collie and Slater (1987, p. 196) short stories hold a number of advantages that also proved to be beneficial for the current investigation:

1. Their practical length allows for a reading that can usually be managed or accomplished within one or two class periods.
2. Due to their length, short stories are also more suitable for re-reading and accomplishing written assignments, such as the reader-response oriented journals for this study.
3. They are less intimidating and therefore (hopefully) less frustrating for foreign language readers, because students can experience a feeling of achievement by completing the reading in a much shorter time frame (as compared to a novel, for example).

4. Unlike longer and more complex texts, such as novels, short stories offer a greater variety in terms of contents and contexts. Thus, the chance to introduce a text that appeals to the interest and taste of individual students is much greater.
5. The extreme compression of the short story that invites the reader to respond to it on a personal level makes this genre particularly suitable for the reader response activities that were selected for this study.

Despite the benefits that the short story holds for foreign language instruction, Collie and Slater (1987) point out, that it is important for the instructor to carefully prepare and present this genre in the literature classroom. Because of its concise nature, the initial or first reading usually does not reveal the wealth of information and attention to detail which are characteristic for the short story. This may prevent students from fully understanding and appreciating the text or even lead to misreadings. Re-reading is therefore a "key element in the full appreciation of short stories" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 197), and needs to be an integral part in the process of reading the short story, whether it be read silently or out loud.

Researcher's role as participant-observer

As the main researcher on site of this study I took the role of what Adler and Adler (1998) describe as the "peripheral-member-researcher", which is marked by an insider's perspective, in this case my own. In order to arrive at a careful and accurate assessment of study participant's responses, I interacted with and observed them closely enough to acquire an insider's viewpoint, without however actually becoming involved in the groups' activities. This was made possible because of the long term student-teacher

relationships I shared with the study participants through prior coursework (I have known every single participant for two or three years, respectively). Consequently, I have established a rapport between the participants and myself, that is characterized by mutual respect, trust and confidence. This in turn allowed me to work "from the margins", while at the same time taking full responsibility for setting up and carefully monitoring all central activities of the study (Adler & Adler, 1998, p. 85).

The main concerns that have been raised in research including participant observation, especially when researchers are viewed in such close proximity to their study participants, are those of *validity* and *reliability*. To enhance the validity of my observations I have presented the written narrative in a form that is referred to as *verisimilitude*. This refers to a style of writing that attempts to "draw the reader [of this dissertation, my comment] so closely into [the] subject's worlds [here into the world of the four case studies] that these can be palpably felt" (Adler & Adler, 2000, p. 88).

To address the issue of reliability, which is otherwise satisfied through a statistical analysis of data that validates the importance and results of noticed patterns and tendencies, I conducted the observations systematically by changing certain variables that were related to materials furnishing additional background knowledge for the readings. While varying conditions such as time and place that still produce identical findings are most likely to enhance the credibility of a study (Adler & Adler, 2000, p. 88), my approach was to vary the ways in which the literary discourse could be explored by students (cf. Kramsch, 1993b, p. 146).

For example, translating the genre (short story) into a different medium, such as a theater stage for Ilse Aichinger's "Fenster-Theater", or varying the referential world of the

story by withholding the end of Böll's "Anekdote zur Senkung der Arbeitsmoral" and asking students to respond to one or both main characters can serve as the starting point for comparing, evaluating and assessing individual students' reasoning with that of the text.

Although it is possible that direct observation results may be impaired by the researcher's own biases they can, if carried out with necessary rigor and consistency and used in combination with other qualitative research methods (i.e., data obtained from a variety of oral and written sources), contribute cogent and credible information that support other qualitative data.

Sampling: Rationale for selection of individual cases for analysis

As Stake (2000) notes, the selection of cases to be studied might be considered one of the most unique aspects of casework. In particular for the two types of casework that were applied in the current investigation – instrumental and collective – the researcher is frequently required to choose which cases to focus on and thus needs to identify a text corpus that can be selected either randomly or purposive.

As demonstrated in research by Huberman and Miles (1998) or Ryan and Bernard (2000), who both discuss in detail qualitative data management and methods of analysis, the proper selection of cases is one of the most important components in qualitative casework. Researchers, as Huberman and Miles (1998) observe, therefore need to think "purposively and conceptually about sampling" and are obligated to sample "an intricately nested range of activities, processes, events, locations, and times" (p. 204). Based on the strategy that is used here, samples can then be based on cases that are

exceptional or rare, that show what is typical of a phenomenon, or that corroborate findings based on a hypothesis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780).

The main research questions for this investigation were intentionally phrased to include samples that were randomly selected. However, as the study progressed, samples exhibiting specific and typical phenomena evolved and it became evident that these were better suited for the ultimate selection of cases. Thus, a purposive rationale was applied that led to four cases, which were exclusively taken from the treatment group. Clearly, these cases are not to be understood as generalizations. Instead, they were studied because they illustrate particular *phenomena* that were observed. Therefore, it can be said that the four selected cases are expected to represent some population of cases. Most important for the decision which cases to select were the following two questions: Does the individual case offer opportunities to learn, and which cases are best suited to learn the most?

Once the cases had been established, the basic units of analysis were identified, which were taken from the body of collected data:

1. Responses to survey questions,
2. Think aloud protocols,
3. Response journals, and
4. Personal interviews.

The comprehensive amount of data about each case study participant has been provided to illustrate personal characteristics of the individual person, namely their background information as shaped by personal, academic, socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects.

The reason for citing this information in such detail is to show how the specific

background knowledge can be related to the individual's approach to reading FL literary texts. In addition, the data serve to establish connections between the case study participant's background knowledge and their individual responses to the aforementioned texts.

Data Collection

All results for this study were obtained through both written and oral data. Since I acted as the main researcher throughout the entire study, data for analysis was collected through both objective measures (questionnaires, student responses) and personal observation (during in-class response activities and personal interviews). The written responses from study participants were collected using think-aloud protocols and response journal entries, while oral responses were procured through personal interviews which were audio-taped and transcribed. All data for this research was collected during the fall semester 2003 in an upper-level undergraduate German Literature course.

Prior to collecting immediate reactions from study participants to the literary texts, three questionnaires were administered in class. Following the questionnaires, students' responses to selected short stories were collected using think-aloud protocols, out-of-class response journals and personal interviews. Data for this study was primarily gathered in a "natural classroom setting", referring to the course I was teaching during the fall of 2003, and in a personal interview with individual students, which was held outside of the regular class time. The data was analyzed using preset criteria.

Preparation of the course

The following schedule outlines the preparation of the course as it was designed for the treatment group from which the four case studies were taken. It is included here to provide the reader of this study with a background regarding the typical procedures that would take place during regularly scheduled class sessions.

The first class meeting was used to provide all study participants with an overview of the course (syllabus). During the second class the questionnaires related to participants' background information (personal and academic profiles), reading experiences and reading response preferences were administered. The third class meeting was devoted to explaining and modeling procedures that were subsequently used to obtain participants' responses (think-aloud protocols and response journals). The following class sessions, conducted from the second until the twelfth week of classes had a similar format:

1. Students began reading the selected literary texts *in class*. During the time of the reading data for think-alouds were conducted and data from think aloud protocols was gathered in the classroom.
2. Students continued and completed reading the texts *outside of class* and responded to them by writing in their response journals.
3. Students *revisited* the story during the following class meeting, which was usually conducted in a fashion that integrated small- and large group discussions. At this point students' comments and questions about the story were addressed, which also provided a venue for readers to express their individually created meaning of a text and negotiate that meaning with other peers.

All study participants were encouraged to re-read the individual stories at their own pace outside of class, multiple times if desired or necessary. In addition, they were asked to view their journals as "works in progress" to which they could add new responses, or change, adjust, or modify prior entries.

Before they began reading students were given guide questions for the pre-reading phase and the response journals. While all participating readers were encouraged to use these prompts, they were not required to respond to all of them. For example, if a student found that a particular guide question was too restrictive for him or her or that it hindered the (student)-writer's flow of responding the story, the student had the option to forego that question.

The personal interview between each study participant and the instructor (researcher) was held at the end of the semester during the fourteenth week of classes. All interviews were audio-taped and took place outside of class during the instructor's office hours. During the interview the instructor asked each student a set of predetermined guide questions which were formulated to gain deeper insights into the students' overall reaction to the readings, their experiences with the think-alouds and with writing the response journals. The interview was designed with the purpose in mind to give students a chance to revisit and reflect upon their responses to the texts they had read during the semester. Another goal of the personal interview was to provide a venue for students through which they could express *how* and *what* they experienced during the act of reading and the writing process.

Procedures

All data for this study was collected during the fall semester of 2003. While information was gathered from all participating students, only data taken from the case studies (*treatment* group) was coded and analyzed.

The primary data collection sources included:

Pre-Reading Phase:	Questionnaires
While-Reading Phase:	Participant Observation during Think-Alouds
Post-Reading Phase:	Open-ended Reader Response Journals
Post-Reading Phase:	Personal Interviews

Secondary sources of information that corroborated the research finding from primary sources were provided through my field notes. These notes included words, or short phrases and sentences, sometimes also questions that I quickly jotted down during my observations in the think-aloud phase, and anecdotal notes or experiences I recorded immediately after each class.

Pre-Reading Phase: Questionnaires. Three questionnaires, entitled *Student Background Information* (Appendix B), *Reading Survey* (Appendix C), and *Students' Reading Response Preferences* (Appendix D) were administered to all students (treatment and control group) at the beginning of this study. The purpose of these surveys was to investigate and analyze the role that individual background information play when nonnative readers of German respond to FL literary texts (*Informed Written Consent Form*, Appendix I). All three questionnaires were administered during the second class meeting and took students approximately 45 minutes to complete.

The first questionnaire (*Student Background Information*, Appendix B) was designed to provide insights into study participants' background information, and how this information can influence and/or effect how nonnative readers of German make meaning when reading and responding to Foreign Language literary texts. The survey was subdivided into four sections and focused on questions related to students' personal, academic, socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Study participants were asked to complete the questionnaire by putting a check mark next to the answer they deemed appropriate, and/or by writing a short sentence to fill in the respective information.

The second questionnaire (*Reading Survey*, Appendix C) was directed at obtaining data that would aid the researcher in gaining a deeper understanding of students' attitudes toward reading in their first/native (L1) and second/foreign (L2) language. This survey consisted of two parts, which were designed to measure students' reading behaviors in L1 and L2 respectively. The majority of questions in part one (L1) corresponded with those in part two (L2), and focused on the enjoyment level of reading, the kind of reading materials that were owned and/or read by students, and the learner's personal rationale and motivation for reading in L1 and L2. The final question in each part of this survey contained a number of items scored on a Likert scale from one to five: while the L1 question addressed the *frequency* of reading various texts (including print and electronic materials), the L2 question was related to numerous statements connected with students' *feelings* and *experiences* when reading in the second/ foreign language.

In the third questionnaire (*Students' Reading Response Preferences*, Appendix D), study participants were asked to contribute information that would offer insights into their personal preferences when responding to FL literary texts (i.e., orally versus

written). Of the 16 items on this survey, 14 were to be rated using a Likert scale from one to five, while two questions specifically asked students to name topics they enjoyed or did not enjoy reading about.

Pre-Reading Phase: Open-ended questions. The four open-ended questions that preceded the short stories (Appendix E) were employed to prepare and motivate learners for the upcoming reading (Arcuri, 1990; Kauffmann, 1996). They were also geared to activate their individual background knowledge and elicit appropriate schemata (Rumelhart, 1987), and to help them brainstorm ideas that could potentially be relevant for the comprehension of the individual story (Godev, Martinez-Gibson & Toris 2002; Liaw, 2001).

The following responses are from the pre-reading questions for the short story "Das Judenauto" (see Table 2). The answers given here illustrate the particular background knowledge readers activated, the schemata they drew on and developed further. The examples also show how participants negotiated between the two languages (L1 and L2) when recording their thoughts. All entries and examples cited in this study have been taken from the four case studies that were selected for this investigation.

Table 2

Das Judenauto (September 22, 2003)

Readers' speculations and hypotheses that were based on the title of the story	Readers' memories, thoughts, and ideas that were based on the title of the story	Readers' predictions about the story
---	---	---

Thomas

Juden in Deutschland.
Wahrscheinlich um 1930-1945,
weil das Thema ist populär für
die deutsche Lit.

Ausser mein eigenes Auto,
aber sonst nichts. Juden auch,
wahrscheinlich ein Synagoge.
Was weiss ich.

Juden werden nicht in einem
positiven Licht sein. Die werden
Von manche Leute als etwas
Unter-Menschliches gestellt. Juden
werden als Geldsuchtig, Lügner
dargestellt.

Andrea

Ich denke, dass diese Geschichte
über einen Juden handelt. Dieser
Jude hatte ein Auto dass von
einen Deutschen kapput
geschlagen wurde.

Ja, diese Überschrift erinnert
mich an den Film "The
Harmonists" den ich letzten
Semester in meiner deutsch
Klasse gesehen habe, weil es
sich auch in diesem Film über
Juden gehandelt hat.

Ich denke dass das kapput machen
von den Jüdischen Auto nur ein
Anfang sein wird, es wird nur
schlimmer und schlimmer biss der
zweite Weltkrieg nicht aufhört.
Wahrscheinlich wird das Auto
Eines Juden kapput gemacht und
er wird über seine Gefühle und die
Ungerechtigkeit schreiben.

Theresia

Ein Auto, das typisch für
Juden zu fahren ist.

Das Buch "Die Judenbuche",
das wir letztes Jahr gelesen
haben.

Die Juden werden irgendwie
benachteiligt werden. Das
Judenauto wird ein Symbol für
etwas Wichtiges sein.

Michael

Die Geschichte ist
warscheinlich über den 2ten
Welt krieg und wie die
Juden diskriminiert
waren.

Yeah, viele of meine eigene
Erfahrungen! KRIEG, TOTE,
CONCEN LAGER
[Konzentrationslager, my
comment]

Probably the life of a Jude before
the war and how he was
discriminated against.

Note. The oral and written samples of case study participants are always cited in the original. No changes
have been made to the language, grammar, spelling or punctuation.

In preparation for the reading of Brecht's story "Die unwürdige Greisin", readers were asked to write a short essay about their own grandmother. By reflecting about their personal relationship with an older family member, readers began to examine their own perspective and attitude towards their grandmother and to think about how they viewed her. To invoke schemata that could assist students in writing the essay, a set of guide questions was provided, which focused on descriptive elements (appearance, living environment), personal characteristics (behaviors, interests, hobbies) and typical

activities (daily activities or tasks) as well as the reader's personal interaction with his/her grandmother.

Example of Guide Questions

Erzählen Sie von Ihrer Großmutter. Die folgenden Fragen können Ihnen dabei als Hilfe dienen.

1. Wie sieht (oder wie sah) Ihre Großmutter aus?
2. Wo wohnt(e) sie?
3. Wohnt(e) sie mit anderen Menschen/ allein?
4. Was sind (waren) ihre Hobbies oder Interessen?
5. Was macht(e) Ihre Großmutter gern?
6. Wie verbringt (verbrachte) sie einen typischen Tag?
7. Wie oft sehen (sahen) Sie Ihre Großmutter?
8. Was tun (taten) Sie, wenn Sie mit Ihrer Großmutter zusammen sind (waren)?

The following excerpts were taken from study participants' essays.

Meine Grossmutter hatte weiße Haare, sie sah typisch aus. Sie wohnte in meiner Nachbarschaft, nur eine halbe Meile weg. Sie wohnte allein nach der Tod meines Grossvaters, also ungefähr 2 Jahre bis sie starb. Sie bäckte, kochte, knitted (meint: strickte) alles was die typische Omis machen. Ich weiss nicht genau wie war oft weg mit anderen Omis, sie lass die Bibel, bäckte usw. Ich sah sie ein oder zwei Mal pro Woche, und auch am die typische Feiertage. Sprechen, essen und ich half ihr mit Dingen wie Gartenarbeit, Hausarbeit (reparieren usw). (Thomas)

Ich habe zwei Großmütter. Die Mutter meiner Mutter hieß (name), sie ist 1990 an Krebserkrankung gestorben. Ich war damals sechs Jahre alt und erinnere mich wenig an meine Oma (name). Von Fotos her weiß ich aber dass sie sehr hübsch war, sie hatte auch viel gelächelt sagt meine Mutter. Zu mir war sie immer nett auch als sie starke schmerzen hatte und diese erinnerung wird immer mit mir bleiben. Meine andere Oma (name), wohnt in (name of country) mit meiner Tante und ihrer Familie. Sie hat lange graue Haare die mit einem Kopftuch bedeckt sind. Sie ist kleiner und runder, ich finde aber dass sie süß aussieht. Oma (name) strickt gern Pullies und andere sachen, sie trink auch sehr gern Kaffee. Als wir in (student's native country) gelebt haben, hatte ich meine Oma jeden Tag gesehen, in Deutschland jeden Monat und jetzt habe ich sie seit über vier Jahren nicht mehr gesehen. Als wir uns aber sahen, hatten wir alles zusammen gemacht, sogar in den selben Bett geschlafen. Ich habe ihre Haare gekämmt und sie meine, wir haben zusammen gekocht und Kaffe getrunken. Ich vermisse meine Oma sehr. (Andrea)

Meine Oma hat kurze, graue Haare, viele falten im Gesicht, ein künstliches Gebiß und ist sehr dunn und schwach. Während des Sommers wohnt sie alein in einem großen Haus in (name of city), und während des Winters wohnt sie alein in

einem kleinen Wohnwagen in (name of state). Für Hobbys strickt sie gern, spielt sie Bridge mit ihren Freundinnen gern, und sie singt gern in der Kirsche [Kirche]. Meine Oma kocht gern, spricht gern, reist gern und liest gern. Wenn sie in (name of state) wohnt, steht sie früh auf, isst sie Frühstück, pflückt sie Orangen und dann spielt sie Bridge mit ihren Freunden. Ich sehe meine Oma jede zwei oder drei Jahre. Als ich ein Kind war, hat meine Oma und ich zusammen Kekse gekocht, Kartenspiele gespielt, gesungen und wir sind zusammen in die Kirsche [Kirche] gegangen. (Theresia)

Meine Großmutter ist die beste [underlined by the student, my comment] Großmutter in der Welt. Ich bin ganz sicher! Ich mach nur spaß, aber sie ist sehr freundlich und sie macht jeden Mensch lachen. Ich sehe ihr nur ein mal pro Jahr. Sie verbringt ihr Zeit mit ihrem Mann. Sie lebt in (student's native country) und hat acht kindern. Sie hat sehr viel gearbeitet um die Kindern zu erziehen. In den Krieg [Yugoslavian war, my comment]), sie hat 3 kindern verloren weil sie getötet wurden. (Michael)

Following this preparatory task, students were introduced to the title of the story and asked to complete the pre-reading questions (Appendix E). Selected responses to these questions are quoted below (see Table 3).

Table 3

Die unwürdige Greisin (November 13, 2003)

Readers' associations and speculations that were based on the title of the story	Readers' predictions about the story, only based on the title of the story	Readers' predictions about the story after reading the first two paragraphs of the story
Thomas <i>unwürdig</i> – unworthy (Gott?) für etwas, etwas falsch gemacht <i>Greisin</i> – alte Leute, gemeine Leute	Eine alte Frau, die undankbar ist, auf etwas, oder jemanden, die/der sie helfen will.	Es handelt sich mit einer alten Oma und ihr Leben und Familie. Besonders wichtig ist ihr jüngste Sohn, den schwach ist. Das Konflikt wird etwas zwischen ihm und seine Mutter sein.

Andrea

*unwürdig –
kompliziert,
nicht verständlich,
schwer umzugehen, undankbar,
gemein*

*Greisin –
graue Haare,
ältere Frau, Oma, Tante,
gemein*

Ich denke dass diese Geschichte über eine Kinheitserinnerung sein wird. Diese Erinnerung ist über eine ältere Frau die eine Nachbarin von einer jüngeren Familie ist. Die ältere Frau beschwärt sich über den Lärm den die Kinder verursachen wenn sie spielen.

Jetzt denke ich dass es sich in der Geschichte um eine Familie geht die sich verändert hatte als der Opa gestorben ist. Vor allem hat sich die Oma verändert, persönlich und auch anderen Leuten gegenüber, wie zum Beispiel dem eigenen Enkelkind. Daher das Enkelkind Jetzt älter ist schreibt diese Person über die Erfahrung mit der Oma nachdem tot des Opas.

Theresia

*unwürdig –
nichts Gutes im Leben gibt,
keine Lust haben etwas
zu machen,
beklagen,
nichts Positives machen,
ohne Wert,
schlechte Laune*

*Greisin –
klug, Nonnen, alte Frauen,
langsam, Omas, schwach,
schlau, brauchen viele Hilfe*

Die Geschichte wird eine alte Frau beschreiben, die immer sehr schlecht gelaunt ist und nichts positives für die Gesellschaft macht, aber auf jeden Fall kriegt sie Rente von dem Staat Deutschlands.

Ich glaube, dass die Geschichte über das Leben der Oma nach dem Tod ihres Mannes erzählen wird. Sie wird die Schwierigkeiten beschreiben, die die Oma hat, ohne ihren Mann und ihre Kinder zu leben. Die Geschichte wird auch erzählen, wie allein die Oma sich fühlt, allein zu leben, und wie andere Leute sie behandeln.

Michael

*unwürdig –
disrespectful,
Probleme,
Alte und Junge*

*Greisin –
alt,
Grossmutter,
No patient*

Die alte Grossmutter wird alter und alter, und ihr Vermutung ist ein bisschen anders. Sie hat viel gearbeitet und jetzt ist sie in Lage wo sie nicht bereit ist die andere Leute zu helfen und sie wird anders sein.

Ich glaube es wird die Gleiche sein, weil es als ich gesagt habe ist. Sie hat sehr viel gearbeitet und viele Kindern großgezogen ist. Jetzt ist sie alt und hat ihrem Man verloren. Wahrscheinlich ist sie nicht bereit viel zu arbeiten und andere Leute zu helfen. Ich glaube sie würde gern helfen, aber ihre Alter ist in den Weg.

Note. The oral and written samples of case study participants are always cited in the original. No changes have been made to the language, grammar, spelling or punctuation.

While Reading Phase: Think-Aloud Protocols. To find out what goes on in students' minds as they read, and how they try to make sense of what they read a technique referred to as "think-aloud" has been employed in the past by scholars pursuing both

qualitative and quantitative research (cf. Block, 1986; Cavalcanti, 1987; Davey, 1983; Davis & Bistodeau, 1993; Olson, Duffy & Mack, 1984; Wade, 1990). Using the think aloud approach allows researchers to gather data while having students "verbalize their thoughts as they read and thus bring into the open the strategies they are using to understand the text" (Oster, 2001, p. 64).

Participants in the current investigation were specifically instructed to comment on the literary texts in a "whatever-comes-to-your-mind-first" fashion. They were also encouraged to voice their questions about the text, orally or in writing, and make inferences or predictions about what *might* or *could* happen in the reading. By producing these comments students did not only activate their existing background knowledge about a particular topic; they also revealed personal strengths and weaknesses in terms of text comprehension.

The participants' oral and written comments during the think aloud sessions provided valuable and important information, which I was able to use in two ways: as an assessment tool and as an instructional device for future classes. By (indirectly) expressing what they needed in order to understand the texts, study participants' allowed me to assess their individual needs more precisely. In an attempt to better accommodate these requirements I considered student's comments when planning subsequent lessons in this course. This resulted, for example in my modification of the guide questions that were used for the response journals. When writing their responses, the study participants referred to these questions as "das orange Blatt" (*the orange paper*). Observing students' remarks and responses to the readings also affected how I phrased and arranged the guide questions for the personal interviews, which were administered at the end of the semester.

Besides the advantage of highlighting the metacognitive insights that occur in think-alouds when readers display the ability to think about their own thinking, this approach also serves as a monitor for reading comprehension (i.e., access of basic knowledge, indication of vocabulary deficits, relation of earlier to newer information, misinterpretation of words or phrases due to literal translation). Additionally, think-alouds are very helpful in making the shift from traditional teacher- to more student-centered classrooms. Instead of the typical instructor-initiated question-answer-session that oftentimes accompanies discussions and interpretations of (literary) texts, the majority of questions and comments about the texts are now actually brought up by the students themselves! It then follows that learners who become *aware* of their own thinking processes, and who verbalize their thoughts by employing a variety of strategies (i.e., creating mental images, activating and bringing forward prior knowledge, making inferences by speculating, hypothesizing or predicting what might come next or what the text could be about) are well equipped to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

Initially I modeled the think aloud strategy (Appendix F) to all study participants using a short story by Maria Do Rosario Matos, "Wie man Tau zieht" (*How to play Tug of War*). As I demonstrated my own think aloud to students I read every sentence of the story out loud, pausing in between sentences to verbalize my comments and questions in a softer tone of voice. The following is an excerpt from my own think-aloud:

"Wie man Tau zieht" – [hm...*man*, niemand spezifisch also...könnte demnach irgendwer sein, vielleicht..."Wie man Tau zieht", möglicherweise eine Art Bedienungsanleitung darüber, wie Leute beim Tau ziehen stehen sollten, also wie sie in einer Schlange stehen, wenn sie Tau ziehen: Knie leicht gebeugt, Oberkörper nach vorn, das Tau mit beiden Händen ganz fest haltend...als Kinder

haben wir das oft gespielt...meistens im Sommer...oder auch im Sportunterricht, draußen...]

"How one plays Tug of War", or "How to play Tug of War" – [uhm... one, no one specific...could therefore be anybody, maybe... "How to play Tug of War", maybe some sort of manual about how people should be positioned, that is – how they have to line up behind one another when they play tug of war: knees slightly bend, body leaning forward, clutching the rope tightly with both hands...when we were children, we played this game a lot...mostly in the summer...or in our phys ed class, outside...]

"Zweisprachig leben" – [...also, es geht um jemanden, der zwei Sprachen spricht...er muß wohl beide Sprachen ganz gut sprechen, denke ich, denn er "lebt" ja offensichtlich in beiden Sprachen...Aber warum "leben"?...Lebt diese Person denn in zwei Ländern? Gleichzeitig? Wo ist sie denn zu Hause?...Und wie paßt das überhaupt zum Titel der Geschichte?...]

To live bilingually – [... well, it's about someone who is bilingual...he probably speaks both languages rather well, I suppose, because he apparently "lives" in both languages...But why "live"? ... Does this person live in two countries? At the same time? Where is she (the person) at home, after all? ...And how does this fit with the title anyway? ...]

After I had read the first few sentences of the story and demonstrated the think aloud strategy, the students and I talked about the comments I had made. I explained how these comments could help me understand the story better, because I constantly kept relating what I had read to what I thought about or knew. I did point out to study participants, however, that my initial thoughts and ideas may not be correct – they were at this point simply assumptions and speculations I had made about the text based on my prior knowledge and personal experiences.

For example, maybe this text wasn't a manual describing the set-up and various rules of the game (two opposing teams, standing apart from each other on either side of a dividing line, holding the same rope, the team that is pulled over the line by the other team loses). Maybe it was instead a personal narrative, which offered some first-hand tips or strategies from experienced tug-of-war players about how to *win* the game.

Furthermore, it is not clear who is being addressed here. While a manual might suggest that this is a text geared towards an adult audience that would seem more familiar with the language of such writings, the concept itself (*playing* tug-of-war) seems to lead the reader's attention in the opposite direction, picturing two groups of laughing and screaming children, cheered on by a crowd, who are pulling on their respective end of the rope as hard as they can to yank the other team to the ground.

At first glance, the beginning of the story, "Zweisprachig leben", does not seem to fit at all with what the title suggests. Even if the phrase is taken by itself, it is still not known who is bilingual: a man, a woman, a group of people? The fact that someone is living this bilingual "double-life" might suggest that he or she chose to live this way, meaning the person enjoys going back and forth between two languages, cultures, and countries. And then again – maybe not. Maybe the constant switch from one side to the other, from one language and culture into the other causes the person to experience confusion, frustration or anxiety. Maybe the person did not chose this life style at all, but was rather forced to live it based on a necessity that emanated from other circumstances (for example, political or socioeconomic reasons).

When I continued to read the story, I invited students to give their comments and ask questions in a similar fashion. I assured them that their individual contributions were a valuable tool that would help bring the story to light and discover what it might be about. To demonstrate that many kinds of responses were acceptable (as long as they were appropriate) I noted students' comments on the board. Thus, it became visible and clear to study participants that their individual contributions were appreciated and that they counted.

My expectation that students' would react in this first think aloud by referring to their own experiences as a bilingual speaker was confirmed. What was interesting however was *the way* in which they reflected those experiences, a phenomenon that I should come to observe in following think-alouds. Comments therefore differed substantially, based on how the participants defined themselves as bilingual speakers.

For example, one student who had recently returned from a semester-long study abroad program in Germany vividly described her experiences living and studying in a foreign culture. She marveled about the opportunities that allowed her to actually use the target language in "real life situations" (versus the somewhat "fake talk" in the foreign language classroom). She also emphasized the possibility of "feeling at home in two places at once", which could be achieved, the student proclaimed, if one has many enjoyable experiences in the host country.

Another student, whose experiences were noticeably influenced by her family's odyssey from one country (her native) to the next (Germany) to a third (the U.S.) spoke about very different encounters and confrontations with the other language(s) and culture(s). This was confirmed by yet another student when he recalled his memories of living in a refugee camp in Germany for weeks, where six or seven people had to share one room. A third student described his experiences, which included moving with his family to a small mid-western town in the U.S., where he felt "stuck", because his family did not have a car right away and (easy) access to public transportation was simply not available in his new hometown.

Compared to native English speakers, comments from non-native English speakers were more contemplative in nature when they talked about what it *felt* like

growing up with two languages in Germany. Their responses included for example memories about their first day of school as an *ABC Schütze* (students who begin school, first-graders) who receives the obligatory *Schultüte* (the colorful, pointed bag that German children receive on their very first day of school, which is filled with various school supply and sweets). They shared experiences about what it was like being a *Grundschüler* (student in the elementary school), feeling at times completely lost and isolated during the first weeks or months of school due to the lack of necessary language skills to communicate with classmates and/or teachers in 'the other' language. They also recalled stories playing soccer with *Kumpels* (friends or pals) after school, and celebrating traditional holidays with family, friends and relatives who all spoke the student's native tongue.

Another interesting observation I made during the think aloud phase was related to the *language* study participants used when verbalizing their thoughts. As indicated by earlier research studies (Davis & Bistodeau, 1993; Lee, 1986a, 1986b), conducting think aloud protocols in the reader's native tongue "is a better measure of actual comprehension and memory than writing in the nonnative language" (Davis & Bistodeau, 1993, p. 461)³³.

Both authors claim, that L2 learners who may not be able to express their ideas in the foreign language accurately or comprehensibly enough may feel compelled to evade

³³ In their investigation Davis & Bistodeau (1993) examined the influence of think aloud protocols and written recalls on reading comprehension in L1 and L2. Data was collected from both think alouds and written recalls to determine how proficient native language readers approach reading texts in their L1 and L2, and to find out if and how L1 reading differs from reading in L2. The findings suggested that a) certain elements of L2 (i.e. vocabulary) have a stronger impact on how readers process the L2 text, especially novice readers, and b) literary practices that are culturally determined may also influence reading behavior in L1.

mentioning certain thoughts completely out of fear that they might state them incorrectly³⁴.

With both native and non-native English speakers participating in this investigation, it must be pointed out, that the latter could not use their first language (L1) to express their thoughts or indicate their comprehension. Since the researcher did not speak or understand the L1 of these speakers, it was both infeasible and impractical to use the non-native students' L1 during any of the response phases. This situation mandated that *one* language had to be chosen for the questions that students were asked to respond to. I decided to provide all guide questions used in the pre-reading phase (Appendix E), the modeling of the think aloud procedure (Appendix F), and the guide questions for the response journals (Appendix G) in English. While the majority of participants in this study attempted to use the target language (German) *only* in their responses, they would occasionally switch back and forth between languages, starting out in L2 (German), then using English for a while, and moving back to L2 again. The recurring use of English in respondents' think alouds can be attributed to various factors (i.e., first or native language, ease of speaking, higher competency level, and personal preference). Usually, however study participants displayed a greater tendency to switch between languages if they wanted to clarify, explain or paraphrase their thoughts.

³⁴ Similar observations were made during a personal conversation I had with Professors Susan Gass and Charlene Polio from the Department of Linguistics and Languages at Michigan State University. I had requested the meeting to obtain their guidance in the design and set-up of this empirical study. While both professors agreed that the readings for the study should be conducted in the target language (German), they suggested that I allow answers for the think aloud protocols and the response journals to be given in English to invite "most immediate and untainted responses". They further cautioned me to consider that due to the various language and reading proficiency levels that existed within the proposed two groups of study participants, responses might fall short, because students may not have the linguistic ability to express their initial thoughts and ideas. (Personal interview from May 20, 2003).

The following examples are excerpts from students' think aloud protocols for Wolfdietrich Schnurre's story "Jenö war mein Freund" (September 15, 2003). All samples are cited in the original. No changes, corrections or modifications have been made to either the language or the format of individual entries.

Thomas

Jenö hat kein heim, er erinnert mir an Huckelberry Finn, er kaute auch Grahalm und war ein Zigeuner. Er hat wahrscheinlich keine Eltern, oder zu mindest gute Eltern, weil er Tabak will.

Der Vater von dem "guten" Kind, war nicht so gegen Jenö. Jeno stiehlt Dingen, von seinen Freund wie das Barometer, oder wahrscheinlich war es nicht Jenö, sondern seinem Vater. Jenö ist kein schlechter Freund, sondern er macht alles was Kinder machen sollen, sie tauschen sogar Geschenke. Jenö hat viele Talenten, und zeigt der andere Junge wichtige Sachen.

Die Familie klingt gut zu sein, sie machen vieles zusammen. Aber Jenö hat ein schlechtes Einfluss, weil den anderen Junge geht nicht mehr in der Schule. Der Vater ist ein sehr schlechter Mann. Jenö hat keine Elektrizität für das Eisenbahn.
Igel = hedgehog

Andrea

während Katie vorlas habe ich mir die Geschiche vor dem Augen geschieldert
Jenö raucht
der Vather möchte Jenö eine Chance geben
Jenö hat etwas ~~gestollen~~ geklaut
Jenö mag es wild zu sein
Jenö's Freund hat sich verändert, (er geht nicht zur schule)

Theresia

Was ist ein Igel? Possum, Stachel?
Ein acht jahriges Kind kaut/ raucht Tabak?!
His dad is more open-minded than mine.
It sounds kind of mystical, where Jenö lives. (The atmosphere)
It's weird that he wanted to steal things but not be given them.

Michael

"TOR", ein Fußball Mannschaft
Just wants to be a bad boy! (Jenö)
Zigeuner, dachte ich nicht über. Er will wahrscheinlich weg gehen
Warum ist er mit ihm Freund geblieben!?
Reminds me of Bosnian and German Zigeuner.
Wir indeed learn from eachother.

The respondents' tendency to prefer one language over the other (i.e., switching between German and English) can also be observed in their response journals as the following excerpts illustrate. The journal entry selections are taken from different short stories and one documentary film. All responses are quoted in the original. No changes or corrections have been made to individual entries.

Theresia

Ich dachte, dass es komisch war, daß der Vater des Hauptfigurs seine erste Meinung nach Zigeuner (*well, his opinion of his son's relationship with one*) so schnell verändert hat. Wenn er etwas wirklich gegen Zigeuner hat, warum hat er die Freundschaft zwischen Jenö und seinem Sohn erlaubt. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

Thomas

Der Vater ist unglaublich Gemein, und lernt sein Sohn eine Gruppe zu hassen. Das passiert jeden Tag, aber es ist immer noch sehr unrecht. *It breeds even more hate, and that benefits no one.* ("Jenö war mein Freund")

Theresia

Er lernt seine Oma hauptsächlich von den Briefen seines Onkels (der Buchdrucker). Das Bild, das der Erzähler von seiner Grossmutter hat, ist die Idee, die seine Oma eine unheimliche, wilde, alte Frau ist. Ich glaube, daß der Erzähler ein größeres Bild von seiner Großmutter andenkt, weil er so objektiv über sie in der Geschichte berichtet. *I think he takes everything he knows about her life into consideration (what his father has told him, etc.) and not just the little snippets of her life that are written in his uncle's letters. If he only took his uncle's letters into account, he would probably write about her with more of a negative bias.* ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

Andrea

Es ist nicht so dass ich meine Mutter nur Liebe wenn ich sie brauche, nein, ich Liebe sie auch wenn sie meine Hilfe braucht. *I think love is all about give and take, and everyone needs it.* ("Der Mongo")

The most striking example of participants' usage of both German and English can be documented in the response journals to Reiner Kunze's story "Element" and the documentary "Verriegelte Zeit" by East German filmmaker Sybille Schönemann, which was shown in connection with Kunze's text. The story "Element" reports a specific

incident in a young man's life: Michael, a student in the former German Democratic Republic (*DDR*) who wants to become a certified chemical worker, dares to have a bible in his dormitory room. Although this is not allowed by school and state officials, he defends his right to keep the book. Thus displaying a sign of individuality, the 'non-conforming' student is treated by teachers and police as an "unsicheres Element" (*security risk*).

The central driving force in "Verriegelte Zeit" is the filmmaker's quest into her own past, when she was arrested, interrogated, and sentenced by the national security service (*Stasi*) of the former German Democratic Republic (*DDR*) and finally thrown out (*Ausbürgerung*) of her homeland in 1985. While chronicling a most intimate part of her life, Schönmann searches for answers from people who had been responsible for her fate: Stasi officers, her supervisors at the East German film factory *DEFA*, judges, lawyers, and prison guards. The documentary thus portrays the filmmaker's way of dealing with her own past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) and is at the same time an important document of a specific time period in the former GDR.

Some study participants wrote both response journals (the one for the story and the one for the film) in English, while others switched back and forth between English and German. Others again kept writing in German, but occasionally inserted English words, phrases or short sentences into their journals. The following excerpts are taken from response journals in which the writers contemplate about the connections between historical developments in the GDR during the 1980ies and how those developments were reflected in the story ("Element") and the film ("Verriegelte Zeit").

Thomas

Man hat nie Verantwortung auf was sie machten dort, sie folgten einfach die

Regeln oder was von oben kam. Die Erzieherin dachte ganz nett an was sie zu Sibylle machte. Sie folgte die Regeln als sie zensiert die Briefe von ihrer Familie, und vergisst vieles was sie schlecht machte. Leute wollen nie selber die Verantwortung nehmen es war einfach die Regeln die von oben kam, oder die Gesetze damals. Persönlich ich verstehe nicht wieso man das machen könnte, und ich hoffe auch, dass ich es nie verstehen werde. *I think if I understood why the people followed the unjust laws, I might have sympathy for them and less for the victims. I believe everyone should be held accountable for their own actions, even though during that time it was legal. Just because something is a law does not mean its right or just. If a person upholds an unjust law, they are just as guilty as the person who made the law in my opinion.*

Andrea

Eigentlich ist der Film eine wahre Begebenheit von der Entwicklung der DDR. Vieles was ich in der Präsentation³⁵ gehört habe, habe ich im Film wirklich gesehen. *I saw the statements in action.* Als ich die Geschichte Element von Reiner Kunze gelesen hatte, hatte ich nicht verstanden warum Leute nicht einfach Ostdeutschland verlassen konnten und was dort wirklich vorkam. Durch den Film wurde mir aber vieles klarer. Dieses ganze Thema erinnert mich an die Situation als meine Eltern versucht hatten Familienmitglieder aus (student's native country) heraus zu holen und wie schwer und kompliziert es war.

Theresia

In der Geschichte "Element" und in dem Film hat die Stasi die Hauptfiguren ohne guten oder bekannten Grund beschlaggenommen. Die Hauptfiguren in die beiden haben wirklich nichts Schlechtes oder 'Illegales' getan, aber die beiden wurden von der Stasi verstört (meint: zerstört). Wir haben auch über die Stasi in der Präsentation³⁶ gelernt. Die Präsentation zeigt die Idee von gezwungenen Kollektivierung. Der Film zeigt diese Idee auch mit den Erklärungen der Befragten, warum sie gemacht, was sie gemacht haben. *The judge says, for example, that it wouldn't have mattered if he thought she should have been acquitted or not because he had to go along with the system of ideas and rules placed before him by the SED.*

Michael

Es gibt viele Zusammenhänge zwischen den Film und die historische Entwicklungen in der DDR. Die Leute die etwas sagen wollten das 'gegen' Regierung ist, war ein 'unsicheres Element'. Es gab keinen Freiheit in denen die Leute ihre Meinung äussern könnten, aber es gab die Gefängnisse für die Leute dass etwas sagen möchtete. Die Stasi wußte alles über die Leute dass etwas

³⁵ The respondent refers to a Power Point Presentation about political, social, cultural and literary developments in the GDR between 1949 and 1989, which I delivered at the beginning of this section, i.e. before the story was read or the film was seen.

³⁶ See previous footnote.

veränder wollten, und ganz schneller habe sie etwas gemacht. Auch in die Geschichte, die Element, Michael (here: the story's main character, my comment) könnte nicht etwas machen das gegen den Regierung oder *socialism* ist.

Post-Reading Phase: Response Journal. All study participants were asked to keep a response journal, which was used to help them develop and refine their responses to individual short story they read. The guide questions chosen for the response journal (Appendix G) were adapted from Probst's (1988) "Dialogue with a Text". They were used to encourage and facilitate students' exploration of the texts by drawing on the individual's feelings and experiences during the reading process. I emphasized to students that there were no "right" or "wrong" answers when they were writing their response journals. Based on the nature and set up of the investigation I also did not assign letter grades to any of the response journals, since I did not want students to feel inhibited or threatened by a grade while they were striving to articulate their personal thoughts and feelings. Students received full credit for the assignment, if the had completed the journal and turned it in.

To gain a clearer understanding why students reacted in a particular way to a text, I did ask them to explore in their writings, *why* they responded to a specific text in the way they did. My feedback to students' responses was therefore phrased in form of open-ended questions, such as, *Why do you think you reacted this way to the story?*

While all participants were always encouraged to share their observations and ideas with the group, there was no pressure on students to do so. For example, if for personal reasons students did not wish to voice their thoughts publicly, because of feelings associated with discomfort, embarrassment, anxiety or sadness when speaking about one's writing, they were allowed to remain silent. The rationale behind this was to

make participants feel comfortable and at ease when writing about their personal feelings and emotions.

Students generally turned in their response journals in the class following the reading, meaning after they had finished reading and responding to the story. However, readers who wished to hold on to their journals because they wanted to reread the story, and/or add another comment or observation were allowed to do so. After I had received all journals for one story, I began to read them while simultaneously writing comments down (i.e., field notes, observations). My own responses varied in length and depth: if students expressed confusion or bewilderment about a story or if they appeared to be very (emotionally) involved with the text, my comments and responses to their writing would be more extensive.

After the study had been underway for a few weeks, some study participants admitted they had initially felt rather awkward and unsure about what and how to write in their response journals. Although all guide questions for the response journal (Appendix G) were read and discussed in class *beforehand* and students were repeatedly assured that they did not have to comment on every single question for each short story, some respondents noted (either in their response journal or in a private conversation outside of class with me) that they felt "funny" or "weird" writing about "personal stuff". Other students felt that certain questions were too similar or repetitive and that they did not distinguish between them. For example:

Question #4 Which pictures or mental images did the text bring to your mind?

Question #6 Which thoughts or ideas did you have while you were reading the text? Please explain briefly what you thought of.

Question #11 What was the most difficult thing for you in reading the text?

Question #12 What was the most difficult thing for you in understanding the text?

These students apparently equated "pictures" and "mental images" (#4) with "thoughts" and "ideas" (#6), and did not differentiate between difficulties they encountered while actually "reading" (#11) and "understanding" (#12) of the text. While question 11 focused on linguistic problems associated with the *reading process* (unknown vocabulary or grammatical structures), question 12 emphasized complicated issues that were related to the *process of making meaning*. The probably most confusing set of questions students faced was presented through questions 3, 4, and 5.

Question #3 Which memories did the text bring to your mind? (for example, of people, places, events, feelings, attitudes, smells, sights, *pictures*, *images*)

Question #4 Which *pictures* or mental *images* did the text bring to your mind?

Question #5 Which feelings and emotions did you have while you were reading? Please describe briefly what you felt.

The recurring use of words such as "feelings" (questions 3 and 5) and "pictures and "images" (questions 3 and 4) caused some students to view these questions as "essentially being the same thing", which resulted in answers such as "see my comment under #3" (for #5), "as I already said in #4" (for #3) or "same as before" and "go back" for question 12, referring back to question 11. This led subsequently to a number of students abandoning some of the questions all together. Instead, these participants chose to write a

narrative in which they responded to some of the questions, but not to others. The style of the narrative however freed students from following the "strict question format" and allowed them to elaborate on a particular aspect of their response that they deemed important for their understanding of the story.

Post-Reading Phase: Personal Interview. After all research sessions had been completed, I conducted a personal interview with every individual study participant. All students had already been informed about the interviews at the beginning of the semester, the procedure was explained to them, and they had also been assured that their responses and identities would remain confidential (Appendix J). The interviews were scheduled during the last week of the semester and held outside of class during my office hours. Each interview lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. Every study participant was asked the same number of open-ended questions during the interview (Appendix H), although certain questions were paraphrased by the researcher during individual interviews.

The purpose of the personal interview was to obtain data from study participants' that revealed important aspects about the participants themselves, their experiences with the literary texts they had read during the course of the semester, and their experiences responding to those texts by writing a response journal. The open-ended questions, while designed to focus on the interview, were created to put participants at ease and to allow me to probe more deeply into their individual responses. After they had been recorded (audio-taped) all interviews were transcribed.

Researcher's field notes

Over the course of collecting the various data, I often wrote field notes during and immediately after each class meeting to briefly capture what I had observed. The field notes also helped me to reflect on study participant's questions, comments and concerns that were voiced during the class.

Data Analysis and Processing

Based on the methodological and pedagogical issues that were employed in this process-oriented study, an introspective approach was used to analyze the database in a discursive and interpretive manner. The orientation of this investigation emphasized process rather than product-related conclusions, which are described by Nunan (1991) as follows: "Process-oriented studies focus on *input* and *interaction*, while product-oriented studies focus on the outcomes of instructional treatment" (p. 262). The process nature of the present study is further defined through the extended examination of how foreign language learners create and negotiate meaning while carrying out different reader-response tasks. Using an interpretive rather than a statistical approach for analysis also allowed for the detailed, discursive report that was necessary to describe the cultural contexts for each case study. The rich (thick) descriptions that were prepared for every individual case entail results obtained from questionnaires, observations, field notes, journal entries, and transcriptions of think aloud protocols and interviews. Such a comprehensive collection of data from various sources goes beyond the scope of numeric data analysis, because it provides the extensive background information needed for the evaluation of individual case studies.

Important considerations before the analysis begins

One of the "most treacherous stages of qualitative research", as Dautermann (1996, p. 252) phrases it, is when the researcher has completed the fieldwork, gathered all the data necessary for analysis, and is now trying to make sense of it all. This is the time when the multiple stacks of collected information and the different experiences associated with those collections need to be sorted out and critically looked at. There are, of course, the actual records (i.e., questionnaires, observations, response journals, and transcripts), but there are also the researcher's personal impressions and reasons for explaining particular phenomena in the data. And then there is the researcher's responsibility to select from this wealth of materials the relevant information for the report.

I found that during the process of analyzing the data and writing this report it was imperative for me to continually engage in self-examination: *Did I misinterpret the participants' writings? Did I read them right? Or did I cloud the reality of their authentic experiences by imposing my interpretations on their work, presuming that they meant this instead of that?* I also had to frequently return to the data, reading and re-reading it again. Of course, once the events that occur during a qualitative study have passed, they cannot be repeated in exactly the same way. Thus the former actual event turns – even at the time the report is written – already into a historical episode. Since it is impossible for the researcher to include all the possible explanations in the descriptive written narrative, she must take a position and determine from that stand how to interpret the data. This stand however, although necessary, opens up another question: namely that of representation, which may also be connected to the "place of the personal" that Tucker

(2000, p. 53) spoke of when she insisted on a stronger emphasis of the student's position in exploring the meaning of literary text. The personal place that qualitative researchers occupy can therefore present a rather difficult challenge during the writing stage, because investigators represent themselves as well as the "others" (i.e., the people they are writing about).

Bruner (1993) defines the qualitative researcher as one who is "historically positioned and locally situated [as] an all-too-human [observer] of the human condition", a person who could be considered as "radically plural" and "always open" (p. 1) when it comes to making meaning. Not wanting to run the risk of "colonizing [the] discourse of the 'Other'", as Fine (1998, p. 130) notes, it is then essential for the researcher to self-reflect upon his/her personal position to prevent confiscating the voice and role of the subject participants. It must be pointed out though, that this "self-reflexivity" (Brueggemann, 1996, p. 19) should not lead researchers to focus on their own representation (i.e., the author of the qualitative report writing about him/herself). Rather, qualitative investigators have to recognize and acknowledge that their own position simply does not allow for being truly represented on both sides at the same time: they are either objective or subjective, participant or observer, one or the other – but not both.

Coding of Data

Ryan and Bernard (2000) insist that coding "is the heart and soul of whole-text analysis" (p. 780), because it requires the researcher to make sense of the collected data and give meaning to it. Central to the coding process, as the authors describe in detail, are the various tasks that are involved in collecting and analyzing empirical data. For

example, the researcher's responsibilities entails sampling, generating themes, organizing codes in lists ("codebooks"), marking texts, building conceptual models, and analyzing these models in respect to the empirical data (pp. 780-789).

The first sampling in the current study was undertaken after the investigation was approximately four weeks underway. At that time random samples were taken from both the treatment and the control group. A second sampling was conducted after the first half of the semester (Midterm Break), at which point the four cases for this study were chosen, because they displayed and illustrated specific phenomena that were related to the participants' individual background knowledge.

Framework for reader response based on reader's background knowledge

From prior experiences teaching introductory or theme-specific literature courses in the foreign language I had learned that students' responses to a text usually revealed a certain level of interest in or involvement with the story. Yet, since most responses at that time still focused on finding "the right" (or predetermined) interpretation of the reading, I wanted to create a framework that helped me explore the reader's interactions with the text as the individual was influenced and guided by his or her personal and cultural background knowledge.

Furthermore, to assess why individual students approached a particular text in different ways, I constituted a preliminary categorization schema (Appendix O) that included pertinent factors and variables in both oral and written reader responses. After organizing and further refining these response categories based on their definitions, the written and oral responses I had collected from study participants and my field notes, I

modified the template and arrived at a final categorization schema for reader responses based on readers' background knowledge (Appendix Q).

For the analysis of written data from think aloud protocols and response journals, I developed coding categories that permitted me to notice patterns (particular and recurring ones) in students' responses. Based on categorization schemata derived from Hancock (1993, Appendix K), Janssen (1996, Appendix L), Miall and Kuiken (1995, Appendix M), and Thury and Friedlander (1995, Appendix N), I established a set of preliminary coding categories (Appendix O), which also contained my personal notes from secondary research sources. A brief overview of the selected schemata is provided here to explain the focus and relevance of each study for the development of my own coding procedure.

Hancocks' (1993) investigation centered on written responses, that sixth-graders had given to realistic fiction. The study sought to determine how these students' active creation of meaning was reflected in their written responses to four books. Janssen's (1996) research explored how teachers' questions about literary texts affected actual responses students gave, especially if these questions were geared to have students "do something with a literary text" (p. 9). While the study discussed what students actually do in response to those questions, its focus was more on text processing activities than on mental or verbal activities of students when they responded to the teacher's questions.

The *Literary Response Questionnaire* (LQR) conceived by Miall and Kuiken (1995) was designed to assess a variety of significant aspects of readers' approaches to literary texts. Pointing out that readers illustrate important reader activities as they engage in think alouds during the process of reading (cf. Dias & Hayhoe, 1987; Smith, 1991), the

authors suggest that readers are quite aware "to describe their own reading activities in a way that extends our understanding of their variety" (Miall & Kuiken, 1995, p. 359). If that is the case, the authors claim, readers might also be able to describe why their individual reader responses differ. To assess those differences Miall and Kuiken developed their Literary Response Questionnaire.

Based on the investigation by Thury and Friedlander (1995) that examined the ways in which student readers make meaning of literary texts, the authors' data confirmed two things: That the process of reading is active not passive, and that readers *create* rather than absorb the meaning of a text. The study explored the use of reader response journals as a means of inquiring about the reading process, and developing reading strategies for readers when they create meaning for literary texts. Response journal entries included, for example specific reactions to readings, questions that students had about the texts, students' reactions to classroom discussions about the literary works, and how personal views of literature and writing could change.

While all of the aforementioned categories provided a comprehensive basis for my own coding system and subsequent data analysis, it must be observed that none of the categories used by Thury and Friedlander (1995) had been designed for nor were they applied in L2 reading contexts. Instead, they were used in L1 reading research exclusively (here: the native English-speaking context), that focused primarily on reader responses in the elementary and secondary school levels. In addition, not all of the categorization schemata listed above proved to be conclusive for the range of data I had collected in the current study, which incorporated both oral and written responses. When selecting relevant factors from the respective categorization schemata for the coding of

my own data, I employed the framework suggested in Iser's (1978) reader-response theory as a guiding principle and concentrated on the following aspects:

1. the effects that the text has upon the reader,
2. the influence of socially and culturally determined aspects that occur during the reading process (the reader's socio-cultural actualization of the text)
3. the reader's own background knowledge, which brings up imaginative and perceptive faculties of a reader, which in turn causes the reader to adjust or modify his/her own focus to complete the "gaps" that are within the written text,
4. the experience the reader has during the act of reading,
5. the possibility of alternative readings of the same text by different readers, and
6. the creation of potential meanings of a text.

After revising and refining the preliminary categories further, they were turned into final coding categories for oral and written responses that were based on the influence of the readers' background knowledge (Appendix Q). As I revisited the original two research questions for the current investigation and subsequent questions that evolved out of those, I then began to examine the collected data for patterns in oral and written responses as related to students' individual backgrounds.

Analysis of personal interviews

The analysis of the personal interviews in this study was directed by Fontana and Frey's (2000) insights and suggestions for interpreting interviews as "negotiated accomplishments" (p. 663). While a semi-structured question format with open-ended questions was employed for the interview (Appendix H), in which the

interviewer/researcher occupies a somewhat directive position, it was apparent that I myself (the researcher) was not simply an "invisible, neutral entity" (p. 663). Rather, I understood myself as an active participant in the interaction with the respondents, thereby defining the interview as a process in which both – interviewer and interviewees – were shaped by the contexts that surrounded them. To use Schwandt's (1997) description, "It has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a form of discourse between two or more speakers or as a linguistic event in which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent" (p. 79).

Referring to research from Holstein and Gubrium (1995) who consider the interview an "interpersonal drama with a developing plot" that is situated within an ever-changing reality further leads to the authors' claim that this reality is "an ongoing, interpretive accomplishment" (p. 16). That said, the "negotiated" interview then centers more on the "how" than the "what" of an interview. While the "what" centers more on the substantive findings, the "how" focuses on "the contexts, particular situations, nuances, manners, [and] people involved" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 663) in this interactive process. All data in this research is reported in a descriptive manner, thus providing a framework for the understanding of study participants' response patterns as they are influenced by their respective personal and cultural backgrounds.

Phases of data analysis

The analysis of data included the following two phases:

- a) the examination of primary (questionnaires, think aloud protocols, response journals, personal interviews), and
- b) the examination of secondary sources (field notes from individual class sessions, anecdotal notes, informal observations).

Guiding principles for analysis of all data sources were provided by the two main research questions:

1. How do students' individual and sociocultural background knowledge influence their responses to authentic foreign language literary texts?
2. Based on those responses, how do students create and negotiate meaning when reading FL literary texts?

The two phases of data analysis also included establishing a personal profile for each of the four case study participants. Data for this part was provided through the primary information from the three questionnaires (Appendices B, C, and D). To provide a thick description, which "gives the context of an experience, states the intentions and meanings that organized the experience, and reveals the experience as a process" (Denzin 1998, 324), I also included data gathered from secondary sources to furnish the reader of this investigation with a portrait-like picture of each case study. The information was provided through personal observations I had made during the research sessions, my field notes from the classroom, field notes written on transcripts of recorded interviews, and anecdotal notes about the study participants.

When I first began with the analysis of data written responses I employed the aforementioned features from categorization schemata provided by Hancock (1993), Janssen (1996), Miall and Kuiken (1995), and Thury and Friedlander (1995) which I had

already arranged in my preliminary coding schema (Appendix O). In order to locate particular patterns and regularities that evolved out of students' answers, which could then be related to the respondent's personal and sociocultural background, I marked, labeled and dated each protocol, journal entry, and transcript.

Then I began to examine each category as it was reflected in the individual's oral and written responses. I assigned each one of the categories to (1) chunks of texts, which were broken down again into (2) single words, (3) phrases and (4) sentences to identify how categories were represented in these parts of speech. Classifying the data by using the preliminary coding schema I organized all responses in a chart, labelling them according to their data source and frequency (Appendix P). This helped me to eventually establish a framework through which data from different responses could be related to each other. Comparing the representation and frequency of selected categories in written and oral responses also allowed me to observe emerging response patterns. By distributing these response patterns back to their respective categories in my preliminary coding schema (Appendix O), I was also able to determine whether the patterns were consistent or not.

Development of oral and written responses to selected short stories

To identify the development of responses as well as similarities and differences that initially surfaced and later manifested themselves in oral and written responses from the four case studies, I examined all their replies to the short stories for overall and recurring patterns.

First, I examined all written responses to think aloud protocols (TAP), pre-reading questions (PRQ) and response journals (RJ) to classify statements according to the respective 24 categories from the preliminary categorization schema (Appendix O). Reading carefully through the written responses I began assigning the various statements (words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs) from each selected short story to the aforementioned categories.

Then I read through the transcripts of the oral responses (PI) and identified parts of conversation that could also be catalogued into these categories. While reading through both written and oral responses I noticed that selected categories were represented in all four response types, while others only appeared in written or in selected written and/or oral response types (Appendix P). At this point it was rather difficult for me to establish any consistent patterns that could be observed for both written and oral responses across all short stories. I noticed, that even within the respective response types (TAP, PRQ, and RJ) for *one* short story students offered a variety of answer styles (for example, they omitted questions, preferred to write more freely without a specific focus on the questions provided, or focused only on selected parts of questions). Furthermore, due to the interactive nature of the personal interview (PI), students' oral responses varied greatly as well. While some respondents answered the interview guide questions (PI) in a more linear fashion, others occasionally "went off the topic" and started talking about issues that might be considered irrelevant or too general to be included.

Then I began to look more closely at the categories that appeared to be consistent in all four response types (PRQ, TAP, RJ, and PI) and refined these by establishing subcategories, which represented the focus of my research questions more clearly. When

selecting relevant factors from the preliminary categorization schema (Appendix O) for the final coding schema of my data (Appendix Q), I employed the framework suggested in Iser's (1978) reader-response theory and identified five main categories:

1. Connections
2. Involvement
3. Evaluation
4. Interpretation, and
5. Reflection

Now I began the process of assigning written and oral responses to the final coding categories, reading again through all responses to determine which category would most appropriately identify the individual written or oral statement for each of the selected short stories. The data itself suggested a division of each of the five main categories into two subcategories that corresponded with the selected aspects from Iser's reader-response theory. Each of the subcategories was then defined based on the influence that the reader's individual and sociocultural background knowledge had on the response given for that particular category (Appendix Q). An example that documents how the reader's personal and sociocultural background knowledge influenced and guided the individual student's process of reading, understanding and making meaning of a given text is provided through the short story "Jenö war mein Freund" (Appendix R).

After I had applied the final categorization schema to all written and oral responses from the short stories selected for this study, I was able to discern commonalities and differences in respect to the representation of categories and frequency of response types. Comparing the data gathered from primary sources with my

personal notes and observations, I began to build a profile for each of the four case studies.

The findings and results from this study are reported in of a descriptive and interpretive manner. The report is comprised of the study participants' responses to pre-reading questions, think aloud protocols, response journals and personal interviews, but also includes the researcher's data as collected through personal field notes, observations, and personal comments on written responses and transcripts. Since the main researcher – I – also served as the primary research instrument in this investigation, it must be noted that the narration and interpretation of all data is subsequently seen from my perspective and based on my understanding of the cases. General descriptions of the data (i.e., questionnaires) are complemented with specific and particular descriptions and comments about the four study participants. All data for this report was collected, evaluated and analyzed with the following two goals in mind: to provide the reader of this study with the necessary setting and background information that allow for a personal understanding of the data, and to communicate the influence of prior background knowledge when responding and creating meaning.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02504 3401

THESIS

5

2004

Vol. I.

138

300

THS

LIBRARY
Michigan State
University

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
APR 03 2006		

**THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
FOR READER RESPONSE TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE LITERARY TEXTS:
STUDENT RESPONSES IN ORAL AND WRITTEN FORMS**

VOLUME II

By

Katharina Häusler Gross

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages

2004

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter reports the results that have been found in answering the question how readers' backgrounds knowledge influences their responses and meaning-making of FL literary texts. The data includes research on individual characteristics and behaviors (questionnaires, observations, field notes), individual written entries (think-alouds and response journals), as well as data collected through voice recordings that were made specifically for the purpose of this study (personal interviews). To understand the respondents' reactions and responses to selected literary texts, and to receive a comprehensive picture of how they arrived at establishing subsequent meanings of the texts, it is important to consider the characteristics and components that influenced these findings. In short, it is necessary to provide a descriptive analysis of how reader and the text interacted in a specific context.

The previous chapter specified both the general setting of this study and the rationale for selecting the four case studies. This chapter provides a detailed description for each of the four study participants to gain deeper insights into their individual backgrounds, their reading behaviors, and their reading response preferences to literary texts. In addition to the data I obtained from primary sources about the study participants' backgrounds (see Appendices B, C, D, F, G, and H) the results also include data I gathered from secondary sources (personal observations during the think-aloud protocols and field notes recorded immediately after the research sessions).

Background Information for Case Studies

The following section provides data gathered through the three questionnaires that were administered before any of the readings took place. All study participants, including the four case studies, were informed about the purpose and nature of this research prior to conducting it (Appendix I and J). The original names of the case study participants have been changed to maintain their anonymity and protect their identity. All written and oral responses are cited here in the original, without any changes, modifications or corrections. Thus the examples (quotes) given in the following sections may include possible spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors.

Student profile 1 ("Andrea")

Individual background information

Andrea, a 19 year-old student who was born in Eastern Europe describes her own ethnic background as "other", specifying it only with the word "white". Her native language is still used as the first language in her family's home, which Andrea shares with her parents and one older sibling. Both her parents have received High School diplomas and work in salaried jobs (construction business and manufacturing industry). Andrea is the first member in her family to go to college.

Andrea describes the relationship with her immediate (parents, sibling) and extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) as a very close one, and notes that she frequently visits the latter. Having various household responsibilities (cooking, cleaning) Andrea considers dinners, watching movies and going out to dance as typical family activities. She recalls as her favorite childhood memory "being my grandfather's

hair stylist". Andrea had lived in her native country until she was eight years old, after which time her family moved to Germany. When she was a teenager, her family moved again, this time to the U.S. and has been residing in a smaller Midwestern town for the past six years. Andrea is a very active and busy young woman. In her spare time she likes to read books, newspapers or magazines. She also enjoys "going to the movies, listening to music, or traveling". Interested in different sports activities, she states numerous times how much she loves to dance. Although she is not a member of any organized club or organization, she would like to join a dance group. She also expressed interest in joining a youth club, an environmental group or a subject-specific group (especially if it is related to foreign languages). When on vacation Andrea likes to "travel" – within the U.S. and abroad – "visit friends and relatives", or "go to state parks". But she equally enjoys staying at home to relax.

Andrea identifies German as her "second" language and marks English as "another foreign language". She also studied Spanish for two years in High School. At the college level she has taken German courses for almost three years. So far, she has not participated in a Foreign Language study abroad program, or in a work-related internship. After attending exclusively public schools throughout her K-12 school life, she enrolled in a four-year private college for which she received a scholarship that was based on her excellent academic performances in High School. Andrea is currently a traditional age college student in her Junior year with a major in German and a minor in ESL. In addition to her full-time life as a student, she has a part-time job for approximately 20 to 30 hours per week. Andrea wants to be a teacher for German and ESL and eventually teach High School students.

Based on her desire to become a German teacher, it is not surprising that Andrea notes a number of reasons why she chose to enroll in the current language course. Among her main incentives to study German is her wish to learn more about the language and culture. She is also interested in German literature, because she likes to read and wants to read literary works in the original. Additional reasons for taking this class are her desire to speak the language more fluently, discuss the readings in the course, and write (about the readings) in the target language. She also notes that she believes she will receive a good grade in this course and adds that the class is part of her requirements for the German major.

While Andrea feels comfortable working alone or with people, she clearly states that one of her favorite things about work is to interact with other people. In fact, she describes herself as someone who "likes to talk to people", but also enjoys listening to them. While Andrea is not actively involved in any specific community group, she writes that she oftentimes engages in helping people from various communities (for example, fellow students at the college level, K-12 students, older people).

Student's reading behavior in L1 and L2

Although she actively uses her first or native language (L1) to communicate with family members and close friends, Andrea writes that she does not enjoy reading in her native tongue, because "it takes longer than in any other language". While growing up, she had children's stories and fairy tales read to her in her first language. Reading materials in her current home, however, include a wider variety of languages and texts, such as newspapers, books, brochures, magazines, or religiously affiliated materials. The

reading materials cover for the most part various topics of general interest, and are printed in her first (L1, native language), second (L2, here German) and third language (L3, here English).

When reading in her first/native language, Andrea's goal is to obtain "specific information" and be "more knowledgeable". She also considers reading in L1 as being part of a "well-rounded person", and admits that she reads to "know more about a topic [she is] interested in". Usually, she reads L1 materials at home or in school. When asked about the kinds of texts she reads, Andrea notes that she always reads "personal letters", "postcards" and "e-mails", often "magazines" and "essays", and sometimes "newspapers". Rarely does she read belletristic in her first language such as "short stories, fairy tales, and folk tales", and she admits to never having read "poetry, novels, romance novels, dramas or other literary texts" in her native tongue.

Her reading behavior in the second/foreign language (L2) stands in stark contrast to that in L1. Reading in her second language (L2) is an enjoyable experience for Andrea, because "it's easy to understand and fast". She recalls having read Theodor Fontane's "Effi Briest" and "Der Kleine Prinz" by Antoine de Saint- Exupery "on her own", meaning that these books were not required readings for any of her classes. Based on her positive reading experiences in L2, which date back to her Middle and High School years, Andrea gives many reasons why she continues reading in her second language.

First, she reads mostly for "pleasure" and "entertainment", simply enjoying the activity itself. She also considers reading in L2 a "good way to learn the foreign language" and believes that through reading in L2 she will "find out more about the culture, lifestyle and history of the target language". In connection with her anticipated

future profession as a German teacher she adds that she would like to use the knowledge she acquired through reading in her future job.

Asked about her personal experiences and feelings when reading in her second/foreign language, Andrea strongly feels that reading in L2 "is not really that difficult" for her. She thinks of herself as a "pretty good L2 reader" and is also quite confident that she understands the main ideas of a story. These positive experiences are underscored by Andrea's responses to questions that are related to FL anxieties L2 readers might encounter (for example, feelings of uneasiness, frustration, insecurity, self-doubt, or apprehension). The fact that she may not understand every single word or face unknown grammatical features in an L2 text does not bother Andrea. She also does not feel "frustrated, upset, confused or overwhelmed" when she encounters longer texts, reads about unfamiliar topics, cannot remember everything about the reading, or has to look up new words. For Andrea, reading in the L2 is an integral part of learning and studying a foreign language, whether that is done in- or outside the classroom.

Student's reading response preferences

When reading in her foreign language Andrea becomes involved, sometimes even entrenched in the book or story in front of her. She states that she always thinks about what she is reading. Having a vivid imagination aids her in bringing the story characters "to life", making them so alive at times that they appear almost too "real" for her. Andrea notes that she frequently consults secondary literature sources to help her better understand what she is reading about. However, already available text interpretations (i.e., written by professional scholars in the field), which might also help her to gain a

deeper understanding of the reading, she does not read. Not wanting to state what she likes or does not like to read about, she leaves those two questions blank.

While she describes herself as a "talker", Andrea enjoys writing about what she reads almost as much as talking about it. Although she still favors an oral response to a reading over a written one – because she maintains that it is easier for her to express her thoughts and feelings through the spoken word – Andrea likes to write *personal* responses to texts she read. She has never kept a journal in which she documented her written responses to readings, and concludes with the thought that "both writing and talking" about a reading are the best ways for her to respond to a text.

Personal characteristics and response behaviors

Andrea might best be described as a person who is exuberantly filled with an enthusiastically positive feeling. Volunteering her thoughts and opinions on a regular basis in class, she was usually the first to enter the conversation about a text. While speaking, she was often very animated, turning to and/or looking at other group members. Her written responses to pre-reading questions and her response journals frequently entailed long and complex sentences, or elaborate paragraphs and were almost exclusively written in German. In contrast to that, Andrea did not seem to write much at all during the think aloud phase of the reading, except for occasional words, phrases or shorter sentences. Her think-aloud protocols were primarily written in German, but included occasionally a few words in English.

The following excerpt is taken from Andrea's written responses to the pre-reading questions for "Jenö was mein Freund":

Ich denke dass diese Geschichte über zwei Leute die freunde waren, aber nicht mehr sind handelt. Ich denke auch dass eine Person ein Ausländer ist und die andere Person Deutsch ist.

...ich denke dass dieser Text interessant zum lesen ist, weil es um Freundschaft geht und ich mir sehr viel an Freundschaft liegt.

Diese Überschrift erinnert mich gleich an meine beste Freundin [name of friend omitted, my comment]. ... ist meine beste Freundin seit der fünften Klasse, aber leider habe ich sie nicht seit vier Jahren gesehen, weil ich nach den USA gezogen bin und sie in Deutschland lebt.

Eine gute Freundschaft geht zu Ende, weil eine Person die andere verraten hat. Diese Person erkennt was sie oder er verloren hat und möchte sich entschuldigen und ihrer Freundschaft noch einen Versuch geben.

In her assumptions and predictions about the text, Andrea already establishes a *personal connections* between the reading and her own life by describing and reflecting upon a prior experience: the lost friendship with her best friend from grade school. She also expresses a strong *personal feeling* when she states how much that friendship meant to her. Yet, because of the geographic distance that now separates her from her (former) friend she recognizes that she is unable to continue the relationship she once enjoyed. Thus she not only evaluates her own situation, but also displays her ability to understand and relate to the story she is about to read.

Many of Andrea's oral and written responses document that she repeatedly recalls prior experiences from her life in Germany, and feelings that were associated with those experiences. Naturally, her oral and written responses can be lengthy at times, and occasionally she has a tendency to "ramble" on, including a wide array of personal experiences and observations about life in general, which she then relates to the respective text she is reading.

Andrea's journal responses can oftentimes be located between expressions of confusion and rejection on the one hand side:

Einige Veränderungen der Greisin kann ich schon verstehen, aber einige auch nicht... Was ich aber nicht verstehe ist, warum sie weniger Zeit mit ihren Kindern und Enkelkindern verbracht hatte. Es kam mir vor als wollte sie Abstand von ihnen halten. In allgemein finde ich dass die Titelfigur verzweifelt und allein sich fühlte, nach dem Tod ihres Ehemannes, weil keiner seinen Platz nehmen konnte.

Ich finde das Verhalten der Greisin unwürdiger, als das des Buchdruckers, weil sie immerhin sich sehr stark verändert hat ohne Rücksicht auf den Rest der Familie zu nehmen. Ich hatte das Gefühl dass ihre Freunde auf der ersten Stelle kommen und dann die Familie. ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

or feelings of empathy and compassion for the story characters on the other:

Als ich die Geschichte gelesen habe, fragte ich mich wie der Vather sich fühlte, seinen Sohn mit einem anderen Kind spielen zu sehen. Denn mir sind schon Tränen in den Augen gekommen, ich war so glücklich für den Freddy. ("Der Mongo")

The constant connections that Andrea makes between story characters and her own life and the strong personal feelings she displays while writing about these characters are a recurring theme in her written work:

"Jenö war mein Freund" hat mich an viele sachen und Leute erinnert, aber am meisten an meine Freundin... [name omitted, my comment]... Ich hatte Bilder im Kopf von mir und ..., als wir sachen zusammen unternommen haben wie zum Beispiel als wir in die Disko an einem Freitag gingen. Als ich die Geschichte hörte hatte ich gemischte Gefühle. Auf der einen Seite war ich glücklich, weil ich an ... und unsere guten Zeiten dachte und auf der anderen Seite fühlte ich mich so lehr innerlich, weil ich jetzt nicht eine Freundin wie... habe.

Diese Geschichte erinnerte mich als ich in der dritten Klasse war, als mich ein Junge, der gerne immer geredet hatte fragte... Daher ich ...nicht verstanden hatte sagte ich...und plötzlich bemerckte ich wie mich jeder in der Klasse ansah und dann lachte die ganze Klasse mich aus. Während ich [die Geschichte, my comment] gelesen hatte, hatte ich Mitgefühl mit Franz als er ausgelacht wurde, weil ich nachvollziehen konnte wie es ihm erging. ("Das Judenauto")

While she is a good listener during class discussions, Andrea forms quite definite opinions about text events, character traits and behaviors. Making inferences and drawing conclusions from her individual and socio-cultural background knowledge, she incorporates these experiences into her text interpretations as the following excerpts from her response journals document.

Ich denke dass diese Geschichte Leser aufmerksam machen möchte, dass es viele andere Kulturen in dieser Welt gibt und dass wir alle Freunde sein können, auch wenn wir verschieden sind. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

...weil meine Kindheit nicht so war, meine Eltern erzählten mir wie wichtig es ist keine Vorurteile über andere Leute zu haben, nicht einmal über die ... [ethnic group in respondents' native country]. Sie sagten mir immer, dass ich mich in die Lage der anderen Person versetzen soll. ("Das Judenauto")

**Ich habe mich nie über Behinderte lustig gemacht, weil meine Mutter mir immer sagte, ich soll mich in ihre Lage versetzen und überlegen wie es mir ergehen würde wenn ich in ihrer Lage wäre...
Freddy [hat] das Leben seines Vathers bereichert. ("Der Mongo")**

Für mich spielt das innere eine sehr wichtige Rolle, weil ich glaube dass die Schönheit kommt und geht aber das Herz bleibt für immer. ("Ein netter Kerl")

SAID's "Märchen" beschreibt das Leben und die Gefühle eines Ausländers und ein gutes Ende dass es geben könnte, wenn einige Deutsche offener wären... Ob ich mich mit derr Blume identifizieren kann ist eine komplizierte frage, weil ich selber eine Ausländerin in Deutschland war, dennoch nicht...ausgestoßen wurde. Aber ich habe erfahren, später im Leben, dass es eine Auswirkung auf mich hatte. Nachdem ich Deutschland verlassen musste, wollte ich nicht einsehen [konnte ich nicht verstehen, my comment] wer und was ich wircklich bin, weil ich dachte dass es nicht gut genug wäre, den [denn, my comment] so dachten einige Deutsche...

Weil die Geschichte ein Märchen ist, finde ich das Ende gut, weil jedes Märchen gut Endet, ich finde es aber nicht realistisch. Man kann nähmlich nicht von einer Haut in die andere springen, wenn man in der eigenen Haut sich nicht gut fühlt. ("Ein Märchen")

While Andrea seemed initially somewhat hesitant when it came to publicly defending her arguments for or against a particular text interpretation in class, she grew increasingly

assertive of herself as the course went on. Eventually she reached a point, where she felt quite comfortable with her own interpretation of a text, even disregarding whether others agreed with her or not.

Of the two films that were viewed in this course ("Jud Süß", "Verriegelte Zeit"³⁷), Andrea's oral and written responses to them are among the most emotional ones. Especially when a character's behavior puzzles or confuses her she rephrases her response in form of a question, which she then poses to the entire class, "**Aber ich verstehe nicht wie [character's name] sowas überhaupt tun konnte!**", or "**Warum hat [character's name] das nur gemacht?**". Sympathizing and emotionally identifying with the film's characters (for example with Faber in "Jud Süß", after he learns of his fiancé's death) and transferring their situation back into her own life, she writes about Faber, "**Ich fragte mich was soll er jetzt machen? Wie soll er weiterleben?**" Of similar passionate value is her written reaction to Schönemann's documentary "Verriegelte Zeit":

Als Sybille ihre gefühle...beschrieben hatte, **drehte sich alles in meinem Magen und ich spürte wie mich eine Gänsehaut über den ganzen Körper überkam. Ich war traurig als ich sah was unschuldigen Menschen angetan wurde, nur weil sie für ihre Freiheit kämpften.** Dieses ganze Thema [die Staasi in der DDR, my comment] erinnert mich an die Situation **als meine Eltern versucht hatten Familienmitglieder aus [her native country, my comment] heraus zu holen und wie schwer und kompliziert das war.**

In sum, most of Andrea's oral and written reactions display how strong she is influenced by her prior personal experiences and how that knowledge determines her interaction with and responses to the texts. Furthermore, this background knowledge serves as a guiding principle for her in the process of establishing the meaning of the texts she reads.

³⁷ Veit Harlan (1941), "Jud Süß"; Sybille Schönemann (1990), "Verriegelte Zeit".

At times, however she becomes almost too self-absorbed or consumed by her own experiences (referring here to the friendship she describes earlier), thus running the risk of losing sight of the text.

Es überraschte mich dass die Freundschaft nicht wegen der Unterschiede zwischen den beiden auseinander ging, sondern, weil Jenö weg gezogen ist, oder weg ziehen musste. Meiner Ansicht nach war das wichtigste dass die Jungs Freunde bleiben obwohl sie so verschieden waren. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

While expressing her hope in class that the two main characters of the short story could be reunited again in the future, and possibly even renew their friendship at that point, Andrea was made aware of Jenö's fate only during the following class discussion. It was only then that she realized that Jenö and his family had been taken away by the Nazi's to be deported and killed in a concentration camp.

Student Profile 2 ("Theresia")

Individual background information

A 21-year old native speaker of English, Theresia identifies her ethnic background as "Caucasian". She notes English as her first and German as a foreign language. Having attended public, private and parochial schools in K-12, she received scholarships for her high academic achievements and her community service to attend college. At the time of this investigation she is in her Senior year, nearing the completion of her undergraduate degree with a double major in International Business and German. While Theresia spent some time studying and working in Germany, she has lived for most of her life in the U.S. In addition to being a full-time student, she also holds a part-time job, working between 10 and 20 hours per week. She lists a large number of

activities and things that she likes to do in her spare time, ranging from "reading" (books, newspapers, magazines), "traveling", "listening to music", "going to the movies, a concert or a theater play", to "talking on the phone", "surfing the Internet" and "writing e-mails". When on vacation she enjoys similar activities, adding only visits with friends and relatives.

While attending High School, Theresia studied German for four years and Spanish for three. In her freshman year in college she decided to continue with German and has been enrolled in upper-level German classes for the past two and a half years. Although she has not spent a large amount of time in Germany – six weeks during an academic study abroad program and three month as an intern, working for a German company – both her language skills and especially her confidence level when speaking German noticeably improved after she had returned to the U.S. Her motivation for enrolling in the current literature course confirms her ultimate desire to continue learning the language in order to improve her fluency. She marks all possible answers on the questionnaire when asked why she is taking the current class, except one: receiving a "good grade in this course" is either not an important enough incentive for her or she is simply not concerned with it. Instead, she notes that she "wants to learn more about the language, culture, literature, and history", "likes to read and wants to read literature in the original language", "wants to speak the language more fluently... [and] discuss the readings", and "write in the target language".

While Theresia is the only child in her family, she notes that she does have an extended family, and also visits them often. Her parents, who reside in the countryside, have obtained higher educational degrees and work as salaried employees, one offering a

trade-related service, the other working in education. Because Theresia rents an apartment and lives on her own, she also assumes all necessary household responsibilities (cleaning, doing dishes, laundry). She does not mention a particular or favorite childhood memory and cites "watching movies together" is a typical family-related activity.

Theresia is a very active and involved member of various groups and organizations, devoting most of her time to addressing problems and topics that are related to social activism, raising awareness for specific issues and advocating equality. She clearly states that these are "things I am passionate about" and that by doing this kind of work she "help[s] people at the same time". It is therefore not surprising that she is heavily engaged in a number of activities that involve "listening and talking to other people within the community", "volunteering time for community events", or "planning, advertising and leading community events". Of any additional organizations that she would consider joining, she favors groups that deal with environmental, political or subject-specific issues where people discuss and/or debate various topics.

While Theresia prefers to work alone, she enjoys talking about her work to her parents, friends, and extended family members. She likes about her work that it is "fun and interesting", but also admits that the downside of her job is that it can be chaotic at times. Although she does not mind engaging in physical activities, she is not a member of a particular sports group or team. Her main interest and involvement can be found with groups that focus on political and social issues within her community or the larger context of society.

Student's reading behavior in L1 and L2

Theresia enjoys reading in her first language, because she says, "it helps me learn". She was read to as a child, and recalls children's stories, folk and fairy tales. Her family has "lots of reading materials", she asserts, ranging from books to newspapers and magazines to catalogues. Most of the materials, which are all in English, cover current events (news), issues related to feminism, and consumer information (catalogues).

Theresia cites many reasons why she reads in her first language: besides the joy and pleasure she derives from this activity, she also reads to "be more knowledgeable" and believes that reading in one's first language is also "part of being an educated, well-rounded person". Although her main motive to read in L1 is to "know more about topics I am interested in" and to "talk with other people what I read about", she admits that she sometimes also reads to "simply kill time". While she reads most of her L1 texts in school (classrooms, college library) she also enjoys the pleasures of reading in various locales (her parents' home, the park, her apartment, on the plane, at the doctor's office).

Among the types of texts that Theresia reads most often are "newspapers, magazines, Internet articles and e-mails", but also "novels and postcards". She sometimes reads "biographies, short stories, fairy tales, and dramas". Reading "statistical reports" she notes is mainly related to assignments for her major subject areas (i.e., Business, Business German). "Travel brochures" and "personal letters" appear less frequently on her L1 reading list. Literary texts, such as "poetry" and "folk tales", and informative reading materials for consumers ("advertisements", "catalogues", "TV guides") are among her least frequently read texts, as are "business letters", "reviews" and "essays". Exclaiming that her second/foreign language "is a beautiful language", Theresia

thoroughly enjoys the experience of reading in L2, stating that this also helps to "increase my fluency" in the target language. Among the stories that she remembers having read in L2 are "Der Kleine Prinz" and Andrew Klavan's "Sag' kein Wort" (German translation).

Theresia marks every single reason (but one) why she reads in her foreign language: ranging from the values of "pleasure and entertainment", to an increased ability of speaking the target language, to her desire of learning more about sociohistorical and cultural aspects through the reading of L2 texts. Reading in the target language to "get specific information" is however not mentioned here. Having confidence in her L2 reading ability, Theresia thinks of herself as a "good reader" who does not experience any major difficulties understanding the main ideas of a story. She also believes that extensive reading in the target language will make her a better reader. Learning a foreign language and reading in it are not separable items for Theresia, who loves to read in her classes and on her own. She notes that she feels at times "a little overwhelmed when I encounter longer texts" and also experiences a certain level of "frustration" if she needs to look up too many words in order to comprehend a text. She maintains however, that reading in L2 for her is "not really that difficult" and that she does not experience certain anxieties that can be associated with L2 reading (for example, limited text comprehension, memory in recall of text passages, unfamiliar text topics, and unknown grammatical structures).

Student's reading response preferences

When responding to a reading, Theresia clearly states that she likes to express her ideas and feelings in writing. She actually prefers written responses over oral discussions,

favoring the protection that privately written statements offer. She constantly thinks about what she is reading, letting story or book characters come to life in her imagination.

Writing about her thoughts – in form of comments, questions or personal observations – not only helps her to better understand the text, but also acts as a vehicle for her to communicate her innermost feelings in an unobstructed way. While she occasionally reviews scholarly articles or interpretations to gain a deeper understanding of the text, Theresia prefers to "write my own ideas down" when responding to a reading. While she is open to reading about a large variety of topics as long as they do not include the theme of "death", she admits to preferring subjects that are closely tied to her social and political interests.

Personal characteristics and response behaviors

Theresia is a very gentle and considerate person with kind of humbleness that sometimes does not do justice to her accomplishments. Being rather quiet during class discussions, Theresia can be characterized as a careful observer and supportive listener of other group members. Although it seems as if she is ready to offer her thoughts and opinions about a reading right away, she usually lets everybody else have their turn first, waiting patiently for them to say what is on their mind. She also does not signal whether she agrees or disagrees with anyone else's opinion or interpretation. Only when specifically asked does she share her thoughts with the group. Sometimes she asks a few questions before she actually moves on to offering her evaluation of the text (situation and events) and her interpretation of it. This behavior remains consistent throughout the course. While she does not often voice her comments about the readings in class, her

written responses include a number of questions related to certain behaviors and actions of story characters, which she found either puzzling and or confusing.

Although Theresia does not immediately react or respond to comments that her fellow students make during class discussions, her written responses indicate that she reflects very intensely about their remarks or suggestions:

I could also feel the stereotypes of gypsies being reinforced in my mind when we first read the text in class. **When [name of a student in class, my comment] mentioned the idea of his [his referring to the main character of the short story, my comment] father taking the train... that's when I realized that my stereotypes for gypsies were being reinforced and that maybe I should think more critically about the story. ("Jenö war mein Freund")**

Now that [name of another student in class, my comment] brought up that point of the whole stealing situation, I can't stop thinking about it! I don't know what else could be more important besides the fact that Jenö and his family were unjustly taken away. I think that is one of the author's key underlying themes. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

Her very powerful reactions to the question who (really) stole the various items that are named in the story (i.e., *Jenö* or the other boy's *father*) exhibit that she initially did struggle with this part of the story. However, after reviewing the situation from a more critical viewpoint and applying her prior knowledge, she focuses on the injustice and horror of the situation itself. Thus it becomes irrelevant for her to seek the true identity of the "thief". She clearly empathizes with Jenö and his family, knowing that their fate will be ultimate demise.

Theresia responds in a mature and thoughtful way, which is oftentimes revealed through the kinds of questions she asks during discussions or writes in her response journals. Sometimes however, it seems as if these questions are less geared to help clarify *her* understanding of the text. Rather, it appears as if she wants to probe her classmates through her thought-provoking inquiries, and alert them to ponder about some

of the underlying social, political and economical issues that she sees or discovers in the texts. While she is less prone to make quick judgements about text events or story characters during the discussion phase, she displays powerful emotions when it comes to writing about them. This behavior can be confirmed by an earlier statement Theresia made on the questionnaire related to her response preferences (i.e., *It is easier for me to write about my thoughts and feelings than talking about them*).

Her responses oftentimes display *personal connections* between her own life and the text, and *personal feelings* that she associates with prior experiences,

I also thought about the racism that existed of students in my elementary school and how it was amazing to me now, looking back, at how young people start acquiring prejudices for other races and such. ("Das Judenauto")

Es ist eine Geschichte über die Verschlechterung einer Beziehung zwischen zwei Personen... Die Titel erinnert mich an Leute, die in der Vergangenheit meine Freunde waren aber sind nicht mehr. Ich fühle mich traurig und einsam, wenn ich daran denke ... I felt involved [with the text, my comment] to the point where the only experience I've ever had with this type of situation is moving so many times during my childhood...having to leave friends behind is a horrible thing. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

While Theresia's first response indicates a feeling of disturbed perplexity about the intolerant or discriminatory behaviors of young children, her second example conjures up an even more personal experience. She recalls a negative image of a relationship that goes bad or deteriorates, which might be related to her own experience or a similar situation in which a friendship was lost or ended, voluntarily or not. However, the memory of such an incident not only brings back strong emotions (sadness, loneliness), it also includes her reflection of past life stories, which are projected into the current short story. Reflecting about the topic of friendship in a different context, Theresia writes the following passage in her think-aloud protocols to "Ein Märchen".

Die farblose Blume hat keine Freunde, weil sie so anders war. Die Blumen mit Farben würden nicht mit dieser Blume sprechen oder spielen und hat nur über diese Blume gelacht. Die farblose Blume war immer sehr trauerig. ("Ein Märchen")

Again, she acknowledges the sad feelings and pain that can be associated with not having a friend, but also cites the reason ("because she, the flower, was so different") that can prevent a friendship from the start or cause the loss of one.

Theresia's background knowledge is not only informed by personal experiences. She often recalls images, ideas and thoughts that she acquired through prior readings, films, TV shows, or movies:

Images of the Jewish Ghetto came to my mind when the author talked about where Jenö lived. Obwohl Jenö in einem Wohnwagen wohnte, **konnte ich immer noch Vorstellungen von Dreck und schlechte Lebensbedingungen des Ghettos sehen...** Der Text erinnert mich an die Geschichte von Anne Frank, und wie ihre Familie von den Nazis weggenommen wurde und zur Konzentrationslage gebracht. **It reminds me the most of the italian movie "Life is Beautiful"** because there's a couple in it that gets seperated because the man is Jewish and the women is not, and so he and his son are sent to a concentration camp. **It also made me think about the "Hunchback of Notre Dame", which also has Gypsies.** ("Jenö was mein Freund")

Der Titel hat mich an das Buch "Die Judenbuche" erinnert... "Die Judenbuche" and "The Wonder Years" because the boy in that [series, my comment] **had wild fasinations too about similar things.** ("Das Judenauto")

In sum, the most typical and recurring element in Theresia's responses is her heightened sensitivity and compassion for topics involving social and personal injustice. Informed by her comprehensive background knowledge in this area, she moves beyond the point of simply acknowledging an unfair, prejudice or unjust situation, and evaluates (story character's) behaviors and actions or story events through a critical lens. By making inferences that draw on both her personal and socio-cultural knowledge base, she is able

to arrive at conclusions, outline possible consequences, or provide solutions for problems as the following examples document:

I think the most important point of the text is the fact that stereotypes and hateful feelings towards other people can and do perpetuate at an early age so it's important for kids to be influenced by good examples & role models that don't promote hate or ill will towards people they have never met or know nothing about. ("Das Judenauto")

no matter how different we think we are compared to others, we all have common bond (our humanity) so we shouldn't discriminate against people who are different. ("Ein netter Kerl")

I imagine life in former East Germany to be pretty crappy. To have your every move watched and not to be able to question your surroundings or the way things are done would be very restricting and unfair... I would find that very hard to conform to and I probably wouldn't and would end up on the "Unsicheres Element" list. ("Element")

Ich toleriere bzw. akzeptiere das Verhalten der Greisin ganz. Es ist ihr Leben, und sie hat keine Verantwortungen für niemanden anders als sich selbst. Warum soll sie ihr Leben nicht genießen, wie sie es will? ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

People who are more likely to identify with the flower are people who are forced into exile (ex. bad living conditions) because of the oppression they face from their society ... I long for social, political and economic justice and equality for all people the most. ("Ein Märchen")

Student Profile 3 ("Thomas")

Individual background information

Thomas is 22 years old, of Caucasian background and a native speaker of English. After attending public, private and parochial schools during his K-12 school years, he is currently enrolled in his third year in college. His scholarships were based on his high academic achievements as well as his status as a family member of an alumnus. His goal is to complete his undergraduate studies with a double major in International Business and German, and a minor in French. While Thomas has spent most of his life in the U.S,

he participated in a year-long High School exchange program in Germany during his senior year, and also studied in Germany for more than seven month during his Junior year in college. Parallel to studying overseas, he completed a three-month long internship at a German company, gaining hands-on experience in work related to his Business major.

In addition to his full-time status as an undergraduate, Thomas holds a part-time job, working 20 to 30 hours per week. In his spare time, he enjoys "reading books", "listening to music", "going to the movies", "traveling" and "sleeping". He also spends some time on the Internet, mostly "surfing" for information he wants or needs to find, and "writing e-mails". When on vacation, Thomas loves to travel, but "only abroad".

As his second/ foreign language he cites German, which he has studied for three years in High School, where he also enrolled in French and Latin for one year, respectively. Entering college, he continued with both German and French and has taken classes at advanced levels in both languages. Thomas' reasons for enrolling in the current German language course are not related to FL requirements (for majors or minors), nor does he cite grade-related motivations. Instead, he simply states "I like German", and then gives various reasons why he does (for example, to "learn more about the language, literature and culture" and "understand" those components better, and to read, speak, discuss and write in the target language).

Thomas grew up in a smaller rural area. His parents are self-employed and have a business related to agriculture and farming. Placing somewhere in the middle between his older and younger siblings, Thomas is quite familiar with the numerous responsibilities and demands that are part of being a member of a larger family. He also has an extended

family, and visits them quite often. Among some of the typical activities that members of his family do together, he recalls "eating, talking [and] playing cards". "Going to grandma's house" belongs to his favorite childhood memories.

Thomas is a very dynamic person who enjoys all kinds of activities, but especially those that are related to foreign cultures (i.e., films, books, foods etc.) because, as he says "they are fun". He can also imagine joining groups that focus on environmental topics or subject-specific issues (as long as the latter focus on languages and cultures) and in which ideas and thoughts are exchanged in a discussion-like forum. The majority of his time outside of classes he spends being actively involved in the student community and volunteering for community events.

Thomas enjoys working in a team as much as he likes working alone and often shares his work-related experiences with friends and family, co-workers and roommates. Although he is generally interested in sports activities, he does not play a sport in any organized fashion.

Student's reading behavior in L1 and L2

Thomas recalls "children's stories, fairy tales and folk tales" that were read to him when he was younger and states that he likes reading in his first language because "it is fun". In addition to the "enjoyment and pleasure" he receives from it, he also considers L1 reading a part of being a "well-rounded, educated and knowledgeable" person. He further notes that he usually reads to "get specific information" and because he wants to know more about a topic that he is interested in.

He maintains that there is an "abundance" of reading materials in his home, including "almost everything one could think of" and attributes this to the fact that the

various members of his family all have different (reading) interests (for examples newspapers, books, journals, magazines). While the majority of those materials are printed in his native tongue (English), his family also owns texts in German, Spanish and Dutch ("the family bible"). Reading is an activity that Thomas associates with his academic environment (at the college, in the library, at work) and his personal life (at home, in his apartment). But he also reads elsewhere (i.e., on the plane, at the doctor's office).

Thomas ranks "E-mails" as his #1 reading text, which he admittedly reads every day. Expository texts such as "newspapers", "magazines", and "Internet articles", as well as literary texts including "short stories" and "novels" he reads quite often, while "poetry", "biographies" and other literary texts appear less frequently on his personal reading list. Trivial or entertainment literature ("romance novels, comic strips"), consumer-oriented literature ("TV guides"), business-specific or -related literature ("reports, statistics, business letters") and personal correspondence ("letters, postcards") he does not read at all. Reading in his second/foreign language (L2) is both an enjoyable and enriching experience for Thomas who values the fact that "reading in another language teaches me new vocabulary". Referring to his last literature class in German, he cites that he read "a lot". In fact, there were "so many stories", he writes, they are "to numerous" to list. Since all of these were however required readings for the class it is not clear, if or what he read on his own besides those texts.

Similar to his motives for reading in L1, reading in L2 is also "entertaining" for him. Some of the additional incentives he cites for reading in L2 however are closely related to required aspects of his FL coursework ("have to read as part of my major",

"reading is required for this class", "have to answer specific questions about the reading"). Other aspects are related to overall educational goals ("more knowledgeable person"), while others again focus on his desire to find out more about the various facets that FL study entails ("culture", "history", "lifestyles", and "personal viewpoints and opinions").

Thomas regards himself a "pretty good reader" in the foreign language, and one who also has no trouble understanding the main gist of a story. He thinks that reading in L2 "isn't really all that difficult", and feels that if he reads more he will also become a better reader. Being quite confident about his abilities to read and comprehend FL texts he repeatedly asserts that encountering unfamiliar vocabulary words or unknown grammatical structures do not bother, frustrate or discourage him when reading L2 texts. He also does not feel the need to understand every single word in a text in order to comprehend the main idea and does not mind looking up new words that will assist him in understanding the reading. Similarly, he expresses that reading about an unfamiliar topic in the target language is also not a frustrating experience for him.

Student's reading response preferences

For Thomas, who declares that he usually thinks about what he is reading, the characters in a story take on a life of their own which makes them appear very real to him. To facilitate his understanding of a text Thomas consults secondary literature, but he rarely reviews scholarly interpretations to enhance his comprehension of the text. Thomas also notes that it is easier for him to write about his thoughts and feelings than speaking about them. While he has kept a written journal for readings before, he maintains that

both, "discussing [a text, my comment] or writing about a reading" are good ways for him to respond to a text.

Personal characteristics and response behaviors

Thomas is a gregarious young man with an amiable personality. But despite his extroverted side he is also a very compassionate individual, which is apparent in his oral, and even more so in his written responses. His strong desire to "make the world a better place" can almost be seen as his trademark: he is very determined to help other people. Hoping that others might need his help, he often includes his aspirations and feelings related to those desires in his journal responses:

Wenn ich könnte, würde ich ihm [refers to main story character Michael] helfen. ("Element")

Wann Eltern gross [the writer means "alt" or "älter", my comment] sind sollen Kinder sie helfen, genauso als wenn die Kinder jung waren und die Eltern halfen sie. ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

Ja, manchmal fühle ich mich als ob ich passe nirgendwo. Ich will auch die Welt besser machen, nicht einfach alles akzeptieren wie die Welt ist. Wahrscheinlich träume ich zu viel, aber ich will etwas besser machen für alle Leute. Wenn ich jemanden sehe, den meine Hilfe (oder einfach Hilfe braucht), mache ich alles was ich kann für den Mensch. Ich erwarte auch NICHTS, ich verstehe Probleme sind ab und zu gross, und dankbarkeit ist genug für eine Bezahlung.

...

Ja, meine Sehnsucht ist Rechte zu finden und ich strebe nach andere Leute zu helfen. Ich hoffe eines Tages wird jemanden meine Hilfe für etwas Dringend brauchen, und ich werde die [diesen Menschen, my comment] (wie der Clown) helfen. Ich weiss nicht wann oder wo, aber ich hoffe ich würde diese Ehre bekommen. ("Ein Märchen")

Occasionally he has a tendency to share his observations about a text in a whispering voice with another group member who is sitting close to him. Whether he does this intentionally or not – his voice is loud enough to be overheard by other participants who

are sitting close by and signal their understanding by either smiling or laughing. When asked, if he wishes to communicate his thoughts with the entire group, he often declines to comment. While this behavior seems to interrupt some study participants (who are trying to focus on their own thoughts during the think aloud phase), other students welcome his comments. Some of his statements might then elicit thoughts or provoke responses from fellow students that eventually lead the entire class to intensely discuss a particular part of the reading for a longer period of time.

Before Thomas begins writing during the pre-and while reading phase, he usually sits and waits for a few moments. (Initially, he confirmed with me that he understood the questions "correctly", probably wanting to make sure that he did answer what was asked of him.) All his responses are usually written in German and formulated in shorter, ellipsis-like sentences, oftentimes containing the words "wahrscheinlich" and "möglicherweise" or phrases such as, "Ich weiss nicht", or "Was weiss ich". Thomas' responses often reveal the *personal connections* he makes between his prior knowledge and what he anticipates the reading might be about, as the following entry documents:

Juden in Deutschland. Wahrscheinlich um 1930-1945, weil das Thema ist Populär für die Deutsche Lit. Juden werden nicht in einem positiven Licht sein. Die werden von manche Leute als etwas Unter-Menschliches gestellt [dargestellt]. Juden werden als Geldsuchtig, Lügner dargestellt. ("Das Judenauto")

Activating his prior knowledge about how Jewish people have been portrayed in the past (i.e., in other literary texts, films, plays, movies, documentaries, or through information he gained in other classes), Thomas also expresses the hope that this text will offer him new and different insights about the topic:

[e]s wird interessant **um eine andere Perspektive zu hören über Juden.** ("Das Judenauto")

A more self-directed response of a personal nature that describes what Thomas feels as he approaches another story is exhibited in the next entry:

Jenö ist **wahrscheinlich gestorben, sonst wird** [wäre, my comment] **der Titel "Jenö *ist* [italics mine] mein Freund"**. Ich schätze diese Geschichte wird eine Tragödie.

Ich denke über [an] meinen eigenen Freunde, und was ich über meine Freunde denke. Bevor ich diese Geschichte lese, ich denke an positive Gedanken. **Es könnte sein, dass nach ich diese Geschichte lese, wird meine Gedanken anders.**

Es wird eine Geschichte zwischen zwei Freunde, Jenö und eine andere Person. **Das Ende wird Traurig, weil die Titel klingt traurig.** ("Jenö war mein Freund")

The title of the story not only summons up images and memories in Thomas' mind that remind him of his own friends. He also reflects about his personal relationship with his friends, thus evaluating these friendships from *his* point of view, seeing them possibly in a different light. Thomas makes a particular reference to the past tense form of the verb "war" (from the title), and associates the title with words such as "traurig" and "Tragödie". This already foreshadows his expectations about the outcome of the story, which also reflects his ability to relate to and understand the text.

Thomas' exploration of character constellations and how different characters in a story relate to one another also reveal the influence of his personal experiences. While he does not necessarily voice these thoughts in classroom discussions, he feels clearly comfortable to write about his beliefs and convictions regarding social relationships and personal behaviors.

Sie [die Greisin, my comment] **musste etwas gegen ihr Mann haben, weil sie änderte sich nach dem Tod ihres Mannes.** Ich schätze er kontrollierte sie, sie

könnten trotzdem in einander verliebt, aber er kontrollierte was, wie ihren Aktionen waren. **Etwas stimmt 100% nicht mit der Familie, aber ich kann meine Finger nicht darauf setzen.**

Eine Familie ist Leute die machen etwas zusammen, und zwar oft.

Wann Eltern gross [the writer means "alt" or "älter", my comment] sind sollen Kinder sie helfen, genauso als wenn die Kinder jung waren und die Eltern halfen sie. In diesem Weg, macht dass Leben ein schönes Kreis um, und wenn es nicht geht wird das Leben und Ruhe zusammen brechen. ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

In some of his responses Thomas displays an acute awareness and evaluation of contemporary socio-political issues, which he formulates into his own questions about the importance of historical events and their significance for current situations.

One shouldn't ask *How could people follow the Nazi's like that?* Rather if I were in that period [during WWII, my comment] and were told all of that Propaganda would I believe it? A great example of how well propaganda works the same way in the U.S. [is, my comment] the Patriot Act. People support this act to suppress terrorists. Many questions come to my mind who decides who the terrorists are? Is it just to take away some of our most basic rights? The Nazi's took away those same rights in order to suppress the population. To me the story scared me, because it made me reflect on how simple it is to change people for the worse. ("Das Judenauto")

Similarly, he connects historical political events in Germany with recent personal experiences and stories from other group members to reflect about the readings and render his own conclusions.

It was also a learning experience to hear from [student's name] situation [which was, my comment] extremely similar to that of the Jews in Germany. [Student's name] was lucky...could have died in that war as well, in a similar way the Jews did, it really made me reflect on how the world really hasn't changed all that much in the past 50 years. ("Das Judenauto")

At times, when certain passages in a story strike him as unusual or odd (especially during the think aloud phase), Thomas offers comments that seem to be heavily connected with his personal experiences, not leaving him much room for alternate readings or different

interpretations of the text. Basing the judgement of human behaviors and actions in these situations solely on his personal beliefs he can get so wrapped up in his own interpretation of the text (or better in *assigning specific meanings to certain parts of a text*), that he overlooks or misreads the actual language in the text. This, in turn leads to an interpretation that the text does not fully support. When focusing on text segments that confirm or stand in contrast to his own value system, Thomas measures story characters' behaviors and actions against *his own* standards, through which he defines conduct as appropriate, correct, or expected.

**Der Vater hat die schlechten Dinge gemacht, nicht Jenö, oder seine Völker.
Jenö was zu nett diese Dinge zu stehlen.**

**Manchmal können Erwachsene immer noch so schlimm [sein] als [wie]
damals.**

**Der Vater ist unglaublich Gemein, und lehrt sein Sohn eine Gruppe (andere
Völker) zu hassen.**

Der Vater stahl die Dingen, aber wieso? ("Jenö war mein Freund")

Being so absorbed in his belief that the young – and therefore likely innocent – child (Jenö) would not commit the criminal act of stealing ("because Jenö was too nice"), Thomas charges the father of Jenö's 9-year old friend (who is the narrator of the story) with the crime. In Thomas' understanding of the text, the father not only steals and is therefore a bad person – he also teaches his son to hate other people! Although it was pointed out during the following class discussion, that the text language does not support such a claim and that the father is essentially open to the relationship between his son and Jenö – he even promoted it! – Thomas held on to his own interpretation.

His reaction to the following story also displays his personal background knowledge (here, family values), when he notes that a functioning family life is characterized by open communication, cooperation and feelings of personal closeness:

Es gibt viele merkwürdige Sachen in der Geschichte zwischen die Söhne und ihrer Mutter. Erst der Geschäftsmann (Sohn) wusste nicht wo sein Vater begraben war, dass heißt er machte keine Zeit [er nahm sich nicht die Zeit, my comment] für sein Vater... aber wann er da war [wenn er da gewesen wäre, beim Begräbnis, my comment], würde er erinnern wo sein Vater liegt. Der andere Sohn, hmm ja, kann man etwas Gutes über ihm sagen? Eigentlich nicht, ...es klingt als ob der Sohn will seine eigene Mutter nur benutzen... Nur weil eine Person Blutverwante ist, macht das nicht eine Familie. Eine Familie ist Leute die machen etwas zusammen, und zwar oft. ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

Student Profile 4 ("Michael")

Individual background information

A 23-year old non-native speaker of English, Michael gives his ethnic background as "Caucasian". His native tongue is an Eastern European language, which is also spoken by all members of his family at home. For the first twelve years of his life, Michael grew up in Eastern Europe before the war conflict in the former Yugoslavia forced his family to move to Germany. Remaining there for three years, his family moved again when he was 16, this time to the U.S. Michael is currently residing in a larger Midwestern city, where he shares a home with his mother.

The youngest member in a family of four, Michael also has an extended family. He notes that he likes to visit them often, but that this is at times difficult, because they live in various parts of the world (i.e., his homeland, Germany, and the U.S.). At home, Michael assumes responsibilities that range from cleaning to cooking and describes typical family activities as "things that my family does at home", "vacations" and

"shopping". His favorite childhood memory, he writes is "talking and traveling with my father".

While living in his native country, Michael's parents obtained terminal academic degrees and instilled the value of a "good and solid" education in Michael as well. Throughout his K-12 school years he exclusively attended public schools and is currently completing his undergraduate degree at a 4-year private college with a major in International Business and a minor in German. The scholarships he received to attend college were based on his excellent academic and athletic performances during High School. Throughout his college years he has never participated in a study abroad program, nor has he completed an internship.

Michael enjoys physical exercises very much, and vigorously participates in a variety of sports activities. Most of all he loves soccer, which he also plays as a varsity sport for his college. He particularly enjoys the challenge that the sport offers him in striving to "become the best I can be" and receives both pleasure and satisfaction out of "working for what I want". Other things he likes to do in his leisure time are "reading" (primarily newspapers and magazines), "listening to music, going to the movies, traveling" and "surfing the Internet". When on vacation he derives joy from "traveling abroad" and visiting "friends and relatives". The only community group that Michael is actively involved in is his ethnic community, where he loves listening and talking to his fellow countrymen, and enjoys helping others ("especially children and the elderly") because it makes him happy and content. In addition he often volunteers his times planning, organizing and/or leading community events. He also attends talks and meetings that his community offers on a regular basis.

Usually taking the maximum amount of credits per semester (between 19 and 20), Michael also holds a job that he describes as "part-time", in which he however works "more than 30 hours" per week. While he does not state a preference in respect to the setup of his work environment (working alone vs. working in a team), the most important and enjoyable factor in his job is the "contact with other people". Dealing with "mean and insensitive people" on the other hand bothers him. He shares his work-related experiences for the most part with his family, relatives and close friends.

Although he studied English for only one year while living in Germany, Michael designates English as his second language. German, on the other hand, which he has studied consecutively for three years during his college years, he cites as "another foreign language". His reasons for taking the current German course are related to his desire to "learn more about the language, culture, literature and history", to "better understand the literature and art of this culture", and to "fulfill a required class" for his German minor. His primary reason however, for enrolling in this course, as well as for continuing his FL studies in the future is "to enhance my ability to speak it more fluently".

Student's reading behavior in L1 and L2

Michael likes reading in his native language (L1) because he considers it an enjoyable leisure time activity and also has no problems understanding it. The stories and books that were read to him when he was a child include mostly children's and adventure stories, but also comic books. The reading materials in his current home span a variety of sources ("newspapers, books, catalogues, journals, magazines") and topics ("sports, politics, travel, news from foreign countries"), and are printed in his native language and

in English. Michael is interested in "specific information and topics" when he reads in L1, although he also acknowledges that reading in one's own language is also part of being an "educated and well-rounded person".

He usually reads in his native tongue at home or while he is traveling (for example, by bus or plane). "Newspapers", "e-mails" and "Internet articles" are among the texts that Michael reads daily, while "postcards", "short stories" and "travel brochures" are also frequent items on his reading list. He also states that he reads "business reports, statistics, and business letters" in his native tongue quite often. Informative reading materials for consumers ("advertisements, catalogues"), "essays" and "personal letters" he reads sometimes, while literary texts ("poetry, novels, fairy tales") and "reviews" hardly ever appear. Trivial and entertainment literature he does not read at all.

Although Michael answers positively when asked about his enjoyment level reading in his second/foreign language (L2) he does not give any specific reason why or what he likes about this experience. Outside of class-required readings he cites that he reads "Eurosport", a magazine reporting about various sports that are popular in Europe with a focus on soccer. His motives for reading in L2 closely resemble his reasons for reading in L1: to "get specific information", to "know more about a topic of personal interest", to be a "more knowledgeable person", and to "broaden the personal perspective about a variety of topics". Furthermore, he relates L2 reading to his academic requirements in the FL, but also mentions that he would like to get a job where he could use what he learned by reading in L2.

Michael remains fairly neutral when asked about his personal reading experiences in L2. He repeatedly states that he neither agrees nor disagrees with statements referring

to how he processes and comprehends FL texts. He views reading in the FL class as a necessary component of language learning that holds the benefit of making him a "better reader". He also thinks of himself as a fairly good reader and believes that he has the ability to comprehend FL texts for the most part.

Student's reading response preferences

Answers that display his somewhat neutral attitude can also be observed when Michael is asked to state his reading response preferences. He notes that characters in a book or story do not really come "alive" for him during the reading process. He further negates that he reviews secondary literature sources or other interpretations to better understand a given text. He reiterates though, that he prefers reading about "politics, sports, and travel" and dislikes reading about "entertainment" topics.

The picture that unfolds when Michael is asked about his writing preferences is somewhat puzzling. Initially he indicates that he very much enjoys expressing his personal opinions and thoughts in writing, because he finds it easier to write than to talk about his feelings. He later marks though that he does not like to write a personal response to what he is reading, thus contradicting his earlier statement. And although he "generally" likes to write, Michael replies negative to having ever kept a response journal. He believes that the best way to respond to a reading is to "repeat and follow up about the given topic". It is not quite clear from this answer what exactly he means by that: whether he prefers to re-read a text a number of times, favors receiving additional and/or secondary sources about the reading, or whether he thinks the reading should simply be discussed in class.

Personal characteristics and response behaviors

Michael is a diligent and hardworking individual who continually strives to "do better" in whatever he is doing (for example, to be a better student, soccer player, or co-worker). He is always aware of the requirements he needs to fulfill in order to be academically and professionally successful – his main objective in life. His approach to reading "literature" is for the most part purpose-oriented and basically connected to finding specific information: he does not consider this activity particularly enjoyable.

During class he does not say very much. Sitting quietly, he listens to what others have to say. But although he does not volunteer his comments in class discussions, he participates when invited to share his thoughts and offers rather insightful perspectives. His responses to pre-reading questions were primarily written in English and contained short sentences or words and phrases, jotted down in a note-like fashion. While he did seem rather absorbed with some of the readings during the think aloud phase, he did not write very much.

Establishing connections between his *personal experiences* (i.e., growing up as a child in his native country) and the readings, Michael continuously draws on memories from his past. For example, before the text "Jenö war mein Freund" was introduced, all students received the copy of a black-and-white photograph, which depicted a Roma family (parents, four children and a grandmother) standing in the backyard behind their small house. Michael writes:

Ich dachte dass these [dieses] Bild viel mit meine eigene Kultur eigenschaften hat. Es ist worscheinlich eine große Familie in einem Dorf. Sie alle leben zusammen und arbeiten sehr viel um ihre Leben zu verbessern. Sie haben keine specifische Berufe aber sie können viele dinge machen und brauchen nicht viel

~~direction~~ Einleitung [Anleitung, my comment] es zu erledigen. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

While Michael did not actually disclose if his insights and detailed observations about the depicted family were influenced by his own experiences, his descriptive narrative suggests that he is familiar with the lifestyle and work habits of a family from his socio-cultural background.) Similarly, he reflects about *personal feelings* that are closely associated with experiences from his past, as the following excerpt from his responses to the pre-reading questions for "Jenö war mein Freund" document:

A story about ex friends who after long friendship disagreed and split their friendship.

I don't think so [when asked whether he thinks the story might be enjoyable for him to read, my comment], **because it will probably be negative and depressing.**

When I saw the "war" word I immediately thought [thought, my comment] about my ex friend.

Importance of friendship

Many of Michael's childhood memories have been influenced by the war in the former Yugoslavia, and are marked by a series of traumatic events. First, he experienced the loss of his father and other close family members and friends, who were killed during the war. Then he went with his family on an odyssey from his homeland to Germany, only to be moved again a few years later to the U.S. His attempts to deal with his past are continuously present in his responses. For example, prior to the reading of the story "Das Judenauto", study participants were asked to write about various childhood memories they recalled. Michael's entries read as follows:

Fußballspiele mit meine Freunde! Dass war echt gut, viel Spass und Erinnerungen.

Reisen mit meinem Vater. Wir haben zu anderen Ländern gereist und viele Sehenswürdigkeiten besucht.

Krieg. Weil ich 9 Mitgliedern meine Familie verloren habe und alles das materialisch ist (Haus, Geld, usw.)

Die Schule war viel schwerer als hier in USA. ("Das Judenauto")

Relating these and similar background experiences to the readings, his written responses oftentimes reflect both compassion for and emotional identification with story characters:

Sicher! [his spontaneous reply when asked whether he can identify with one of the main characters from the story, my comment]. **Der Krieg hat alles verändert. Ich lebte mit die Leute die mich gewusst [gekannt] haben und uns akzeptiert haben. Dann müssten wir weg gehen und irgendwo neue Haus** [ein neues zu Hause?] **zu finden. Es ist nicht leicht neue Haus zu finden und sich integrieren wo man ganz anders lebt. Aber, Zeit ändert alles.** ("Ein Märchen")

References that indicate his personal connections with and personal feelings for the story characters can be found in the following response, where Michael describes the quality of a good relationship between father and son:

Freddy ist sehr glücklich wenn sein Vater da neben ihn ist. Dass ist schon ein ganzes gute gefühl. ... Sein Vater ist ein sehr guter Mensch der ihm hilft und liebt.

Freddy's Geschichte ist in gewissem Sinne eine Liebesgeschichte weil da sein vater ist.

Vater ist immer da! Vater kümmert sich um seinen Sohn! ("Der Mongo")

Examples that show how Michael draws on his prior experiences and incorporates them in his understanding of the texts, especially when these personal and socio-cultural experiences are embedded within the particular socio-historic and political context of his past are cited below:

In his [referring here to the main story character Michael] **position I personally would not try to challenge the authorities because once you do, you are in their black book. They will make your life a living hell.** ("Element")

Jeder Mensch gehört irgendwo! [hin, my comment] **Es ist der Land oder Platz wo mann respektiert und akzeptiert wie der Mensch ist.**

Ich habe Sehnsucht nach meinem Heimat, Stadt, und meine Familie. Wir haben so viel verloren nur weil wir ... sind. Wir sind nicht besser, nicht

schlechter aber anders. Ich denke dass ich in meinem Heimat gehöre und dass ich immer ein 'Ausländer' in anderen Länder sein werde. ("Ein Märchen")

The influence of Michael's specific cultural background knowledge, which he uses as a model for his own life, but which has also shaped his understanding of socially and politically acceptable behaviors and socio-cultural relationships (for example, between family members in "Die unwürdige Greisin", or between government officials and citizens of a country in "Element") is documented in the following excerpts:

Aus dem Text wissen wir dass er der jüngste Sohn ist und schwache Gesundheit hat [referring to the character of the printmaker in the story, my comment]. **Ich glaube er ist eine gute Man weil er versucht hat mit Mutter zusammen zu leben. Er hat auch die andere Familie mitgliedern die Briefe geschrieben.**

...
Sie [die Greisin, my comment] sollte eng mit Familie bleiben aber auch Leben mehr geniessen. Sie sollte Familie besuchen und Leute zu ihre Haus einladen aber auch mehr reisen. Sie sollte ihr Verhalten nicht 360 Grad ändern. Meine Meinung nach, Greisin verhalten ist unwürdig. Sie hat [sich, my comment] so viel geändert so dass die Familiemitgliedern es bemerkt haben und wüßte nicht was zu machen.

...
In meine Kultur die ältere Leute haben unabhängig sind, aber Töchter/ Söhne kümmern sich um die ältere Leute. Wir glauben dass die ältere Leute viel moral Unterstützung brauchen. Sie haben viel Respekt von jungen Leute und junge Leute machen alles was die ältere Leute möchten. ("Die unwürdige Greisin")

As for [a] socialist government, individuals are not important but [the] country as a whole is what really counts... for the national security [of a socialist government, my comment] it is important that people do what they are told to do [underlined emphasis from respondent] and not to challenge the political system. ("Element")

It is noteworthy that, although Michael described a number of stories that were read during the semester as being "sad" or "depressive", he concludes his response statements often with a hopeful note or an optimistic outlook:

[i]t actually turned out to be a sad story but with some very positive developments. ("Jenö war mein Freund")

**Der text war traurig aber auch interessant.
Es gibt auch Leute das die behinderte lieben und unterstützen. ("Der
Monggo")**

**Liber Großmutter,
Es ist ganz klar dass du sehr traurig bist und das die Situation nicht leicht für
dich ist. Wir brauchen einander. Die ganze Familie hat dich sehr lieb. ("Die
unwürdige Greisin")**

**Es war eine traurige Märchen mit guten Ende.
Wir müssen aus unseren Herzen die entscheidungen bringen. Der Clown hat
dem Herz geöffnet und möchte ihr [referring to the main story character, a
flower] helfen. ("Ein Märchen")**

While Michael's responses repeatedly indicate the strong relation he forms between the memories and experiences from his childhood and how he understands and interprets a text, his comments also express his ability to look at things from different perspectives and allow possibly different interpretations. While his oral comments during class were few, they often centered on presenting the same solution for various problems that were related to social or personal inadequacies: people's desire to *communicate* with one another and their continuous attempt to try and *understand* each other – despite all differences that might exist.

Categories reflecting the Influence of individual and socio-cultural Background

Knowledge in Written Responses

To examine the frequency, scope and specific characteristics of written responses that displayed the influence of readers' individual and socio-cultural knowledge, I analyzed all data from answers to pre-reading questions, think-aloud protocols and response journals. Overall, I found that stories evoked written responses that were primarily linked with the reader's individual or personal background knowledge, if the

reader focused on his or her very own life experiences, feelings, beliefs or values during the reading process and incorporated those when assigning meaning to the respective text. Written responses that were stronger influenced by the reader's socio-cultural background could be discerned if the reader centered on expressing experiences and feelings that were related to the reader's background knowledge as influenced by public, communal, socio-historically or socio-culturally related norms, values, beliefs or information.

In respect to personal connections readers established between themselves and the texts it was for some stories difficult to draw a clear separation between responses based on either individual or socio-cultural background knowledge. The readers' personal knowledge base was in these cases so closely linked to his or her socio-cultural background, that one informed the other and vice versa (for example, "Jenö war mein Freund", "Das Judenauto", "Element", and especially "Ein Märchen").

Of the short stories that were selected for the analysis of responses, I found that responses from the first category, **Connections**, were represented in all written response types from the participating case study respondents. Responses for the first subcategory **Personal Assumptions and Beliefs** focused on connections the respondents made between their own personal (life) experiences and their predictions, hypotheses or assumptions of the texts. However, the nature and depth of individual experiences that were recalled for different stories varied, based on individual respondent's memories, background knowledge and circumstances. For responses that were assigned to this category readers recalled experiences that included the following characteristics:

"Jenö war mein Freund"

Current or former (lost) relationships with family members and friends

Negative developments within relationships

Possible reasons for break-ups of relationships

Assumptions based on background knowledge about other literary text and language use

"Das Judenauto"

Positive and negative memories related to the respondent's personal childhood

Background knowledge referring to historical events in Germany

- **Background knowledge associated with images of war and social injustice**

Background knowledge related to other readings and/or films and

"Der Mongo"

Relationships between immediate family members

Background knowledge about division of work within modern-day families

- **Background knowledge about children from divorced families**

Daily routine and personal hygiene

"Element"

The main part / a specific part/ any part of a greater whole

A part of something bigger

"Die unwürdige Greisin"

Relationships/ conflicts between different generations (grandparents, parents, children)

Positive childhood memories about grandparents

Background knowledge about social status of old/ older people in society

- **Background knowledge about typical behaviors/ actions associated with older people or the older generation**

"Ein Märchen"

Negative experiences/ relationships (i.e., with other people) that turn out well in the end

A story with a moral (a teaching), a general theme

Purpose and intentions of fairy tales

For this category, respondents frequently recalled experiences and memories (positive and negative ones) that were connected to their individual life situations and also influenced by their personal beliefs and/or values (marked in *italics*). Responses that

suggest a stronger influence of the reader's socio-cultural background knowledge indicate the reader's connections made to public, communal, socio-historically or socio-culturally related norms, values and beliefs (marked in **bold**). Responses that are marked with a bullet point (●) indicate the influence of both personal and socio-cultural background knowledge. Responses for the second subcategory, **Personal Connections**, focused on the respondents' thoughts, comments, and ideas that indicated connections the readers made between the text and their own individual and socio-cultural background knowledge. For responses that were assigned to this category readers recalled connections that referred to:

"Jenö war mein Freund"

Personal relationships with family members and friends

Background knowledge of related books, stories, films, or movies

- **Background knowledge of lifestyle, status, beliefs and values of other cultures and/or ethnic groups**

"Das Judenauto"

Positive and negative childhood memories, including school memories (K-8)

Personal knowledge of related books, stories, films, or movies

Negative images of Nazi-Germany and German-related historical events, 1933-1945

Background knowledge related to the Holocaust

- **Background knowledge associated with images of war, social injustice and discrimination**
- **Background knowledge related to recent or current political events**

"Der Mongo"

Personal relationships with family members

Personal relationships with people with disabilities

Personal value system of respondent

Background knowledge of status and treatment of people with disabilities

Background knowledge associated with issues related social injustice and discrimination

"Element"

Background knowledge associated with lifestyle in former East Germany

Background knowledge associated with relationship of church and state

- **Personal relationship/ conflicts with authorities or government officials**
- **Background knowledge associated with issues related social and political injustice and discrimination**
- **Background knowledge associated with role and influence of government and police in public and private spheres**

"Die unwürdige Greisin"

Personal relationships with family members, in particular grandparents

Personal knowledge of conflicts between different generations (grandparents, parents, children)

Personal knowledge of lifestyle, status, beliefs and values of older people

Background knowledge of status, role and treatment of women in society

"Ein Märchen"

- **Personal identification with story character's situation**
- **Personal relationships with people from other cultures**
- **Personal knowledge associated with issues related to social injustice and discrimination towards minorities and specific groups in society**
- **Background knowledge associated with status of minorities and foreigners**

For this category, respondents also recalled experiences and memories related to their individual lives and influenced by their personal values and beliefs (marked in *italics*).

Responses that indicate a stronger influence of the reader's socio-cultural background when making connections between the reader and the text were also noticed, and are marked in **bold**. It is noteworthy to observe that the number of responses which suggest the influence of both personal and socio-cultural background knowledge (marked with ●) has increased, which can lead to two conclusions:

1. Readers displayed the ability to make connections with the text that were not only based on or informed by their own personal experiences but also included other forms of background knowledge (movies, films, books, socio-cultural background)

2. By incorporating both forms of background knowledge – personal and socio-cultural – readers potentially increased their chances of understanding story events and story character's behaviors or actions, because they related a more comprehensive knowledge base to the text.

Examining responses from the second category, **Involvement**, I observed that while responses were represented in all written response types, they were not consistently represented in every story. For example, responses from the first subcategory, **Personal Involvement**, which indicated a self-directed response from the reader expressing feelings and emotions that are connected to the story, could be found in most stories. However, the respondent's **personal involvement** varied in degree and intensity, which could largely be attributed to the reader's personal experiences, background knowledge about the topic of the story or the individual's interest in the story. An example of respondents' feelings and emotions as related to the story "Jenö war mein Freund" are given below:

Thomas	Was passiert...war schrecklich I felt involved
Andrea	Ich hatte gemischte Gefühle Ich war glücklich Ich fühlte mich so leer innerlich
Theresia	Ich fühle mich traurig und einsam Dieser Gedanke ist fürchterlich I felt involved to a point where...
Michael	I saw my personal experiences I felt the sadness and emptiness

Responses from the second subcategory, which expressed the reader's understanding of the text by establishing connections between the reader and the text focused more

specifically on the reader's **Personal Involvement with the Story**. These responses also included feelings of empathy, compassion, or rejection that were directed towards the actions and behaviors of story characters. Although responses linking feelings of compassion could be found if a story character displayed values and morals that reflected those of the respondent, no consistent pattern of the reader's **Personal Involvement with the Story** could be discerned in all responses or for all stories. For example, the fact that respondents (partially) accepted the behavior and actions displayed by the grandmother in "Die unwürdige Greisin" did not necessarily cause them to develop or express feelings of compassion for the old lady. Feelings expressing the respondent's understanding for the story character's situation, or feelings expressing empathy, consideration, pity, mercy, or emotional identification could be noticed, if the respondent had experienced similar situations in his or her life:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Thomas | Ich wollte mich in der Geschichte setzen. Ich wollte denken als ob ich das Erzähler war. ("Jenö war mein Freund")
The story scared me... ("Das Judenauto")
Machmal fühle ich mich, als ob... ("Element") |
| Andrea | Ich weiss wie es ist, wenn man jemanden als eine Freundin...sieht und dann plötzlich von der Person getrennt wird. ("Jenö war mein Freund")
Ich hatte ich Mitgefühl mit Franz als er ausgelacht wurde, weil ich nachvollziehen konnte, wie es ihm erging. ("Das Judenauto") |
| Theresia | Having to leave friends behind is a horrible thing. ("Jenö war mein Freund")
I can partially identify with the flower. ("Ein Märchen") |
| Michael | I initially felt good, when Jenö got accepted as a friend. ("Jenö war mein Freund")
Das ist schon ein ganzes gute gefühl. ("Der Mongo") |

Responses from the third category, **Evaluation**, displayed probably the strongest influence of reader's individual and socio-cultural background knowledge. Comments and opinions related to the respondents' appraisal, judgement or assessment of story character's behaviors and actions were consistently and inextricably linked to the reader's personal standards, values, morals and convictions. These personal beliefs must however be seen in relation to the reader's past and present socio-cultural environments, since they account next to family-instilled values for the second most important source of the respondent's ethical and moral codes (i.e., the influence of religious values, community groups, organizations, or politics).

When comparing the responses in respect to how readers evaluated behaviors and actions displayed by children versus adults, an interesting phenomenon could be observed. For example, in evaluating the behavior and actions of *Jenö*, readers acknowledged both positive,

Thomas	Jenö [ist] nett, ein guter Freund ... Jenö hat vielen Talenten, und zeigt der andere Junge wichtige Sachen.
Andrea	Jenö mag es wild zu sein.
Theresia	Jenö war ein guter Freund.
Michael	[The] two young boys were fortunete [fortunate] enough to meet each other.

and (possibly) negative components of the main character:

Thomas	Jenö hat ein schlechtes Einfluss, weil den anderen Jungen geht nicht mehr in der Schule.
Andrea	Der neunjährige Junge [referring to Jenö's friend, the narrator of the story] ging auch weniger zur Schule. Jenö raucht.
Theresia	Jenö war ein komischer Typ. It's weird that he wanted to steal things but not be given to him.

Michael Jenö wants to be a bad boy.

Although it remained somewhat of a mystery for the entire class whether *Jenö* had actually stolen things from his friend or not (only one reader ruled out completely that *Jenö* was a thief), all respondents sided with *Jenö*, attributing his behaviors and actions mostly to the fact that he simply behaved like a child (or a boy). Since he was only a child and therefore not fully responsible or accountable for all his actions, it was to be expected that he would or might do things that are wrong.

In contrast, the behaviors and actions of the grandmother in "Die unwürdige Greisin" were measured against standards and values that more clearly reflected the respondent's personal and socio-cultural background, which also influences and possibly determines the expected conduct of grandparents.

Thomas

Meiner Meinung nach ist sie [die Großmutter] wirklich nicht unwürdig, wie den Titel behauptet, sondern ihre Kinder, und sie ist teilweise daran schuldig wie ihr Mann, dass die Kinder glauben, dass sie unwürdig ist.

Andrea

Was ich aber nicht verstehe, warum sie weniger Zeit mit ihren Kindern und Enkelkindern verbracht hatte. Es kam mir vor als wollte sie Abstand von ihnen halten. Ich finde das Verhalten das Verhalten der Greisin unwürdiger als das des Buchdruckers, weil sie immerhin sich sehr stark verändert hat ohne Rücksicht auf den Rest der Familie zu nehmen.

Theresia

Ich hoffe, dass ich etwas wie das Leben der Großmutter habe, wenn ich alt bin. Ich will mein eigenes Leben genießen, bevor ich sterbe, und das ist wahrscheinlich, was die Großmutter gemacht hat. Ich toleriere bzw. akzeptiere das Verhalten der Greisin ganz.

Michael

Sie könnte es ein bisschen anders machen! Sie sollte eng mit Familie bleiben... sollte Familie besuchen, und Leute zu ihre Haus einladen.

Meine Meinung nach, Greisin Verhalten ist unwürdiger. Sie hat so viel geändert. Sie sollte ihr Verhalten nicht 360 Grad ändern.
In meine Kultur die ältere Leute haben unabhängig sind, aber Tochter/ Sohne kümmern sich um die ältere Leute. Wir glauben dass ältere Leute viel Moral Unterstützung brauchen.

The responses for the fourth category, **Interpretation**, dealt mainly with the effects that the text had on the reader, and how the reader accomplished to fill or complete "the gaps" (Iser, 1978) during the actual reading process. Naturally, readers needed to draw on their individual and socio-cultural knowledge base to help them establish connections between the meaning of the reading and how that meaning could be related to the individual's personal life. By placing the focus in this category on the reader's *reconstruction* of the text, responses documented how the readers perceived and comprehended a text.

Some of the **personal interpretations** that students had rendered were validated during classroom discussions (i.e., "Der Mongo", "Ein Märchen"). Interpreting the story character's behavior in "Der Mongo" for example, readers repeatedly expressed statements that described the personal feelings and emotions they had during the reading process:

Thomas

Ein Gedanken volles Text. Man kann viel lernen von alle Menschen, nicht nur die 'Gesunde Menschen'!

Andrea

Es macht mich traurig wenn andere Leute einer anderen Meinung sind und glauben dass Behinderte stören und weg geschickt werden müssen.

Theresia

Dieser Text ist der trauerigsten Text...dieses Schuljahres, meine ich. Es war ein guter Text, weil er ein gutes Ende hat, aber trotzdem macht er mich ganz deprimiert.

Michael

Es war traurig aber auch intresant...[d]ie Author hat den Text sehr gut geschrieben.

But they also pointed out the importance of accepting and supporting people who are different in any way, shape or form.

Thomas

Es ist unsere Pflicht zu helfen wann und wo wir können. Alle Menschen verdienen unsere Respekt, und wir sollen es ihnen geben. Es ist auch so in der Bibel.

Andrea

Ich denke dass auch Behinderte Menschen gefühle haben und genauso lebendig wie 'normale Menschen' sind. Ich denke dass das Leben von Freddie's Vater sich sehr stark verändert hat und dass der Vater sehr viel Verantwortung an [auf] sich genommen hat, aber trotzdem hat Freddy das Leben seines Vaters bereichert.

Theresia

Freddy braucht doch viel Arbeit, um ihn zu kümmern, aber die Liebe seines Vaters so groß ist, daß er [der Vater, my comment] wahrscheinlich denkt, daß es nichts ist. Man kann auch die Liebe Freddy's Vaters sehen, wenn er Freddy beschreibt. Ich denke dass diese Liebe die beste Liebe der Welt ist, weil der Vater sein Leben opfert, um [sich um] seinen Sohn zu kümmern.

Michael

Aber es gibt auch die Leute das die behinderte lieben und unterstützen.

Similar in nature and content were the interpretations that readers assigned to the story

"Ein Märchen", when they described their understanding and meaning of the symbol

Herzgarten:

Thomas

Ein neues Land wo die Blume akzeptiert ist.
Herzgarten ist ein Symbol für ein neues Ort, Land.

Andrea

die neue Heimat wo alle gleich sind
Der *Herzgarten* wird von einer positiven Perspektive beschrieben, eine Welt in der alles gut ist. Das wichtigste Element in diesem Herzgarten ist das alle Blumen gleich sind.

Theresia

der Himmel oder eine Phantasie

The most important element is probably the fact that the flower [main character of the story, my comment] isn't judged by anyone in the garden. The deeper meaning, I believe, is the idea that if we only judged people by the content of their character (their *heart*) and not by the color of their skin, the world would be a much better place.

Michael

wie ein Welt sein sollte

Wir müssen aus unseren Herzen die entscheidungen bringen. Der Clown hat den [sein] Herz geöffnet und möchte ihr [möchte der Blume, my comment] helfen.

Interpretive responses to other texts however showed signs of different re-construction processes (for example, "Jenö war mein Freund", "Das Judenauto", "Element", and "Die unwürdige Greisin"). Based on the various perspectives and viewpoints that individual readers applied when trying to make sense of the reading, responses reflected contrasting and even conflicting meanings of the same text. Possible misreadings and subsequent misinterpretations of story events or character actions could be related to two factors:

1. the reader's lack or insufficient background knowledge of necessary socio-cultural and/or sociohistorical facts, or
2. the reader's uncompromising or overpowering influence of personal background knowledge.

The latter made it at times difficult for the respective individual to be receptive to new ideas or concepts, which in turn limited the negotiation of possible interpretations.

Statements indicating the **relevance of the respondent's personal story interpretation** for his or her own life were again closely related to the reader's personal experiences.

Responses for the fifth category, **Reflection**, indicated statements that expressed the reader's reflection of his or her own reading process and that of other readers. Based on the reader's general openness to take in new ideas or adopt a different stance toward

the text, responses for this category highlighted possible adjustments or modifications the reader made to reach different conclusions or interpretations of the reading. Statements could also include the (re)-negotiation of an initial meaning that the reader had previously assigned to the text. However, responses for this category were rarely found in the written work of case study participants. Most respondents did not add (any) additional comments or opinions to their original interpretation of a story, nor did they include adjustments or modifications to previously made comments that would suggest that they had arrived at a different or new understanding of the text, or extended the text's meaning.

Categories reflecting the Influence of individual and socio-cultural Background

Knowledge in Personal Interviews

A similar procedure as was outlined for the evidence of background knowledge in written responses was applied in the analysis of oral responses. Categories reflecting the influence of readers' individual and socio-cultural background knowledge in oral feedback, which specifically focused on comments that respondents made during the personal interview (PI), corroborated findings from written responses. Thus, results obtained from the examination of oral responses validated the importance that readers' prior knowledge and experiences had when trying to assign meaning to a text. Due to the interactive nature of the personal interview, which was guided by a set of pre-determined, semi-structured and open-ended interview questions, the interview with each case study participant focused more on uncovering the "how" than the "what". This means that the "contexts, particular situations, nuances, manners [and especially, my comment] people

involved" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 663) were placed at the core of this conversation, while "substantive findings" (the "what") took secondary place.

In general, the interviewees seemed to be quite comfortable speaking about the personal experiences they had made during the various stages of the reading and writing process. Some even shared rather personal feelings and observations with me that were not immediately or only in a peripheral way related to the interview, the readings or the course content. However, I decided not to interrupt the respondents "stream of consciousness", because I perceived the interviewees' extended reactions to the texts, their thoughts, observations, feelings and emotions were all integral parts of their attempt to verbalize "what happened to them" (as readers!) during the reading process.

Andrea most notable comments during the interview were related to her experiences when reading the story "Element". She admits that she almost had to force herself to read the text again, because she was – at least initially – unable to establish any connections to the text (leave alone make sense of it!) due to her limited or nonexistent background knowledge about socio-historical and socio-political circumstances in the former East Germany:

Denn ich wußte einfach... ich, ich wußte nichts über die... DDR, und ich hatte keine Verbindung mit dem Text, und ich hab' es nicht verstanden, für mich hat das gar keine Bedeutung.

Referring later on to her changed understanding of the text, she cites the reasons for her previous reaction and responses to the text and also acknowledges the sources that led to an adjustment of her story comprehension:

Ich denke...jetzt weiß ich, daß...der Grund für meine... Reaktion auf diesen Text war, weil ich gar keine Ahnung hatte von, DDR... es hat sehr viel...geholfen, als

Sie [referring to the interviewer, myself] die Präsentation³⁸ gegeben haben über DDR... und, ...Ihren persönlichen Erfahrung... Sie [referring to the interviewer, myself] kommen aus...ich hab', aus Deutschland, naja...für mich macht das nichts.

The strongest and probably most lasting effect on Andrea's understanding of "Element" was furnished through the documentary "Verriegelte Zeit" by Sybille Schönemann.

Andrea comments:

Nachdem wir den Film gesehen haben..."Verriegelte Zeit", ja...danach hatt' ich schon verstanden und erfahren, als ich es gesehen habe, und auch die Musik...und, es hat...auch Gefühle in mich ... irgendwie erweckt, und ich wußte ...es war einfach eine Welt, von der ich überhaupt nichts wußte! Und wohl [obwohl] ich die Hälfte meines Lebens in Deutschland verbracht hatte, hab' ich wirklich eingesehen ...was ich nicht wußte!

Although Andrea also states that she had heard about East Germany from her parents while living in (then) West Germany, she reiterates that the presentation about the GDR, the additional information provided from her instructor, and in particular Schönemann's documentary motivated her to read the story again. Furnished with her newly acquired background knowledge, Andrea was now able to read the story from a completely different perspective, which not only allowed her to experience a positive reaction to the text, but also empowered her to create a "totally different meaning of the text for herself". In her response to the format of the course, Andrea states that while she initially enjoyed the guide questions for the response journals, she eventually grew tired of them, because she was bored answering the same questions:

Am Anfang, ...sagen wir die ersten drei Geschichten, ...war ich eigentlich ganz froh, daß wir dieses Blatt hatten [referring to the guide questions]...denn,...so wußte ich, ...inwiefern...was ich schreiben sollte, und, was von mir verlangt wird, und, ...anstatt irgend ...etwas zu schreiben, was in mein Kopf los ist. Aber danach, ...würd' [wurde] ich ein wenig müde, immer dasselbe.

³⁸ The presentation about East Germany was actually given *before* the story "Element" was read. The documentary "Verriegelte Zeit", on the other hand was watched by students *after* they had read the story.

Responding positively to a changing question format (which I implemented after the fall break) Andrea comments:

Und dann hat es mir, ...sehr,...gut...gefall'n, daß wir andere Fragen hatten, die wir beantworten könnten [konnten], wenn wir wollten, oder immer noch das...Blatt [referring to the original guide questions for the response journal] benutzen würden, oder eine Mischung...Das hat mir viel besser gefall'n.

Evaluating her overall experience with writing response journals to selected short stories,

Andrea points out what she likes about this experience and why she likes it:

Die Journale fand' ich auch ganz gut...ich lese gern, und dann, schreib' ich gerne über Sachen, die ich gelesen habe. Vor allen [allem], wenn es Dinge sind, die mich interessieren,...Familie,...Liebe, Schule, Verhalten, Geschichte, natürlich sehr, sehr...vor allem,...über Deutschland.

When describing her most difficult experiences in the course that were related to reading and writing about the stories, **Theresia's** reactions are similar to those of Andrea. She comments in particular on two texts, "Jenö war mein Freund" and "Element", noting that it was rather complicated for her to locate a connection between the texts and her understanding of them.

Die Themen, [über] die ich nicht so viel, Hintergrundinformationen, ...vorher gelernt habe, zum Beispiel über Zeugener [Zigeuner] hab...wußte ich fast gar nichts.
Oder, "Element" oder "Verriegelte Zeit", weil ich...es, es ist schwer für mich, [mir diese] ...Situation zu, ...vorstellen...weil, ich habe das, ...nie in Leben... erlebt...So, es war schwer [einen Bezug dazu zu fassen oder sich in die Situation hineinzusetzen].

Theresia also perceived the presentation about the GDR and the documentary as helpful background information for the story, because they enabled her to understand the text better. Additionally, she notes that her comprehension of a text or film or benefits from

other people's *personal* experiences, from people who have lived through the situation that is described:

Die Hintergrundinformation war hilfreich, aber, wenn ich ein Text lese oder ein Film sehe, ...von einer Person, die...die es wirklich erfahren hat, dann kann ich... die Situation besser verstehen. Aber...es ist auf jeden Fall [dennoch] schwer, es zu verstehen.

In her response to the format of the course, Theresia admitted that she preferred to follow her *own* thoughts, ideas and feelings when responding to the texts:

Es hat mir mehr gefallen, nur etwas,...von Kopf oder von Herz zu schreiben, nicht...über diese Fragen.

She felt that the guide questions for the response journal did not always allow her to immediately react to the readings. While trying to focus on her very initial response, she perceived these questions as either too specific or too general:

I had too search for the answer, ...I had to...come up with something, and I couldn't just, you know, think, you know, this is what came to me first... this is what was *important* to me.

Reflecting on all of the short stories during the personal interview, Theresia reiterated how much she enjoyed reading, discussing and writing about texts that were about "Außenseiter and oppressed people", because as she states, "those are things I'm so [emphasized, my comment]... interested in learning about, and passionate about".

Thomas continues his elaborative (and sometimes questioning) comments about "Jenö war mein Freund" by stating that this was his most difficult story to write about. For him, though, this had less to do with relating specific socio-cultural background knowledge to the reading. Thomas was more concerned with issues that included the adequate expression of personal emotions:

Manchmal ist es schwer...zu erklären, was für Emotionen oder Gefühle man hat, wenn man schreibt, oder so, und das war am Schwersten. Weil ...so zum Beispiel, manchmal du hast diese Gefühle, aber du weißt nicht genau, wie man das...auslassen kann.

Ja...Jenö war mein Freund...hat der Vater gelogen, oder nicht? Was werde [würde] ich machen in diese Situation, war es der Vater, der gelogen hat, oder Jenö?

While first questioning his previous interpretation of the story at this time, Thomas then goes on and refers to his personal life experiences ("Erfahrungen aus meinem Leben") to explain his evaluation of people's behaviors and action. His firmly established mistrust and suspicion of behaviors and actions displayed by adults ("Erwachsene sind hinterlistig", "es ist nicht so einfach mit Erwachsene zu sprechen als es ist mit Kinder", "Erwachsene vergessen nicht so einfach") eventually leads him to to confirm his initial interpretation of the text: it was (most likely) the father who committed the crime and stole the things!

In a similar way as it is documented in his written response journal, Thomas' personal beliefs and convictions (informed by his personal background knowledge) override the actual text language, which does not support Thomas' claim. Of all interviewees, Thomas expresses most clearly how much he enjoyed the format of the course (and the written responses) which allowed him to openly state what he thought and felt about the readings:

Ich mag die Freiheit im Kurs, man darf schreiben, so wie er [man] will... und es ist nicht ein bestimmte Frage für ein Text, weil manchmal... hat man andere Fragen, daß er [man] ...versuchen zu antworten will...Und das hat mir gefallen, daß es mehr Freiheit gibt.

The findings obtained from **Michael's** responses in the personal interview are in some way dissonant with the results gathered from his written responses and do not entirely

verify his earlier statements. While he repeatedly refers to the comments ("meine/ die Kommentare") he made or wrote about various short stories, he does not necessarily provide details or explanations that would help clarify his experiences during the reading process. The most dominant influence of his background knowledge, or more precisely his past experiences, are expressed in his following statement:

Einige Geschichten, das ich, die Geschichten... "Verriegelte Zeit" ... "Element", und "Ein Märchen"...und der Film, das wir gesehen haben, "Jud Süß"...weil...es viel über meine Vergangenheit zu tun hatte.

While pausing frequently during the last comments, Michael emphasizes later on that he would have preferred to write his responses for these stories and films in his native tongue, because he believes that would have enabled him to express what he really thought, felt or experienced when he was reading the texts or watching the films.

Referring to the story "Ein Märchen" he asserts his earlier position when saying:

[Die Geschichte hat] meine Vergangenheit zurückgebracht, und ich habe mich eigentlich in dieselbe...Situation gefunden. Die sagen wie [die Geschichte spricht über, my comment]... *Identität, Heimat, anders zu sein, Gehörigkeit* [Zugehörigkeit, my comment] und so weiter.

Michael also observes that he benefitted most from the class discussions when trying to make sense of the readings, because they allowed him to review und understand the readings from a different point of view. He also states that the meaning of a text was mostly *made* clear to him (or "revealed") during the actual discussion period of the class. At the end of the conversation, Michael summarizes his experiences reading and writing about the texts by giving the following comment:

I also found out that if I'm interested, I write much more about it, I think much more about it...I go in details, where as [with] some texts...I just, like, read it, and then...OK. I know the answers, so I put it down, and...just leave it alone.

This observation might also help explain his attitude and perception about reading in general and in particular for this course.

Summary

The previous chapter examined and discussed the influence of readers' individual and socio-cultural background knowledge when reading and responding to various short stories in German. Detailed background information about the participants' individual backgrounds, their reading behaviors, and their response preferences to literary texts were provided to obtain a comprehensive picture about the individual person. This was also done to gain a better understanding of the respondents' reactions and responses to the selected texts, and to illustrate – based on examples – how readers arrived at conclusions and established meanings of the texts. In addition, the researcher's personal notes and observations about respondents' characteristics and response behaviors were added, to present data from a more personal perspective about each respondent (as compared to the results from questionnaires).

The case study participants in this investigation focused on both their personal (individual) and socio-cultural background knowledge when responding, while occasionally referring to or including their peer's personal experiences (or cultural background). All students, who participated in this study (including the four case studies), knew each other from previous coursework or had met through other language-related activities where they shared a similar cultural context. It became however apparent during the investigation, that the readers' personal and socio-cultural perceptions in respect to selected stories were quite different. The influence of the readers' personal

background knowledge appeared to be the domineering factor in the responses to most stories.

The examination of the personal interviews however indicated that if readers acquired *additional* background information (for example through presentational materials on a specific topic, audio-or visual materials, or classroom discussions) that completed or updated their socio-cultural and socio-historical knowledge base, they appeared to display a greater awareness for these aspects. Respondents did not seem to incorporate this knowledge into their written responses, for example by adding to their response journals or revisiting the story to create a new or different meaning of the text for themselves. Data gathered through the personal interviews suggests however, that some respondents appeared to have come to different conclusions about some of the texts.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings

The study's main point of investigation was to find out how individual background knowledge influenced, guided and/or determined the way non-native readers of German constructed meaning when reading FL literary texts. Findings from this study suggest that the students' background knowledge is closely connected to the way they respond to literary texts in the Foreign Language. Furthermore, the results gathered from written data (think aloud protocols and response journals) indicate that,

1. the background knowledge L2 readers activated when approaching a text also guided and informed them during the different text processing stages (i.e., the readers' background knowledge directly affected *how* they responded to specific text passages or the entire text)
2. the form of written text response, *response journals*, allowed students to activate their prior knowledge in a more open and less restrictive way than other in-class reader-response activities.

The data implies that the readers' existing background knowledge (and here especially experiences related to the students' personal lives), had the strongest affect on the nature and extent of their written and oral responses to the texts (Tierney & Pearson, 1994). The data also suggests that background knowledge can act as an "ease" factor for L2 readers when they are locating and comprehending unfamiliar text information (Hauptmann, 2000). If readers possessed the necessary background knowledge to activate appropriate

schemata, they generally had less difficulty understanding the text. This was noticable in particularl in their responses to the story "Die unwürdige Greisin". By combining their topic knowledge (i.e., family relationships, conflicts between generations, role and status of grandparents in different cultures) with their personal experiences (i.e., the relationship between the reader and his or her own grandmother), students were able to predict story events, which greatly enhanced their comprehension of the text. Moreover, results from this study corroborate earlier research findings that highlight the critical role of *cultural* background knowledge for the successful comprehension of L2 texts (cf. Bernhardt, 1991a; Graesser, 1987; Hauptmann, 2000; Kornienko, 2000; Pritchard, 1990). Adding their own culture-specific knowledge, readers compared the traditional role of a grandmother with the more modern behaviors exhibited by the main character of the story, thus outlining the influence that a society's socio-cultural and socio-historical contexts have on modifying the position of elderly people.

Results further suggest that the readers' responses can also be negatively affected by their insufficient knowledge about socio-cultural and socio-historical facts that were depicted in the texts. Based on the kind of questions that readers asked about specific political and historical aspects (i.e., in stories like "Jenö war mein Freund", "Element", and "Das Judenauto"), it was evident that they were struggling when grasping the text's content, which in turn led to misreadings or false interpretations of the text. For example, findings indicate that the readers' lack of exposure to customs, traditions or behaviors of other cultures (i.e., specific groups in society: gypsies, or political systems: life in a socialist society) also contributed to their misunderstanding of texts that reflected those cultural phenomena. In an attempt to compensate for their lack of knowledge readers then

relied too heavily on either bottom-up (i.e., word-by-word reading, literal translation of verbal symbols) or top-down processing (i.e., activating prior background knowledge based on personal experiences, guessing and predicting).

However, the over-emphasis of either text- or knowledge-based processing of information led frequently to misreadings of specific story events, which resulted in inaccurate or false comprehension. For example, the personal familiarity with the theme *friendship*, as portrayed in "Jenö war mein Freund", helped readers to accurately describe the relationship between the two main characters, Jenö and his friend (top-down processing). Based on their comprehension of the textual language in the story's title (Jenö war mein Freund, use of the simple past form), students were also able to make educated guesses about possible events that might happen, and also predicted an unhappy or even tragic outcome for the story (bottom-up processing). Yet, readers who did not possess the relevant cultural background knowledge to explain the (culturally) "foreign" behavior of the gypsy boy (*Jenö*) could not "fill the gaps in the text" (Iser) that would have assisted them in understanding the deeper meaning of his behavior.

Being unaware of the fact that *Jenö's* understanding of possessions (for example, he simply takes an item if he likes it) was embedded in his cultural value system, which differed from the readers' own cultural background, some students were not able to build an appropriate model of the text's meaning (cf. Johnston, 1983). While those readers *did* produce inferences (i.e., by charging the narrator's father with the crime of stealing), their judgement was primarily based on "generic" or personal (i.e., "adults or grown-ups are deceitful and can't be trusted", "children don't steal"), rather than specific socio-cultural knowledge structures (here: *Jenö's* value system). While discussing the text in class, it

was pointed out that the actual text language did not support these inferences (i.e., the narrator's father tells his son that the customs Jenö follows are different from those of the father and his son). Despite that fact, some readers' personal background knowledge still had an overriding influence on how they interpreted the text, which ultimately led to a defective text meaning for those students.

Another even more striking example showed how the insufficient content knowledge of socio-historical background information not only impaired one reader's understanding of a text, but caused her to get increasingly frustrated about the text ("Element"), which almost led to the student's complete rejection of the story. Admitting little to no familiarity with the political and ideological system of the former East Germany, and the powerful role the secret police (*Stasi*) played in this society, the reader acknowledged that her deficient background knowledge did not allow her to connect with the text. It was only after the reader had repeatedly recalled additional information that were given before and after the reading of the story, that she was able to associate them with the text language and respond to the story.

As anticipated, the results obtained through the personal interviews with individual students indicate that those readers who *revisited* the stories and the process of making meaning enhanced their personal understanding of the text and appreciation for it. However, these results could not be confirmed for all students who participated in this study. The results show further, that the structured pre-reading activities and guided questions given during the think aloud phase helped students initially in making more accurate predictions about what was to happen in the texts. However, the data did not conclusively indicate, that structured reader response activities such as the guide

questions for the out-of-class response journals consistently enhanced students' understanding of all short stories that were read. Students often felt that these questions were too structured or rigid. This in turn hindered them when they were trying to express their thoughts, feelings or opinions in a less controlled way, especially during the writing stage.

Conclusions

The above cited results lead to the conclusion that factors, which augmented the students' understanding of the short stories, also assisted them when constructing and negotiating meaning of the texts. As documented through the findings (think aloud protocols, response journals and personal interviews), these factors are closely connected with the respondents' prior personal experiences and background knowledge. If L2 are to comprehend second language texts adequately, it then follows that they must be provided with a context that helps them *extend* their individual knowledge base. They will need to have access to relevant socio-cultural and socio-historical background information that supports the expansion of their existing cultural background knowledge. This not only allows L2 readers to summon up what they already know about a particular topic or theme (content familiarity) – it will also help them to build the appropriate schemata that are necessary for text comprehension.

As Pearson and Spiro (1981) rightfully pointed out, the existing knowledge ("old information") that the L2 reader brings to the text presents the foundation to which new concepts ("new information") are added during the reading process. Only after having

successfully combined the "old" with the "new" will the reader be able to "make sense" of what she read and give meaning to the text.

One of the most important requirements for reading and comprehending foreign language literary texts is therefore to provide readers with carefully designed activities that stimulate their prior knowledge, so they can connect and interact with the text. These activities should be designed to prepare students for the text (pre-reading tasks), guide them during the different reading phases (while-reading tasks), and convey the different perspectives that a text holds (post-reading tasks). Facilitating an interactive approach to reading L2 texts, that utilizes both bottom-up and top-down processing to arrive at valid interpretations, the study of FL literary texts can thus be made an enjoyable as well as gratifying experience for second language learners.

I further conclude that by creating an environment, which is accepting of the various responses readers offer, students can feel free to voice their feelings, thoughts and opinions in an atmosphere conducive to learning. If readers are encouraged to engage with literature in an interactive fashion, giving authority and credibility to their personal interpretations of a text, they can also begin to feel more comfortable when sharing their own (text) experiences with their peers.

Although the participants in this study did not usually adjust their earlier text interpretations during the class discussion, there is evidence (transcripts of personal interviews) that they began to consider different perspectives when rethinking the text. For example, readers changed or modified their own viewpoint after they had accepted comments and observations that were made by their fellow classmates. When thinking in a more critical way about these "outside" influences (in addition to one's personal

experiences), readers were usually able to make revisions to their original text interpretations.

As the results have suggested, an exchange of ideas that invites multiple perspectives from readers can certainly help L2 students to discover and value different interpretations of the same text. However, the findings imply further that a reader's accomplishment in comprehending the meaning of a text is even greater, if he or she individually rebuilds the text. During this reconstruction process, L2 readers will carry out both text- and reader-based tasks by linking explicit and implicit text language (cf. Swaffar's et al., 1991, procedural model). To actively reassemble the text, students will need to move from a "reading for global comprehension" to a "reading for detail". By doing this, they will not only gain a deeper understanding of the text language itself (bottom-up processing), but also find out whether their former assumptions and hypotheses (top-down processing) about the text can be confirmed by the language.

During the process of reconstructing the textual information, students should be encouraged create a matrix in which they organize the text. First, readers select words and phrases (later sentences) from text passages or the entire text, which represent the topic of the text. Then, they *comment* on the text language. By comparing and contrasting the actual text language with their own comments, readers go beyond hypothesizing about the global topic of the text, because they now establish informative patterns that must reflect their comprehension of the text. Examples for how these steps can be implemented into the teaching of FL literary texts will be given in the following section.

As documented in prior research and confirmed by the results achieved in this investigation, it is the unique blend between the reader, the text and the context (here in

form of the response mode) that allows for something to "happen to the reader". To recall Iser (1978), the literary text that does something to its reader simultaneously tells us something *about* the reader. The meaning that L2 readers are then trying to establish when reading foreign language texts may not lie so much within the text, but "brings out what had previously been sealed within [them]" (Iser, 1978, p. 157). Yet, the reader must also consider and tie together all the factors presented in the text, if she is to approach it in a truly interactive manner. That means she must pay attention to the socio-cultural and socio-historical context of the text, the linguistic intricacy of the language and how it is arranged and organized in the text, and the various perspectives that are part of the comprehension process (i.e., the viewpoint of the text, the author and the reader).

As this study has shown, reading and *making sense* of FL literary texts still present L2 learners with far greater challenges than they are used to when reading in L1 (i.e., unfamiliar schemata, insufficient linguistic knowledge, or disconcerting perspectives). This can lead them to arrive at inadequate or even false text comprehensions. To foster an interactive reading approach to L2 texts that enables second language readers to 'take over' the text and its meaning, it seems then that a detail-oriented and perceptive reading of the text would best accomplish this goal. By teaching L2 students to employ strategies that direct them to read surface language information for its implicit value, and providing them with specific reading tasks that function as the guiding principle in the 'reading for meaning' process, readers can discover the significance a text has for themselves. The multiple layers that these pre-, while- and post-reading activities need to address (of the text and of the reader) will be further illustrated in the following section.

Implications for Teaching

My primary interest for conducting this study has been to explore the interactions that exist between L2 readers and the literary texts they read. Based on the aforementioned results, I believe that the positive and negative experiences readers had (which they expressed in their responses), have not only deepened their understanding of the texts, but also of themselves. Reading and engaging with a literary text in order to fill its "gaps" (Iser, 1978) and endow it with a particular meaning is a difficult enough undertaking in one's native language. To successfully accomplish this task in the second language, that presents the L2 reader with additional challenges (as outlined in the conclusions), the following recommendations are offered, which focus on integrating text- and reader-based processing tasks as they are utilized in an interactive reading approach.

How these suggestions can be implemented in the FL literature classroom is illustrated by a sample lesson plan for Wolfgang Borchert's (1946) short story "Das Brot". In selecting and arranging the reading activities I chose for this text, I followed Swaffar's et al. (1991) interactive reading model, outlining the L2 reader's reconstruction of the text in six different stages. These stages are assumed to exist in the discourse with every literary work, and can therefore also be used with texts other than short stories. The six stages are defined as follows:

Stage 1	Pre-Reading Activities that stimulate and activate the readers' background knowledge to prepare them for the text topic At this point students are exposed to a variety of print-, audio-, or visual materials that will aid them in developing the required or necessary schemata for later text comprehension. The materials can include documentary and feature films, music, art work, books or stories with a
----------------	--

related topic, personal stories, biographies, interactive Web-Presentations, or even fields trips. Pre-reading activities should specifically be aimed at complementing the students' existing (prior) knowledge with new information that is relevant for the understanding of the text.

Stage 2 Pre-Reading Activities that let readers preview the text's content and orientation

After the instructor has introduced the topic to students, they are asked to formulate hypotheses or predictions about the text's focus or its outcome. Following this, students read quickly over the text (skimming) to outline the subject matter by means of key words and phrases they have located in the text.

Especially these first two phases allow instructors to create a learning environment in which students can read and respond to the text in a less-guided, more learner-centered and open-ended format. Because the pre-reading phase is (in contrast to later stages of the reading process) more open to speculations and hypotheses about the text, it offers a great opportunity to invite students' initial and untainted thoughts, observations and comments.

Stage 3 While-Reading Activities that focus on students' reading for global comprehension or gist while they identify the episodic structure of the text

Students are asked to locate the topic, main characters and events, and the general setting of the text. While recognizing how the text is arranged (for example, in chronological order or by presenting and/or comparing contrastive aspects), students should also be encouraged to identify specific text features that confirm their initial hypotheses and predictions about the text, i.e. individual words, phrases or sentences.

In L2 classrooms where readers may exhibit different linguistic proficiency levels it is recommended, that instructors stay somewhat flexible when it comes to the language that students use during class (for writing or speaking). While readers should certainly be encouraged to use the L2 when responding, they should also be given the option of answering in the language in which they can best express themselves when conceptualizing the text. L2 readers who are sitting in the same level language class do

not necessarily share the same linguistic knowledge base, which makes it rather difficult for some students to adequately express their thoughts or questions about the reading. This problem also calls for the instructor to give learners the necessary tools (i.e., vocabulary and grammatical structures) that enable them to communicate their ideas in a meaningful way.

In addition, the teacher should provide the support and guidance that assist students in developing their critical and analytical thinking skills by arranging classroom discussions and open forums in a way that make learners feel comfortable when sharing their personal experiences with others. For example, students may be more inclined to open up while working in small groups, when they discuss and compare their individual speculations about the text. Asking open-ended questions that focus on the readers' *experience* with the text, teachers could pose questions such as, "What do you think about the text?" or "What kind of a text do you think this is" (a drama, a play, a short story, a letter, etc.). Afterwards, questions that lead students to explain their rationale in more detail can follow, for example, "Why do you think this about the text?", "Why do you think this word (phrase, sentence) is important?" or "What made you change your mind about the text?"

Stage 4 **While-Reading Activities that focus on students' reading for detail**
Students identify semantic and syntactic discourse markers that help them establish the relationships of the text. By further identifying the structure of the text, they relate illustrative details (micropropositions) to global ideas of the text (macropropositions). While sorting through gist and detail (macro-operation) of the text, readers begin to build information pattern that are arranged in form of a matrix (or table). After students write comments for selected text information, they compare the actual text language with their personal statements. In evaluating their own matrix – through small group work or class discussion – students find out whether their comments can be confirmed by the text language or not. It is important during this phase to make readers aware of the distinction

between explicit and implicit text language: what a text *says*, and how that language can be *interpreted* are two different things.

Stage 5 Post-Reading Activities that focus on the readers' reconstruction of the text

With the help of their matrix (i.e., words and phrases), students write short paragraphs, that consist of simple or more complex sentences, depending on the individual student's ability. While reassembling the text, students use their own language. To produce a comprehensible output that also reflects the correct formal properties of the language, the instructor needs to make sure that students possess the necessary vocabulary and grammatical structures that allow them to formulate a coherent text (such as verb tenses, conjunctions, adverbs, relative clauses etc.). It is beneficial for this step, that students review these features in specific exercises before they begin to write.

While this task (stage 5) can be assigned in-class or as homework, I would recommend that students practice their writing first in small groups or even in pairs in the classroom. As students learn to manipulate the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the text and mold it into a language of their own, it can be helpful for them to consult their peers' (or the teacher's) help when expressing themselves. Furthermore, if students are given enough time in class to reflect upon the text (i.e., by re-reading and analyzing it), they also have additional opportunities to ask questions about specific parts of the text, thus confirming their understanding of it.

Stage 6 Post-Reading Activities in which readers express their opinion about the text, thus creating the text's meaning

Based on their prior statements (see stage 5), readers now extend the literary discourse by expressing their opinions (personal feelings or conclusions) about the text in a short written paragraph. Students should be encouraged to state their viewpoint of the text, offering alternatives or solutions to problems encountered in the text, or critiquing specific actions or behaviors cited in the text. Based on the particular argument readers wish to make in order to interpret the text's significance, instructors need to furnish them with relevant discourse markers that support those arguments (i.e., phrases that assert personal convictions such as *I believe, I think, I am convinced, I am certain/sure that...*).

When creating a learning environment that provides ample opportunities for students to express their personal thoughts, feelings and opinions about literary texts, instructors should be open to using both written and oral responses, which could also be extended into artistic forms of expressions. For example, after reading stories such as "Jenö war mein Freund", "Das Judenauto" or "Ein Märchen" students could put on a play in which they take on the different roles of characters from the text. Based on their prior knowledge about the text's topic and their personal experiences, readers can also be encouraged to present alternative endings, which reflect their convictions and beliefs about the treatment of minorities or ethnic groups. This could be in form of a personal letter (student's perspective), or from the viewpoint of one of the characters in the story.

As demonstrated in this study, the use of non-threatening and protective response formats (here: response journals or personal interviews) was geared to stimulate FL learners to apply their own standpoint. Without any of the interferences or interruptions that may dominate the classroom environment, students can thus feel more at ease when interpreting a text. Teachers need to keep in mind though, that L2 readers will only be able to express their views adequately, if they feel comfortable and secure in their classroom, and if they possess the sufficient linguistic knowledge to do so.

Sample Lesson Plan for the Short Story "Das Brot" by Wolfgang Borchert

Brief overview of the short story: Wolfgang Borchert's (1946) story "Das Brot" is one of the most famous German short stories of the 20th century. Borchert, who himself experienced World War II as a young man, often wrote about the horror and fear of war, describing the anguish and suffering of the German people in a simple, yet frightfully

gripping language. In "Das Brot", the author portrays an elderly couple who demonstrate – despite the poverty and hopelessness they have to endure – how love and the human spirit can prevail. Written in a simple, almost scarce language, the story offers a glimpse into the daily, yet private life of two people in post-war Germany, while highlighting fundamental characteristics of the decade following the war.

Stage 1

Pre-Reading Activities that stimulate and activate the readers' background knowledge to prepare them for the text topic

Visual input

Students are shown black-and-white photographs or images that depict life in Germany at the end of the war, 1945 (i.e. bombed-out cities, *Trümmerfrauen*, people waiting in line to get daily food rations etc.). Pictures/ Fotos are put up as overhead transparencies or distributed as xerox copies to students.

Audio input (optional)

Teacher plays *Sag' mir wo die Blumen sind...* performed by Marlene Dietrich ("The Essential: Marlene Dietrich", 1965); (*Where Have All the Flowers Gone*, P. Seeger, 1965)

Additional input (optional, can be modified based on class level and teacher preference)

Students view film clips from documentaries (*Rubble Films*), or feature films (for example, Wolfgang Staudte's "Die Mörder sind unter uns", 1946) that portray images of the destruction of people and cities in Germany after World War II. Students read Günter

Eich's poem "Inventur", which illuminates the scarcity of basic things (such as food, clothing, personal things) people experienced after the end of the war

Activating background knowledge

Prior to reading the short story "Das Brot", the instructor asks students to think what they already know about the historic time period in Germany after World War II (between 1945 and 1950/55). Students should be encouraged to include information they have learned about Germany and WWII in other classes (history, art, political science, social science etc.). Students work in small groups of three or four, labeling self-adhesive poster-board cards with events, places, or people they associate with the time period. Students are introduced to a variety of audio, visual, and print materials (see above) that assist them in extending their existing knowledge base.

They are asked (individually or in small groups) to voice their immediate reactions to the visual (pictures, films), audio (song) and print (poem) materials. Comments that are generated from individual students are written on the board by the teacher. If students work in small groups, they record their results on their respective poster board. Afterwards, all posters are put up on the blackboard. Students compare their information with each other while referring to the actual historical events, thus establishing the sociohistorical and socioeconomic framework that allows them to access the story.

Activating linguistic background knowledge

Teacher presents students with a list of vocabulary (see example below) that are relevant for the text topic. Students are asked (in partner- or small group work) to mark all words and phrases they associate most with the pictures (fotos, films) they have seen that depict the time period after the war:

A. Sehen Sie sich bitte die folgenden Fotos (Bilder, Filme) an.

Welche der folgenden Wörter assoziieren Sie mit den Fotos (Bildern, dem Film/ Filmausschnitt), die Sie gerade gesehen haben?

- _____ Zerstörung
- _____ Tote und Verletzte
- _____ wenig (oder keine) Kleidung
- _____ wenig (oder kein) Essen
- _____ Rationierung von Lebensmitteln
- _____ Armut
- _____ Hunger
- _____ Angst
- _____ Kälte
- _____ Traurigkeit
- _____ Hoffnung

B. Worum geht es in dem Lied, "Sag' mir wo die Blumen sind..."?

Warum gibt es keine Blumen (Mädchen, Soldaten etc.) mehr? Wo sind sie?

After establishing the main or global topic of the song, students will be given a print version of the text, which they can use when referring to specific text language of the song.

	<u>Was passiert?</u>	<u>Warum?</u>
Blumen	▶	
Mädchen	▶	
Männer	▶	
Soldaten	▶	
Gäber	▶	
Blumen	▶	

Students should also be asked to add words and phrases *they* associate with the topic.

References can be made to current events (including articles from contemporary press coverage:

**C. Welche weiteren Wörter assoziieren Sie mit derThematik?
Notieren Sie Ihre Gedanken in Stichpunkten.**

Krieg	Leben <u>nach</u> dem Krieg
_____	_____
_____	_____

After the topic has been introduced, the teacher asks students to make predictions by describing what they think life after a war would be like for them personally. To help students formulate hypotheses, the teacher can provide:

- a) a list of possible expressions about personal feelings and emotions, or
- b) the beginnings of sentences in the subjunctive II (expressing hypotheses), which students would have to complete.

D. Welche Emotionen und Gefühle hätten Sie, wenn Sie nach dem Krieg in Deutschland gelebt hätten?

_____ Ich wäre ... (hungrig, durstig, traurig, allein, einsam, ängstlich, müde, hoffnungslos...)

_____ Ich hätte ... (Angst, Hunger, Heimweh ...)

_____ Ich würde ... (weinen, weglaufen wollen, leben wollen, Hoffnung haben ...)

_____ Ich könnte (nicht) ...

_____ Ich ...

_____ Ich ...

Stage 2

Pre-Reading Activities that let readers preview the text's content and orientation

Students are asked to read the title and make predictions about the topic of the text. Then, they will briefly skim the entire text and hypothesize about events they *expect* to happen in the story. Students should also be encouraged to speculate about the outcome of the text.

Referring to previously their activated background knowledge (i.e., visuals, audio and print input, socio-historical knowledge), students are asked to speculate about the symbolic meaning of the word *Brot*- (bread-), which appears in the title and throughout

the text (i.e., *Brotteller/* plate for bread, *Brotkrümel/* bread crumbs, *Brotmesser/* bread knife, *Brotscheiben/* slices of bread).

Possible open-ended questions could include:

E. Warum, meinen Sie, wird das Wort (*Brot*) so oft benutzt im Text?

F. Wofür könnte das Brot ein Symbol sein?

G. Was könnte mit dem Brot passieren?

Possible answers could include:

Brot = Symbol für	(Hunger)
	(Armut)
	(Rationierung von Lebensmitteln)
	(wichtigstes Grundnahrungsmittel)
	...
	...

The teacher records students' answers on the board (or overhead transparency).

Stage 3

While-Reading Activities that focus on students' reading for global comprehension or gist while they identify the text's episodic structure

Having established the main theme (topic) of the text, students are asked to scan the text to recognize its organization. Students need to pay attention to formal text features and discourse markers that divide the text into shorter episodes (which are often summarized in paragraphs). By locating text features that indicate shifts in setting of the

story, character actions, and events, students are also able to confirm (or reject) their initial hypotheses about the text.

First, students check their global understanding of the story by answering discrete-point questions about the text, writing down key words and phrases that are relevant for the respective category:

H. Überfliegen (scan) Sie kurz den Text. Schreiben Sie dann zu jeder Kategorie (wer, was, wann, wo) einige wichtige Begriffe und Personen.

Wer? (Who) --- (ein Mann, eine Frau – ein Ehepaar, lange verheiratet)

Was? (What) --- (Mann hat heimlich Brot gegessen, Frau hat ihn dabei überrascht)

Wann? (When) --- (nachts, nach dem Krieg)

Wo? (Where) --- (in der Wohnung: Küche, Schlafzimmer)

Asking readers to organize the story to determine its episodic structure, students fill in the following table with the respective information from the text.

I. Nach dem ersten Lesen: Ergänzen Sie die Tabelle mit den entsprechenden Informationen.

ORT DER HANDLUNG	WICHTIGE WÖRTER
das Schlafzimmer	(das Bett ³⁹ , die (Bett)-Decke, das Kauen)
die Küche	(die Uhr, der Küchenschrank, das Licht, der Tisch, der Brotteller, das Brotmesser,

³⁹ Words in parentheses signify possible responses students could give.

	die Brotkrümel, die Fliesen, die Lampe, die Brotscheiben)
der Korridor/ der Flur	(der Fußboden)

A quick comprehension check for the students' global understanding of the text can also be administered by having readers mark statements with either **Richtig** (correct) or **Falsch** (incorrect). Students are then asked to correct false statements by locating the right answer in the text. Possible questions could include:

Markieren Sie, ob die folgenden Aussagen Richtig oder Falsch sind.

- _____ Die Frau wachte auf, weil sie in der Küche etwas gehört hatte.
- _____ Der Mann und die Frau trafen sich im Schlafzimmer.
- _____ Auf der Küchendecke lagen Brotkrümel.
- _____ Der Mann kam in die Küche, weil er dachte, er hätte etwas gesehen.
- _____ Das Ehepaar sieht sehr alt aus.
- _____ Der Mann und die Frau sind fast 40 Jahre verheiratet.
- _____ Die Frau fegt die Brotkrümel vom Tisch.
- _____ Das Ehepaar glaubt, daß es draußen sehr windig ist.
- _____ **Die Frau schläft bald wieder ein, während der Mann noch liest.**
- _____ **Die Frau gibt ihrem Mann mehr Brotscheiben.**

J. Korrigieren Sie die falschen Aussagen, indem Sie im Text die richtigen Antworten finden.

Stage 4

While-Reading Activities that focus on students' reading for detail

While explaining the behaviors and actions of the husband and his wife, students create a matrix in which they comment on selected text language, thus relating illustrative detail to the global topic of the text. To assist students in finding motivations for the characters' behaviors the instructor can provide the class with a list with a possible solutions (or reasons). Students can work in small groups or pairs to decide which answers they find most suitable or appropriate. For example:

1. Die Frau wachte auf, weil ...

_____ sie nicht schlafen wollte.

2. Sie ging in die Küche, weil ...

_____ sie Hunger hatte.

3. Der Mann sagt, daß er etwas gehört hat, weil ...

_____ er wirklich ein Geräusch gehört hat.

4. Der Mann sagt seiner Frau nicht, daß er Brot gegessen hat, weil ...

_____ er Angst vor ihr hat.

The students' matrix, in which they comment on the actual text language, could then look as follows:

TEXT LANGUAGE	STUDENT'S COMMENTS
<i>Plötzlich wachte sie auf.</i>	Frau konnte nicht schlafen, hatte Angst, war unruhig
<i>Sie überlegte, warum er aufgestanden war.</i>	Frau hörte ein Geräusch in der Küche
<i>In der Küche hatte jemand gegen einen Stuhl gestoßen.</i>	Was/ Wer ist in der Küche? Nacht, dunkel
<i>Sie stand auf und tappte durch die dunkle Wohnung zur Küche.</i>	Frau geht in die Küche
<i>Sie standen sich im Hemd gegenüber.</i>	Frau überrascht Mann in der Küche
<i>Auf dem Küchentisch stand der Brotsteller.</i>	Mann hatte (heimlich) Brot gegessen
...	...

When assessing their own matrix, readers should be reminded to check their comments against information given in the text, making sure that the actual language

supports their statements. At this point, students should also be guided in discovering the symbolic language of this short story. Possible questions for discussion can include:

What does *the bread* stand for?

What happens in the *dark*?

How do characters' actions and behaviors change in the *light*?

How do characters look in the *light*?

Did the couple *really hear* something outside?

Referring back to the dreadful socioeconomic situation (i.e., hunger, poverty, rationed foods, not enough to eat, shortage of electricity etc.) people had to experience after 1945 – which was discussed in the pre-reading phase – readers now locate text language that illustrates and reflects the bare lifestyle of post-war Germany.

The short and simple sentences (*Es war halb drei. Ich dachte, hie wäre was.*), the repetitive and almost stereotypical dialogues between husband and wife, (*Ich dachte, hier wäre was, sagte er. – Ich habe auch was gehört, antwortete sie.*), the paratactic arrangements of sentences, and the lack of modifiers such as adjectives can serve as examples that describe the *Kahlschlag*-like framework of this text.

The compressed narrative almost resembles the form of a drama. It takes place in only two rooms (*Schlafzimmer, Küche*), and spans a time period of less than twenty-four, beginning during the night of the first day (*Bett, dunkle Wohnung, kalte Fliesen*), and ending at the evening of the following day. While the secretive or emotionally expressive behaviors are displayed in the dark (*Nach vielen Minuten hörte sie, daß er leise und vorsichtig kaute. Du kannst ruhig vier essen, sagte sie, und ging von dr Lampe weg*), the

light brings out the characters' physical (*sie sieht doch schon alt aus, dachte er*) and personal frailty.

For example, the embarrassing moment, when the wife discovers her husband in the kitchen is literally lit up (*Sie machte Licht*). Ashamed about what he did, the husband does not tell his wife that he was hungry, which is why he took (actually stole) a slice of bread. Instead, he lies and pretends that he came into the kitchen because he had heard something. She, on the other hand, does not call him on it: she does not ask any questions, nor does she accuse him of having taken the bread, although she knows he did. In fact, she forgives her husband and even gives him an extra slice of bread (part of her own ration!) the next day. Now, however she lies to him, claiming that the food does not agree with her.

By linking explicit language with its implicit meaning – for example, when trying to find explanations for the husbands' and in particular the wife's behavior – students will find out that what the text says is not necessarily what it means, thus beginning to interpret the story.

Stage 5

Post-Reading Activities that focus on the readers' reconstruction of the text

In reassembling the text, students should be guided to produce comprehensible output that reflects the text language in terms of formal properties. Specific exercises that review adverbial time expressions (*zuerst, danach, dann, zuletzt*), conjunctions (*weil, darum, aber, nachdem*) and verb forms in the simple past (*wachte auf, ging, war, stand auf...*) should therefore precede this post-reading activity. The readers' reconstruction of the text could then look like this:

Die Frau wachte mitten in der Nacht auf, weil sie etwas gehört hatte. Es gab ein Geräusch in der Küche. Ihr Mann war nicht da, denn sein Bett war leer. Darum stand die Frau auf. Dann ging sie langsam in die Küche. Aber es war so dunkel, daß sie nichts sehen konnte. Erst nachdem sie das Licht angemacht hatte, sah sie ihren Mann - und den Brotteller auf dem Tisch. Der Mann hatte Brot gegessen...

If students successfully associate the text's surface language with its underlying meaning, they might already be able to produce a reconstructed text that reflects a personal viewpoint or interpretation, for example: *Glücklicherweise traf sie in der Küche ihren Mann. Aber leider sah sie, daß er...*

Stage 6

Post-Reading Activities in which readers express their opinion about the text, thus creating the text's meaning

Based on their prior statements (see stage 5), readers now extend the literary discourse by expressing their opinions (personal feelings or conclusions) about the text in a short written paragraph. Students should be encouraged to state their personal viewpoint of the text, offering alternatives or solutions to problems encountered in the text, or critiqueing specific actions or behaviors cited in the text. Depending on the particular argument readers wish to make in order to interpret the text's significance, instructors need to furnish them with relevant discourse markers that support those arguments (i.e., phrases that assert personal convictions such as *I believe, I think, I am convinced, I am certain/sure that...*).

After having used language that was primarily guided by the text, students should be able at this stage to express their personal thoughts and ideas about the text, and evaluate the story from their point of view. Mainly designed as a reader-based task this activity prompts readers to interact with the text on a clearly personal level to assign

meaning to it. Equipped with the necessary linguistic and grammatical structures that assist readers in making their arguments, a reader's brief essay about "Das Brot" could then read like this:

Ich denke, daß der Mann heimlich das Brot gegessen hat, weil er großen Hunger hatte. Nach dem Krieg gab es doch so wenig zu essen. Aber der Mann hat sich auch für seine Tat geschämt, glaube ich, denn es war ihm peinlich. Deshalb hat er immer wieder gesagt, "Ich dachte, ich hätte etwas gehört." Die Frau wußte, daß ihr Mann das Brot gegessen hatte, und sie war traurig darüber. Aber sie war noch viel enttäuschter darüber, daß ihr Mann sie angelogen hatte, und ihr nicht die Wahrheit gesagt hatte. Dennoch hat sie ihm verziehen, weil er ihr auch leid getan hat, und sie wußte, daß er Hunger hatte. Am nächsten Tag gab sie ihm deshalb noch eine extra Scheibe Brot.

Interpretative attempts that further explain and define the wife's (almost) sacrificial behavior would need to be discussed on the backdrop of womens' role and conduct as it was prescribed and deemed acceptable in the 1940ies and 50ies. The socio-cultural code for a woman's attitude and conduct, established by societal norms and standards, regulated largely which behaviors were appropriate and which were not. Equipped with that knowledge, students could venture out to explore how the role and position of woman in society, including their own, have changed over time, and assess the story's appeal and timelessness for contemporary readers.

Implications for further Research

Research questions that evolved out of the current investigation are predominantly related to the limitations of the study (as pointed out in chapter 1), and the results that have been obtained so far. The following recommendations and suggestions are made, because the focus on specific aspects and questions that the present study did not address in detail:

1. How would the results of the study change if a larger number of study participants were involved?
2. If different categories would be applied to determine the influence of students' background knowledge while reading FL literary texts, how would that have changed or altered the findings of the study?
3. How would findings be different if respondents from various socio-cultural backgrounds would have participated in a similar study?
4. Would the data collected from more respondents provide more conclusive evidence regarding the influence of readers' background knowledge when reading FL texts?
5. How would readers respond if they were able to relate their individual and socio-cultural knowledge while responding in their native language?
6. Would the depth and extend of responses have changed over time if respondents would have focused on any one text over a longer period of time?
7. How would respondents have "filled the gaps" in the respective texts, in particular the ones with less familiar contents, if they would have had the prior knowledge about socio-cultural and socio-historical aspects?
8. If the current study was to be replicated, for example with beginning or intermediate level FL students, how and in which way would the methodology and the procedures of the study have to be changed?
9. If respondents were to have used different forms of communicating with one another about the readings, for example through a Web Log or through the exchange of e-mail messages, how would that have changed the outcome and the results of this investigation?

Further research in to any (or all) of the above cited questions would most likely provide a more detailed picture about what happens when FL students engage in the reading and meaning-making of literary texts. It would also outline more precisely what goes on in the minds (and hearts) of FL students as they read, interpret, discuss, re-read and write about their individual experiences with literature. More research dedicated to the investigation of this matter would also identify which aspects of the reading and interpretation process need to be observed more carefully to grant readers both enjoyable and meaningful experiences in the FL literature classroom.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Course Description for Seminar in German Literature

Title

"The Stranger(s) Among Us: The Experience of *The Other* in German Culture and Society." (Depiction of Outsiders in German Literary Texts and German Films)

Literary Genre

Short narratives and prose (short stories)

Course Content

In this course we will examine how "*the Other*" has been represented in selected German literary texts, contemporary German films, and literary texts by non-native (foreign-born) authors writing in German. Through the study of literary and cultural artifacts from different historical periods we will explore how German perceptions of "*the Other*" and "*Otherness*" have been developed over time. Attention will be given to works that take as their chief subject the portrayal of "outsiders" in German culture (for example: 'unconventional' women, fools, handicapped people, prisoners, Jews, minorities, overweight people, gays/lesbians, guest workers, right/left-wing radicals etc.)

To guide students in their literary and cultural readings, class discussions will focus around three primary questions:

4. The outsider's role within society and their community.
5. The outsider's thoughts, attitudes and beliefs.
6. The outsider's position within the social, political, historical and cultural contexts of their time(s).

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Student Background Information

The following questionnaire is designed to provide insights into student background information that can influence and/or effect how non-native readers of German make meaning when reading and responding to Foreign Language literary texts.

The questions below are for research purposes only, and your individual answers will not be made available to anyone. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

The questionnaire has four parts:

Part I: Personal Background

Part II: Academic Background

Part III: Socio-economic Background

Part IV: Socio-cultural Background

Please read every question carefully. Answer the questions by putting a check mark next to the appropriate answer and/or by filling in the respective information.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by returning this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Student Background Information**Part I: Personal**

Gender _____ Male _____ Female

Age _____

Country of Birth _____

Ethnic Background

_____ African-American _____ Hispanic
_____ Asian _____ Native American
_____ Caucasian
_____ Mixed Ancestry (Please specify): _____
_____ Other (Please specify) _____

First/Native Language

What is your first/native language? _____

What is your mother's first/native language? _____

What is your father's first/native language? _____

Which language is predominantly spoken in your home? _____

Second/Foreign Language

What is your second/foreign language? _____

What other foreign languages do you speak? _____

Education (K-16)

What kind of educational facilities did you attend in the past? Please mark all that apply.

_____ public schools
_____ private schools
_____ parochial or religiously affiliated schools
_____ home schooled
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

What type(s) of school are you currently attending? Please mark all that apply.

	Public	Private	Parochial or Religiously Affiliated
2-Year College	_____	_____	_____
4-Year College	_____	_____	_____
University	_____	_____	_____
Other (Please specify):	_____		

Educational Degree

What is the highest educational degree you have completed until now? Please mark only one.

☐ High School Diploma

☐ Associate's Degree

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Post-Secondary Education

Are you the first person from your family to attend a college/university?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you receive a scholarship to attend this college/university?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is "yes", what criterion or criteria were used in awarding your scholarship? Please mark all that apply.

☐ academic

☐ athletic

☐ community service

☐ ethnic background

☐ economic status

☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Residence

Where did you grow up and/or live in the past?

Country: _____ State: _____ For _____ months / _____ years

Country: _____ State: _____ For _____ months / _____ years

Country: _____ State: _____ For _____ months / _____ years

Current Living Arrangements

I am currently...

☐ living in a dorm on campus.

☐ living in an apartment on campus.

☐ living at home.

☐ renting an apartment.

☐ renting a house.

Work

Do you currently have a job?

_____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", is this a part-time or a full-time job?

_____ Part-time _____ Full-time

How many hours per week do you work?

_____ 5 – 10 hours per week
_____ 10 – 20 hours per week
_____ 20 – 30 hours per week
_____ more than 30 hours per week

Leisure Time Activities

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Please mark all that apply.

_____ participate in sports activities
_____ listen to music
_____ play music/ play an instrument
_____ read books
_____ read newspapers/magazines
_____ go to the movies
_____ travel
_____ sleep
_____ go to a concert (e.g. classical or modern)
_____ go to a theater play
_____ surf the Internet
_____ talk on the phone (e.g. to friends or family)
_____ write e-mails
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

Vacation

What do you like to do when you are on vacation? Please mark all that apply.

_____ stay at home
_____ travel within the U.S.
_____ travel abroad
_____ visit state parks
_____ stay at campgrounds
_____ visit friends/ relatives
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

Student Background Information**Part II: Academic****Current College Status**

☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior
☐ Dual Enrollment ☐ Continuing Education
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Major (Please specify, if double major): _____

Minor (Please specify, if double minor): _____

When do you plan to graduate from college/university (i.e. year)? _____

Language(s)

Have you studied a second/foreign language in High School?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is "yes", please specify language(s) and duration of study:

Foreign Language	_____	For _____ months / _____ years
Foreign Language	_____	For _____ months / _____ years
Foreign Language	_____	For _____ months / _____ years

Have you studied a second/foreign language at the college/university level?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is "yes", please specify language(s) and duration of study:

Foreign Language	_____	For _____ months / _____ years
Foreign Language	_____	For _____ months / _____ years
Foreign Language	_____	For _____ months / _____ years

Study Abroad Experience

Have you ever participated in a Study Abroad Program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is "yes", please indicate

When (year)? _____

Where (country)? _____

For how long (months/years)? _____

Subject(s) studied? _____

Have you ever completed an internship?

_____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", please indicate

When (year)?

Where (country)?

For how long (months)?

Work related to?

Why did you enroll in this Foreign Language class? Please mark all answers that apply.

I am taking this Foreign Language class, because...

_____ I want to learn more about the language, culture, literature and history.

_____ I want to better understand the literature and art of this culture.

_____ I need to fulfill the college foreign language requirement for my major.

_____ I need to fulfill the college foreign language requirement for my minor.

_____ I like to read.

_____ I want to read literature in the original language.

_____ I think I will receive a good grade in this course.

_____ I want to speak this language more fluently.

_____ I want to discuss the readings in class.

_____ I want to write in this language.

_____ Other (Please specify): _____

Would you like to continue studying this Foreign Language next semester?

_____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", why? _____

If your answer is "no", why not? _____

Parents Residence

My parents live _____ in a larger town or city
 _____ in the suburbs of a city
 _____ in a smaller town or village
 _____ in the country

My parents _____ rent an apartment/ a house
 _____ own a home

Parents Education

Which of the following educational facilities did your parents attend?

	Mother	Father
Elementary/Middle School	_____	_____
High School	_____	_____
College/University	_____	_____

Parents Educational Degree

What is the highest educational degree your parents completed? Please mark only one.

	Mother	Father
High School Diploma	_____	_____
Associate's Degree	_____	_____
Bachelor's Degree	_____	_____
Master's Degree	_____	_____
Ph.D.	_____	_____

Parents employment status

	Mother	Father
wage/salaried employee	_____	_____
self-employed	_____	_____
contributing worker in family-owned business	_____	_____

Parent's Employment Sector

	Mother	Father
_____ Agriculture, hunting, fishing and forestry	_____	_____
_____ Mining	_____	_____
_____ Manufacturing	_____	_____
_____ Electricity, gas and water supply	_____	_____
_____ Construction	_____	_____
_____ Wholesale and Retail Trade	_____	_____
_____ Hotels and Restaurants	_____	_____
_____ Transport and Storage	_____	_____
_____ Communication and Telecommunication	_____	_____

☐	Finance and Insurance	☐	☐
☐	Real Estate Business	☐	☐
☐	Public Administration	☐	☐
☐	Education	☐	☐
☐	Health Services and Social Work	☐	☐
☐	Other Community, Social and Personal Services	☐	☐
☐	Private Business with Employed Persons	☐	☐
☐	Other: (Please specify): _____		

Parents occupation/profession

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Student Background Information

Part IV: Socio-cultural

Personal and Home Environment

How many members are in your family?

Of the children in your family, where do you place?

_____ the oldest child

_____ the youngest child

_____ in between the oldest and the youngest child

_____ the only child

Do you have an extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins etc.)?

_____ Yes _____ No

Do you visit your extended family?

_____ Yes _____ No

Do you assume any household responsibilities?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "yes", what are your household responsibilities?

Do you assume any parental or caregiver responsibilities?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "yes", what are your parental or caregiver responsibilities?

What are typical activities that members of your family do together?

Do you have a favorite childhood memory?

_____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", what is that memory?

Clubs and Organizations

Are you a member of a club or organization?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, which activities that your club/organization offers do you enjoy most?

Why do you enjoy these activities?

Which of the following groups listed here would you like to join?

- _____ choir or singing group
- _____ music band (or orchestra)
- _____ dance group
- _____ book club
- _____ youth club
- _____ environmental group
- _____ subject-specific club (i.e. for Math, Science, Foreign Languages, English etc.)
- _____ theater or drama group
- _____ political group
- _____ discussion group
- _____ none
- _____ Other (Please specify): _____

Professional and Work Environment

In which of the following setups do you enjoy working most?

- _____ with a partner
- _____ in a team
- _____ alone
- _____ doesn't matter to me

What do like most about your work?

What do like least about your work?

Do you like to talk about your work with other people?

- _____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", whom do you like to talk to?

- _____ friends
- _____ co-workers
- _____ room mates
- _____ parents
- _____ grandparents
- _____ relatives and/or other extended family members

Sports

Do you enjoy physical activities?

- _____ Yes _____ No

Are you a member of a sports team?

_____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", which activities that your sports team offers do you enjoy most?

Why do you enjoy these activities?

Communities

Are you actively involved in a community group?

_____ Yes _____ No

If your answer is "yes", which of the following communities are you involved in? Please mark all that apply.

_____ neighborhood community
_____ spiritual community
_____ student community
_____ college/ university community
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

Which of the following activities are you involved in? Please mark all that apply.

_____ listening to other people within the community
_____ talking to other people within the community
_____ helping community members (e.g. fellow students, older people, children)
_____ volunteering time for community events
_____ planning and/or advertising community events
_____ organizing and/or leading community events
_____ attending community events
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

Reading Survey

The following questionnaire is designed to provide the researcher with insights into students' attitudes toward reading in their first/native and second/foreign language. The questions below are for research purposes only, and your individual answers will not be made available to anyone. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

The questionnaire has two parts:

Part I: Reading Survey in the first/native language

Part II: Reading Survey in the second/foreign language

Please read every question carefully. Answer the questions by putting a check mark next to the appropriate answer and/or by filling in the respective information.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by returning this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Part 1: Reading Behavior Survey for First/Native Language (L1)

1. Is reading in your first/native language enjoyable for you?
_____ Yes _____ No
2. If your answer is "yes", why? _____
3. If your answer is "no", why not? _____
4. Did someone in your family read to you, when you were a child?
_____ Yes _____ No
5. If your answer is "yes", what kind of stories or books were read to you? Please mark all that apply.
_____ children's stories
_____ fairy tales
_____ folk tales
_____ adventure stories
_____ comic books
_____ Other (Please specify): _____
6. Does your family have any reading materials at home?
_____ Yes _____ No
7. If your answer is "yes", what kind of reading materials are those? Please mark all that apply.

_____ newspapers	_____ journals
_____ books	_____ comic strips
_____ catalogues	_____ magazines
_____ brochures	_____ Other (please specify): _____
8. What are the reading materials about?

9. What language(s) are the reading materials in? Please list all that apply.

10. Why do you read in your first/native language? Please mark all answers that apply.

I read in my first/native language, because...

- ☐ I enjoy reading.
- ☐ I read for pleasure.
- ☐ I read to get specific information.
- ☐ I want to be more knowledgeable.
- ☐ I think reading is part of being an educated person.
- ☐ I think reading is part of being a well-rounded person.
- ☐ I want to kill time.
- ☐ I want to know more about a topic that I am interested in.
- ☐ I want to talk with other people what I read about.
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

11. Where do you read materials in your first/native language? Please mark all that apply.

- ☐ at home
- ☐ at school (college/ university)
- ☐ in the library
- ☐ at work
- ☐ at the cafeteria
- ☐ in a bookstore
- ☐ in a park
- ☐ at the doctor's office
- ☐ in my dorm room/ apartment
- ☐ in the car (when I'm not driving)
- ☐ on the bus
- ☐ on the plane
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

12. Please use the following scale to rate how often you read the following texts/materials and circle the appropriate answer.

- (0) never = N
 (1) very rarely = R
 (2) sometimes = S
 (3) often = O
 (4) always = A

In my first or native language I read...

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Always</u>
newspapers	0	1	2	3	4
magazines	0	1	2	3	4
advertisements	0	1	2	3	4
catalogues	0	1	2	3	4
travel brochures	0	1	2	3	4
TV guides	0	1	2	3	4
comic strips/books	0	1	2	3	4
biographies	0	1	2	3	4
poetry	0	1	2	3	4
short stories	0	1	2	3	4
fairy tales	0	1	2	3	4
folk tales	0	1	2	3	4
novels	0	1	2	3	4
romance novels	0	1	2	3	4
dramas	0	1	2	3	4
other literary texts	0	1	2	3	4
reports/ statistics	0	1	2	3	4
business letters	0	1	2	3	4
reviews	0	1	2	3	4
essays	0	1	2	3	4
personal letters	0	1	2	3	4
postcards	0	1	2	3	4
articles on the Internet	0	1	2	3	4
e-mails	0	1	2	3	4

Part 2: Reading Behavior Survey for Second/Foreign Language (L2)

1. Is reading in your second/foreign language enjoyable for you?
_____ Yes _____ No
2. If your answer is "yes", why? _____
3. If your answer is "no", why not? _____
4. Have you read anything in your second/foreign language on your own (i.e. not a class-required reading)?
_____ Yes _____ No
5. If your answer is "yes", what was/were the title(s) of the story/stories you read? (Please specify): _____

6. Why do you read in your second/foreign language? Please mark all answers that apply.
I read in my second/foreign language, because...

_____ I enjoy reading in my second/foreign language.
_____ I read for pleasure and entertainment.
_____ I would like to get a job where I can use what I learned by reading in the foreign language.
_____ I read to get specific information.
_____ I have to read as part of my second/foreign language course work.
_____ Reading is required for this class.
_____ I have to answer specific questions about the reading.
_____ I think reading is a good way to learn the second/foreign language.
_____ I want to be a more knowledgeable person.
_____ I want to broaden my view on a variety of subjects or topics.
_____ I want to find out more about the culture and lifestyles of the target language.
_____ I want to find out more about the history of the target language.
_____ I want to find out about various and different opinions that people have.
_____ I want to kill time.
_____ I want to know more about a topic that I am interested in.
_____ I want to talk with other people what I read about.
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

7. What are your personal experiences and feelings when reading in your second/foreign language? Please use the following scale and indicate, whether you
- (1) = strongly agree (SA)
 - (2) = agree (A)
 - (3) = neither agree nor disagree (N)
 - (4) = disagree (D), or
 - (5) = strongly disagree (SD)
- with the following statements by marking the appropriate number.
(adapted and modified from Saito, Horwitz, Garza (1999): Foreign Language Reading Anxiety)

When I am reading in the second or foreign language, ...

	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. I feel overwhelmed when I see a longer text in front of me (for example, longer than a few paragraphs).	1	2	3	4	5
2. I understand most of the words, but I still don't really get what the whole story is all about.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel that reading is the hardest thing in the second/foreign language class.					
4. I get upset when I don't understand what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I get frustrated when I am reading about a topic that I am not familiar with.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I often get confused and then I can't remember what I was reading about.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I get confused and upset, when I don't understand every single word.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get frustrated because I usually have to look up so many words.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I mostly translate the text word for word in order to understand what it is about.	1	2	3	4	5
12. It bothers me when I encounter unknown grammar in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I would rather just learn how to speak the second/foreign language instead of reading in it.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I don't mind reading in class, but I don't like reading outside of class by myself.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel confident that I understand the main ideas or the "gist" of the story.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I think that I will become a better reader if I read more.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel that reading in the second/foreign language isn't really that difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I think that I can read pretty well in the second/foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire

Reading Response Preferences

The following questionnaire is designed to provide the researcher with insights into students' preferences in respect to reading responses when reading literary text in the Foreign Language. The questions below are for research purposes only, and your individual answers will not be made available to anyone. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Please read every question carefully. Answer the questions by putting a check mark next to the appropriate answer and/or by filling in the respective information.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by returning this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Student Preferences in Respect to Reading Responses

The set of questions below are for research purposes only, and your individual answers will not be made available to anyone. Please use the following scale and indicate, whether you

- 1= strongly agree (SA)
2= agree (A)
3= neither agree nor disagree (N)
4= disagree (D)
5= strongly disagree (SD)

with the following statements by marking the appropriate number. Thank you.

(adapted and modified from the published dissertation by M.S. Davidson from the U of Pittsburgh, 2000)

	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
Reading					
1. I usually think about what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I am reading, the characters in a book or story come "alive" for me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The characters in most books or stories seem unreal to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I review papers or articles to better understand what I am reading about.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I review interpretations by professional scholars to better understand what I am reading about.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I enjoy reading about _____					
7. I don't like reading about _____					
Writing					
8. I enjoy expressing my thoughts and feelings when I write.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I like to make written comments about what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Writing comments or questions while I am reading helps me understand the reading better.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I enjoy writing a personal response to what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
12. It is easier for me to write down my thoughts and feelings than talking about them.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I would rather discuss orally than write privately about what I am reading.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I don't like to write.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am currently keeping (or I have kept) a written journal.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I think the best way to respond to what I read about is...					

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX E

Pre-Reading Questions for Think Alouds

(Format: Open-ended Questions)

- 1. Based on the title (or title page), what do you think this story is about?**
- 2. Based on the title, do you think reading this story will (or might) be enjoyable for you?**
- 3. Does this title bring any memories, thoughts or ideas to your mind?**
(e.g., about people, places, events, feelings, attitudes, smells, sights, pictures, images)
- 4. What do you predict could (or might) be happening in the text?**

APPENDIX F

Procedures for Think-Aloud Protocols

(Model Demonstration)

Procedure #1: Model Demonstration of Think-Aloud Strategy

1. Instructor first explains, then models Think-Aloud Strategy for students, using the first paragraph of a short story
2. Reader should think all the time while reading
3. Thinking about what one reads while one reads is part of the process of making meaning of the text
4. Readers then verbalize their thoughts in written form about the text (to show what strategies they use in order to understand/ comprehend the text)
5. Readers make comments (in written form) about the text (to show what prior knowledge about the subject they bring to the text)
6. Readers write down their own questions about the text

Things to consider for the reader while reading a text

- a) Which information could be important?
- b) What are "key words" or "key phrases" in the text?
- c) Which facts are known about the characters of the story?
- d) Which possible facts are known about the characters of the story?
- e) Which things could be predicted about the text as one continues reading on?
- f) Which questions does the reader have about words, phrases, characters, the plot, other things?
- g) What are the personal reactions of the reader towards the text, the characters, the plot (i.e. the readers feelings, attitudes, thoughts, beliefs)

Procedure #2: Class Application of Think-Aloud Strategy

1. Instructor reads second paragraph of short story out loud – sentence by sentence – and invites all students' think-aloud comments as modeled above
2. Instructor writes all comments on board/ OH to demonstrate that a variety of different responses is appropriate and acceptable for a given text

Procedure #3: Partner or Group Application of Think-Aloud Strategy

1. Instructor advises students to work with a partner or in a small group together on the third (4th, 5th, ...) paragraph of the short story
2. Students take turns in reading and "thinking-aloud" together, writing down their comments as they read
3. At the end of the assigned paragraph(s) student partners (or groups) compare their comments with each other
4. Then all students share their think-aloud comments with the class.

Procedure #4: Individual Student Application of Think-Aloud Strategy

1. Students read the following paragraphs of the story alone and write down their individual think-aloud comments for the remainder of the short story.

Follow-Up Procedure for Think-Aloud Protocols

1. Instructor distributes text to students and also hands them a pencil and piece of paper.
2. Without any further comments or instructions, instructor observes students' reactions while reading (facial expressions, mimics, gestures, "drawing" or writing on paper).

APPENDIX G

Guide Questions for Out-of-Class Response Journals

(based on R.E. Probst, 1988, *Dialogue with a text*, pp. 35-36)

1. What was your very first reaction to the title of the text?
2. What was your first reaction or response to the whole text? Please explain your reaction briefly.
3. Which memories did the text bring to your mind?
(for example of people, places, events, feelings, attitudes, smells, sights, pictures, images)
4. Which pictures or mental images did the text bring to your mind?
5. Which feelings and emotions did you have while you were reading? Please describe briefly what you felt.
6. Which thoughts or ideas did you have while you were reading the text? Please explain briefly what you thought of.
7. What was happening in the text while you were reading? Please retell the major events in your own words.
8. What did you focus on the most, while you were reading the text: certain words or phrases, characters, places, ideas, images, descriptions? Other things?
9. Please explain briefly why you focused on those things.
10. In your opinion, what was the most important part or aspect of the text? Why?
11. What was the most difficult thing for you in reading the text?
12. What was the most difficult thing for you in understanding the text?
13. Did you feel involved with the text or distant from it? Please explain your answer briefly.
14. Do you think this was a good text? Why, or why not?
15. Did this text remind you of anything else that you have read (a book, a story, a poem) or seen (a film, a play) before? If so, what is the connection between the two?

APPENDIX H

Guide Questions for Personal Interviews

(Open-ended)

- 1. Did you make any comments, questions or marks in your texts while you were reading? If so, what do those comments mean to you? Tell me about them.**
- 2. Do you think those first comments, questions, marks or drawings helped you in any way? If so, how?**
- 3. How did you like the process of writing a response journal to the readings? What did you like about it? What did you not like about it? Why?**
- 4. What was the easiest part for you in writing the response journal?**
- 5. What was the most difficult part for you in writing the response journal?**
- 6. Tell me how you wrote your response journal:**
 - immediately or shortly after you had finished the reading?**
 - after a while, after a few hours?**
 - the next day?**
 - after you read the story again?**
- 7. If you were to choose your two best journal entries – which would you pick?**
- 8. Why do you think those two are your best two journal entries? What do you like about them?**
- 9. Did your meaning of the story (stories) change after we talked about them in class? If so, why and how did your meaning of the story (stories) change?**

APPENDIX I

INFORMED WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

(Subject Consent Form)

Influence and Role of Student Background Information when responding to

Foreign Language Literary Texts

July 22, 2003

Dear _____

You are being asked to participate in this study because your input can provide helpful information to both Foreign Language students and instructors. I am requesting your permission to administer a questionnaire to you as a member of my Advanced German 325 class: *Seminar in German Literature*.

Description

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate and analyze the role that individual background information play when non-native readers of German respond to Foreign Language literary texts. I plan to administer the questionnaire at the beginning of the fall semester 2003 during the second class meeting. The completion of this questionnaire should take no longer than half a class period (approximately 45 minutes).

The results of the questionnaires will be part of my doctoral dissertation at Michigan State University. I hope that the information from this study will aid me in meeting the needs and interests of my students. I also anticipate that the results of this study will help my own and future students in their understanding and appreciation of Foreign Language literary texts.

Confidentiality

Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your identity and all data gathered in this study will be kept confidential. Your name will not be collected and/or used in the dissertation itself, because it is not the purpose of this study to identify specific persons by name. All information that will be collected for this study are for research purposes only, and will only be known to the main investigator.

Voluntary Consent

Your participation in this study is free and voluntary. You may also choose to participate partially by answering certain questions only. The questionnaire will in no way alter the prescribed course of study for the German 325 Literature class.

Right to withdraw

You also have, of course, the right to refuse or discontinue your participation in this study, and you will not be asked by me or anyone else to participate in this study if you object. If you do not wish to participate in this study you may leave the second class meeting after the first half of the class.

You can be assured that your decision to refuse or discontinue participation will in no way result in penalty or loss of benefits for you, nor will it negatively affect your grade in this course.

Benefits

Your voluntary participation in this study can, however, result in potential benefits for you. This can be in form of extra credit or extra points that will be applied to your participation grade of this course. Furthermore, your voluntary participation in this study will help gain important information for the process of learning and instructing Foreign Languages.

If you have any further questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at Aquinas College during my office hours, which are posted on my office at AB 9C. You may also contact me by phone (616) 459-8281, extension 3724 or e-mail: grosskat@aquinas.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant in this study, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Old Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this study by signing this consent form

Thank you for your attention to my request.

Sincerely yours,

Katharina Häusler Gross



Date

Please print your name here



Your Signature

APPENDIX J

AUDIO CONSENT FORM

(Subject Consent Form)

Students' Overall Reaction to and Experience with Activities when responding to

Foreign Language Literary Texts

July 22, 2003

Dear _____

You are being asked to participate in an audio taped personal interview because your input can provide helpful information to both Foreign Language students and instructors. I am requesting your permission to audio tape a personal interview between you as a member of my Advanced German 325 class: *Seminar in German Literature* and myself.

Description

The purpose of this taped interview is to investigate and analyze students' overall reaction to and experience with reader response activities during this course. The questions asked in the interview are not quiz or test questions about the individual texts. Rather, they are related to the student's individual responses to the texts.

For the purpose of analysis I will keep all audio taped interviews until the completion of my dissertation. All tapes will be permanently destroyed after the completion of my dissertation. I plan to administer the personal interview during the fall semester 2003 towards the end of the course (November 2003).

The personal interview will take place outside of class during my office hours, and I will be contacting you individually to schedule the interview time. The completion of this personal interview will take no longer than half a class period (approximately 45 minutes).

The information given during the personal interview and the results of the interview will be part of my doctoral dissertation at Michigan State University. I hope that the information from this study will aid me in meeting the needs and interests of my students. I also anticipate that the results of this study will help my own and future students in their understanding and appreciation of Foreign Language literary texts.

Confidentiality

Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your identity and all data gathered in this study will be kept confidential. Your name will not be collected and/or used in the dissertation itself, because it is not the purpose of this interview to identify specific persons by name. All information that will be collected for this study are for research purposes only, and will only be known to the main investigator.

Voluntary Consent

Your participation in this personal interview is free and voluntary. You may also choose to participate partially by answering certain questions only. The personal interview will in no way alter the prescribed course of study for the German 325 Literature class.

Right to withdraw

You also have, of course, the right to refuse or discontinue your participation in the personal interview, and you will not be asked by me or anyone else to participate in the interview if you object. You can be assured that your decision to refuse or discontinue participation will in no way result in penalty or loss of benefits for you, nor will it negatively affect your grade in this course.

Benefits

Your voluntary participation in this study can, however, result in potential benefits for you. This can be in form of extra credit or extra points that will be applied to your participation grade of this course. Furthermore, your voluntary participation in this study will help gain important information for the process of learning and instructing Foreign Languages.

If you have any further questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at Aquinas College during my office hours, which are posted on my office at AB 9C. You may also contact me by phone (616) 459-8281, extension 3724 or e-mail: grosskat@aquinas.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant in this study, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Old Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this study by signing this consent form.

Thank you for your attention to my request.

Sincerely yours,

Katharina Häusler Gross



Date

Please **print** your name here



Your signature

APPENDIX K

Categorization Schema for Written Responses to Realistic Fiction

(Hancock, 1993, pp. 342-345)

Immersion Categories	reflect an immersion by the reader in the text as s/he attempts to make sense of the emerging plot and characters
-----------------------------	---

Understanding	Responses indicate the reader's current understanding of both character and plot (usually stated positively and reflecting <i>certainty</i> in the mind of the reader). These responses may move beyond a report or summary to reflect a personal interpretation or, they may reflect an indication of sudden discovery of meaning from the text.
Character Introspection	Responses indicate the reader's effort to project introspective insight into the feelings, thoughts and motives for behavior of the characters. These responses reflect a sense of understanding through reasoning but indicate a degree of <i>uncertainty</i> on the part of the reader. They strike a balance between assuredness and the insecurity of not being so certain. They may begin with tentative statements such as, "It sounds like...He must be...She probably...I think (character's name)"
Predicting Events	Responses reflect the reader's speculations about what will emerge as the text proceeds. These statements often begin with "I bet... I guess... I think... If... then."
Questioning	Responses reflect a lack of complete understanding or a questioning of the text. They may reflect puzzlement in the reader's mind such as, "I wonder why...I can't tell." Questions often reflect confusion. Statements which begin, "I can't believe...I'm surprised...I didn't know" may reflect doubt in the reader's attempt to comprehend the text.

Self-Involvement Categories	reflect responses that reflect personal involvement with the character of plot
------------------------------------	--

Character Identification	Responses show the reader has achieved a sense of personal identification with the character by putting him or herself in the character's place as indicated by statements that begin, "If I
---------------------------------	--

	were...I probably would/n't..." Empathetic identification such as, "I know how he feels...I feel sorry for..." or sharing a related experience from the reader's life may also occur. Directly addressing the character or giving personal advice to the character also shows involvement.
Character Assessment	Responses indicate the reader's judgement of the actions and values of the character measured against his or her own personal standards of behavior. Indication of assessment occurs through inclusion of evaluative terms such as traits of the main character (i.e., nice, mean, smart, dumb) or through distinctive expression of likes or dislikes. Responses may also reflect perception of growth or change in the character such as, "She's starting to...He's beginning to..."
Story Involvement	Responses indicate the reader's personal involvement in the story and resulting reaction to setting, theme, actions, or sensory aspects of the story. Evaluative terms (i.e., disgusting, gross, weird, funny) often reflect this interaction. Such terms may indicate personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the unfolding event of the story. They may also reflect active or passive anticipation in reading the text such as, "I can't wait...Do I have to go on?"

Detachment Categories	indicate that the reader detaches him/herself from the book in order to make a statement regarding evaluation of the literature or to contemplate his or her perspective on reading or writing
------------------------------	--

Literary Evaluation	Responses indicate the reader's evaluation of all or parts of the book. They may indicate praise or criticism of the author and his or her writing style, writing techniques, use of realism, or ability to maintain reader interest. Responses may compare or contrast the book, author, or genre with others known to the reader.
Reader/Writer Digressions	Responses indicate the wanderings of the reader's mind while he or she interacts with the text. They may include thoughts going on outside the context of the text. They often include references to the act of reading, the process of writing in the literature journal, the nature of the reading-writing environment, or simply off-track or divergent statements that digress from the book.

APPENDIX L

Categorization Schema for Analysis of Mental Activities as implied by

Teacher Questions

(Janssen, 1996, pp. 10 – 12)

1. Direct Activity	Asking for reading, rereading, looking forward, looking back, reading aloud and so on <i>"Read the text out loud."</i>
2. Pointing out problems, difficulties or puzzles	Asking for puzzles or unanswered questions of students <i>"What did you find difficult, unclear in this story?"</i>
3. Evaluation	Asking for evaluative or emotive response or for a reasons of like/dislike <i>"Did you find reading this text worthwhile? Is so, why?"</i>
4. Identification	Asking for identification of text type, genre, period, author or identification of linguistic, stylistic or structural means <i>"Does the story have an open ending or a closed ending?"</i>
5. Anticipation	Asking for expectations or predictions of the text's content <i>"Judging by the title, what is this story about?"</i>
6. (Re)-construction	Asking for (re)construction of the text: asking for meanings, inferences, conclusions concerning events and characters. Asking for motifs, themes or main ideas of the text and meanings of indirect uses of language <i>"Briefly retell the story."</i> <i>"What is the theme or main idea of the story?"</i>
7. Forming Bridges	Asking for bridges between text parts, between text and external world or between text and other (literary) texts of other forms of art <i>"Compare the screen version with the original story."</i>
8. Elaboration	Asking for personal associations, experiences, general opinions or ideas, relatively detached from the text. Or asking for alternative designs for (parts of) the text <i>"What would you do, if you were in this character's shoes?"</i>
9. Reflection	Asking for reflection s on personal reading processes or on reading processes of others <i>"How did you read the story?"</i> <i>"What strategy did you use?"</i>
10. Transformation	Asking for transformation of the text into another (literary) form <i>"Make a radio play of the story."</i>

APPENDIX M

Categorization Schema for Literary Response Questionnaire (LQR)

(Miall & Kuiken, 1995, pp. 360-361)

Factors	Description of Factors
1. Insight	This factor reflects an approach to reading in which the literary text guides recognition of previously unrecognized qualities, usually in the reader but also in the reader's world
2. Empathy	Items on this factor indicate projective identification with fictional characters. Some reflect the extended "presence" of these characters (e.g. in imagined dialogue), as though projective identification is regarded as a means to make the characters seem "real" to the reader
3. Imagery Vividness	This factor expresses imaginal elaboration of the literary world that becomes vividly present not only vividly, but also in feeling, sound, and smell.
4. Leisure Escape	Items from this factor indicate an approach to reading that emphasizes reading for pleasure, an enjoyable and absorbing departure from everyday responsibilities.
5. Concern with Author	This factor reflects interest in the author's distinctive perspective, themes, and style as well as the author's biographical place in a literary or intellectual tradition.
6. Story-driven Reading	These items reflect an approach in which the reader is focused on plot or story-line, with particular emphasis on interesting action and compelling conclusions.
7. Rejecting Literary Values	This factor represents the rejection of careful reading, of scholarly study, and of instructional presentation of literary texts. Reading is regarded as a compulsory and irrelevant task.

APPENDIX N

Categorization Scheme for Variables in Student Reader Responses as expressed in

Response Journals

(Thury & Friedlander, 1995, pp. 66-70)

Factors	Description of Factors and Variables
1. "The Linking Reader"	Characterizes a stance which makes links and connections, which include: a) connections of the reading to books and television (<i>I would add here other readings and films</i>) b) connections of the values in the (literary) work to modern values (<i>I would add here values that are immediately tied to personal and cultural background of reader</i>)
2. "The Surface Evaluator"	Designates a stance that operates predominantly from evaluation of surface structures, which include: a) evaluation of characters and culture of the literary work b) speculation about the plot of the literary work c) value judgements about the plot of the literary work d) connections between the reader him/herself and the characters of the literary text (<i>i.e., identification</i>) e) connections between the world of the characters in the text and the reader him/herself Based on reader's limited understanding of the literary text this factor might also include f) comments on interest level of reading (such as "boring", "dumb") g) comments that exhibit no consideration of author's purpose, or literary elements used by the author
3. "The Mature Student Reader"	Characterizes a stance that can be described as a "personalizing reader stance" which suggests the personalization of formal

	elements of the literary work and a reading process that is highly self-conscious and personal. Factors may include: a) general comments about reading - positive general comments about reading - comments about reading expectations b) variables that explicitly link the text's repertoire with the reader's repertoire, suggesting a connecting between the two - value judgements about plot and style - comments on culture - comment's on author's aim
--	---

APPENDIX O

Preliminary Categorization Schema including Personal Notes

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION of CATEGORY and EXAMPLES
<i>1. Immersion Categories</i>	
Anticipation / Prediction/ Speculation	Reader expresses expectations and hypothesis about the text's content. Ich denke, daß.../ Ich glaube...(alle) Wahrscheinlich...(alle) Ich hoffe, ... (Thomas) Ich erwarte, dass ich völlig schockiert sein werde...(Thomas) Das Ende wird... (Thomas) ...werden...gezeigt/ werden...dargestellt (Thomas, Theresia) Ich sage voraus...(Theresia) Es wird...geben. (Theresia) Diese Überschrift erinnert mich an...(Theresia, Andrea) In dieser Geschichte geht es... (Andrea) Ich denke dass ...versuchen wird... (Andrea) ...denn ich war neugierig wie er dass schaffen [schaffen] sollte. (Andrea) Es wird/ es klingt...traurig (Thomas, Michael)
Imaginal Elaborations	Reader displays vivid images of the literary text that are not only visualized but also expressed in feelings, attitudes, smells, sounds or personal associations and memories. Er erinnert mir an...(Thomas) Die Geschichte erinnert mir an meiner Kindheit...(Thomas) It made me think of... (Thomas) I saw a hospital full of twenty sick people...Well, I guess that the images of sick people had the strongest effect on me. (Thomas) Reminds me of...(Michael) I immediately thought about...(Michael) It sounds kind of...(Theresia) It made me picture talking walks... (Theresia) Vor meinen Augen hatte ich mir...vorgestellt (Andrea) Dieser Text brachte Bilder vor meinen Augen aus dem Krankenhaus wo ich lag... (Andrea) Ich hatte Bilder im Kopf von mir und M...(Andrea)

Questions

Reader inquires about a particular part or the entire story to probe or clarify meaning. Responses may reflect lack of complete understanding, or reader's attempt to comprehend text.

Many questions come to my mind... (Thomas)

Ich fragte mich auch, was für eine Lexikon [Lektion] die Geschichte lehren wird. (Thomas)

Problems/ Confusions/ Difficulties

Reader expresses puzzlement, doubt, confusion, frustration or bewilderment in his/her attempt to comprehend the text.

Wieso spricht diese Geschichte nicht mehr über...? (Thomas)

...das finde ich am komischsten [hier: eigenartigsten] in der ganzen Geschichte. Thomas

I just don't understand her thought process... Thomas

...wieso brauchen sie ein Barometer? (Thomas)

...if I were...would I believe it? (Thomas)

Persönlich ich verstehe nicht wieso man das machen könnte [meint: konnte]... (Thomas)

Einige Veränderungen der Greisin kann ich schon verstehen, aber einige auch nicht. (Andrea)

Ich konnte nicht verstehen wie die deutschen Leute, Juden hassen und sie töten konnten, weil ich nie jemanden wirklich gehasst habe, oder jemanden heut zu Tage hasse. (Andrea)

2. Self-Involvement Categories

Personal Connections with other readings and/or films

Reader makes connections between the text and other stories, books, films

I've read many texts that have brought out similar emotions in me...
(Thomas) also listed under reflections

Ja, dies Überschrift erinnert mich an den Film "The [Comedian]
Harmonists" den ich im letzten Semester in meiner deutsch Klasse
gesehen habe, weil es sich auch in diesem Film über Juden
gehandelt hat. (Andrea)

Die Judenbuche (Theresia)

Personal Connections with reader's background

Reader expresses thoughts, ideas, and comments that are based on personal background knowledge and connects them to personal life experiences.

I've always felt that/ thought that...
In hospitals

Dieses Text ärgerte mich, weil es erinnert mich nach meiner
eigenen Erfahrung. (Thomas)
I felt more involved. I know what....is like. (Thomas)

Dieser Text erinnerte mich als ich 13 Jahre alt war... (Andrea)
Aus meinen Erfahrungen weiss ich... (Andrea)

Meine erste Reaktion auf die Überschrift war sehr positive, weil ich
wusste dass es sich über eine Freundschaft in dieser Geschichte
handelt... (also listed under pos/neg. comments on reading ... Jenö
war mein Freund hat mich an viele sachen und Leute erinnert, aber
am meisten an meine Freundin M. (Andrea)

ich weiss wie es ist wenn man jemanden als eine Freundin oder
einen Freund sieht und dann plötzlich von der Person getrennt wird.
(Andrea)
(also listed under personal involvement)
Es kann einen sehr verändern, ich denke es hat mich verändert,
...(Andrea)

Personal Connections with reader's socio-cultural background

Reader indicates comments that are specifically related to personal socio-cultural background knowledge and reflects the influence of those experiences

Dieses ganze Thema erinnert mich an die Situation als meine Eltern
versucht hatten Familienmitglieder aus (native country) heraus zu
holen und wie schwer und kompliziert es war. (Andrea)

**Personal Connection
between reader and story
character(s)**

Reader expresses thoughts, opinions and ideas that derive from his/her personal identification with the story characters. Responses also indicate the reader's personal involvement, sympathy and acceptance, or antipathy or rejection of story characters.

Ich würde das Selbe wie Michael [aus Element] machen (Thomas)

...was Till gemacht hatte war nicht richtig, und ich könnte sowas nie übers Herz bringen. (Andrea)
also listed under Evaluation of story character

...hatte ich Mitgefühl mit Franz (story character in Das Judenauto) als er ausgelacht wurde, weil ich nachvollziehen konnte wie es ihm erging (Andrea)
(also listed under personal feelings)

Ich bin auch verlobt und verliebt und ich fragte mich was ich machen würde wenn ich auf [an] Dorothea's Stelle wäre... Je, mehr ich über diese Frage dachte, je schwieriger wurde es für mich eine Entscheidung zu treffen... (Andrea)

**Personal Connection
between the reader's and
the story characters'
world**

Responses indicate the reader's reflection of the story character's world and comment on reader's ability and potentiality to immerse him/herself in that world. Reader also expresses feelings and emotions in respect to personal adaptability to story character's world.

Ich hoffe, wann ich damals dort lebte, würde ich etwas gegen... unternehmen. (Thomas)
If I were in that [time] period...(Thomas)

Das wäre so schwer für mich, wenn ich so ein [behindertes] Kind hätte, aber ich weiß jedoch, daß ich doch das Kind so viel lieben würde. (Theresia)

Jeder Mensch geht durch schwere Zeiten im Leben und kann dadurch die Zeit in der DDR besser nachvollziehen. (Andrea)

...ich denke dass jede Person gute und schlechte errinerungen über die Schulzeit hat. (Andrea)

Personal Involvement

Reader expresses feelings and emotions that are connected with the story.

...the story scared me, because it made me reflect on... (Thomas)
I felt more involved. I know what....is like. (Thomas)

Ich fühlte mich beteiligt auf einer Art mit dem Text, weil ich es lustig fand und interesse beim lesen hatte. Aber auf anderer Seite fühlte ich mich unbeteiligt weil ich wusste das was Till gemacht hatte, war nicht richtig und ich könnte so was nie übers Herz bringen. (Andrea)

Ich fühlte mich sehr beteiligt mit dieser Geschichte, weil ich weiss wie es ist wenn man jemanden als eine Freundin oder einen Freund sieht und dann plötzlich von der Person getrennt wird. (Andrea)

Ich fühlte mich total distanziert von dem Text, weil meine Kindheit nicht so war... (Andrea)

Personal Feelings

Reader indicates a self-directed response of a personal nature that is related to the story in general or specific story characters

...manchmal fühle ich mich als ob...(Thomas)
...ich würde dort fühlen wie ein Tier in einem Käfig... (Thomas)
I think it is sad... (Thomas)

Ich war traurig als ich sah... (Andrea)
Ich hatte das Gefühl dass ihre Freunde auf der ersten Stelle kommen und dann die Familie. (Andrea)
Aber ich hatte auch Mitleid mit...weil ich auch nicht sehr glücklich wäre wenn mich jemand anlügen würde. (Andrea).

Als ich die Geschichte hörte, hatte ich gemischte Gefühle. Auf einer Seite war ich glücklich, weil ich an M. und unsere guten Zeiten dachte und auf der anderen Seite fühlte ich mich so sehr innerlich, weil ich jetzt nicht eine Freundin wie M. habe. (Andrea)
...hatte ich Mitgefühl mit Franz (story character in Das Judenauto) als er ausgelacht wurde, weil ich nachvollziehen konnte wie es ihm erging (Andrea)

Empathy

Reader indicates projective identification with the story characters and may reflect the extended "presence" of the characters by engaging in an imagined dialogue with them.

Sei Stark! [addressed to main character in Element] (Thomas)
Wenn ich könnte, würde ich ihm helfen. (Thomas)
Liebe ..., ich vermisse dich sehr, vorallem seitdem Opa gestorben ist. Ich fühle mich als währst du, oder ein Teil von dir, mit Opa weg gegangen... (Andrea)

3. Evaluation Categories

Evaluation of story characters' personality

Reader expresses comments and opinions about the character's personality and indicates judgement of the character's values. These responses are predominantly based on the reader's own moral values, convictions and beliefs. The character's personality is assessed and measured against the reader's own personal standards and behaviors.

Meiner Meinung nach ist sie [die Großmutter] wirklich nicht unwürdig... (Thomas)

As for the child in the story, I do think he is rather normal... (Thomas)

Ich denke dass [story character Michael, Element]...mutig, erfahren und ehrlich ist. Michael weiss was er vom Leben will und er geht auch danach. (Andrea)

Sie muss wirklich mutig gewesen sein, vorallem alls sie immer noch nicht aufgegeben hatte...

Ich fand es auch toll dass sie verantwortliche Leute zu Rede gestellt hatte... (Andrea)

Ich denke es war okay dass sie im Gasthof gegessen hat...(Andrea)

Evaluation of story characters' actions

Reader expresses comments and opinions about the character's behaviors and choices, which result in specific actions. These responses may also be based on and judged according to the reader's own moral values, convictions and beliefs.

Es ist ja sehr gut, das die Mutter das nicht erlaubt. (Thomas)
...wenn er [story character] noch lebt, würde ich nicht mit ein solcher Typ befreundet sein. (Thomas)

Franz...war Mitläufer des Nazi Regimes (Thomas)

Ich denken sie lebt wie sie will und braucht niemandem sagen warum sie es so macht. (Thomas)

Ich finde das Verhalten der Greisin unwürdiger, als das des Buchdruckers, weil sie immerhin sich sehr stark verändert hat ohne Rücksicht auf den Rest der Familie zu nehmen. (Andrea)

Value judgement about the plot of the story

Reader expresses personal likes/dislikes and/or satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the unfolding events in the story. Responses also indicate the reader's personal involvement with and reaction to the story (including the story's setting, theme, actions, language or sensory aspects). Responses may be

concise (*I liked it*) or accompanied by further explanations (... *because*).

It is a good text in the way it draws various experiences from different students. (Thomas)

Die Sprache wird in jedem Abschnitt brutaler und durch Macht bestimmt. (Andrea)

Ich stelle mir das Leben in der ehemaligen DDR traurig vor, weil die Menschen keine Rechte auf ein normales Leben hatten. (Andrea)

4. Interpretation Categories

Appraisal of understanding of story

Reader expresses comments on personal understanding of the story based on reader's comprehension of story plot, actions and events in story. Reader might relate personal understanding of story to insights gathered in classroom discussions or contributions from other influencing factors (personal knowledge of language, related readings, books, films)

I do understand German quite well, so the understanding wasn't hard. (Thomas)

Personal (re)construction of the text or story line

Reader expresses thoughts, ideas, and opinions about personal meanings, inferences, and conclusions regarding story characters and events. Responses may indicate main motifs, themes and/or main ideas of the text.

Sie hat nie Zeit für sich selbst. Sie machte nie was sie wollte. Als ihr Mann starb bekommt sie endlich Zeit für Sie Selbst. (Thomas)

"die langen Jahre der Knechtschaft" interpretiere ich als das Leben dass die Gesellschaft von einer Frau in dieser Zeit erwartet hat, welches die Greisin auch geführt hat. "die kurzen Jahre der Freiheit" interpretiere ich als das Leben dass die Greisin immer haben wollte, aber nie die Gelegenheit hatte bis ihr Ehemann nicht gestorben ist. (Andrea)

Es ist ein guter Text, wenn man zeigen möchte, dass man nicht jeder Person vertrauen sollte und was die Nachfolge sein könnte [was passieren könnte, wenn man jeder Person vertraut, my comment] (Andrea)

Jetzt verstehe ich warum Franz am Ende der Geschichte so reagierte, weil er nämlich so gross geworden ist. Sein Vater war ein Nazi und daher wurde Franz im Geiste des Faschismus erzogen. (Andrea)

**Personal relevance of
story for reader's life**

Reader forms and expresses links and/or connections between parts of the text or the entire text and the respondent's personal life. Personal relevance for the reader's life may be expressed through "lessons learned" or personal meaning derived from the text.

You can see students use the text and interpret it into their lives.
(Thomas)

Ein Gedanken volles Text. Man kann viel lernen ... (Thomas) also
listed under personal reading experience

Es ist unsere Pflicht zu helfen wann und wo wir können...Es ist
auch so in der Bibel. (Thomas)

Ja, ich denke dass der Text sehr gut war, weil...die Geschichte mich
an M. erinnert hat. (Andrea)

5. Reflection Categories

Reflections on personal reading process

Reader expresses comments related to personal reading ability and background knowledge related to ease or difficulty of reading the text. Responses may also include opinions on likes/dislikes that reader experienced during the process of reading.

I wasn't a difficult text for me to read or understand. (Thomas)
I've read many texts that have brought out similar emotions in me... (Thomas)

Meiner Meinung nach war der Text gut, weil es in einer leichten Sprache geschrieben wurde und kurz genau zum Punkt war. (Andrea)

Reflections on reading process of others

Responses indicate how individual readers reflected on the reading process and subsequent comments from other readers. Responses may include how the individual reader related comments and opinions from other readers to his/her personal understanding of the story. Responses may also include how other reader's comments influenced, guided or determined the individual's understanding of a story.

It was also a learning experience to hear from (student's name) her situation...(Thomas)
I was surprised that no one else in the class had a similar reaction as I did... (Thomas)
Maybe for students who do not have this experience they see only the comical value of the story. (Thomas)

Reasoning

Reader expresses inferences and conclusions that are based on logical, emotional or rational thought processes, revealing critical thinking processes of the respondent. Responses may include possible solutions and/or ideas for problem solving of situations addressed in the story.

Man darf nie Privat mit Publikeben [öffentlichem Leben] einmischen [vermischen], Leute die das machen werden viel Stress bekommen. (Thomas)

I believe all Stasi and people involved should have paid a monetary fine, as to admit what they did what in fact wrong.... Maybe the money could then go to help victims and families [in the former GDR] to recover mentally from the trauma. (Thomas)

Meiner Meinung nach finde ich es berechtigt das ältere Menschen solche emanzipatorischen Bestrebungen haben, weil sie darauf ein Recht haben, solange sie aber sich selbst nicht in Gefahr bringen und andere Menschen auch. (Andrea).

Seeking Explanations

Responses that focus on and express the reader's search for answers related to unexplained behaviors and actions by story characters, or unknown and/ or unexplored story events.

I just don't understand her thought process... Thomas
...wieso brauchen sie ein Barometer? (Thomas)
Persönlich ich verstehe nicht wieso man das machen könnte [meint: konnte]... (Thomas)
All also listed under Difficulties and Problems, above

Was ich aber nicht verstehe ist, warum sie weniger Zeit mit ihren Kindern und Enkelkindern verbracht hatte. (Andrea)

*6. Reading Experience
Categories*

**Comments of general
nature about the reading**

**Comments of positive or
negative nature about the
reading**

Readers comment on their personal approach to reading the text, possibly expressing enjoyment and pleasure, but also anxiety, uneasiness or worry.

Die Geschichten waren interessant... (Thomas)

Ein Gedanken volles Text. Man kann viel lernen ... (Thomas)

Die Geschichte war unterhaltsam und lustig, ich könnte noch mehr von... lesen. (Andrea)

Die Geschichte ...war zu dumm. (Andrea).

Meine erste Reaktion auf den Text war eigentlich ganz positive, ich dachte dass der Text lustig und unterhaltsam war. (Andrea)

Meine erste Reaktion auf die Überschrift war sehr positive, weil ich wusste dass es sich über eine Freundschaft in dieser Geschichte handelt. (Andrea)

**Comments on author's
aim**

Responses reflect the reader's concern with the author's distinctive perspective, style, or chosen theme. Reader may also include comments on the author's biographical position within the literary tradition.

...der Schriftsteller nimmt eine Aussenseiterposition... (Thomas)

Sie [the author] will zeigen, dass obwohl Menschen Übergewichtig sind, dass sie immer noch Menschen sind, genau wie alle andere Leute. (Thomas)

...das [Fühmann] zeigen wollte...wie deutschen Kindern beigebracht wurde Vorurteile über die Juden zu haben und sie von klein auf zu hassen. (Andrea)

APPENDIX P

Data Sources for Analysis based on Preliminary Categorization Schema for Written and Oral Responses

Category Type	Category	Source of Data for Analysis of Category			
		Pre-Reading Questions (Written)	Think Aloud Protocols (Written)	Response Journals (Written)	Personal Interviews (Oral)
Immersion	APS	•	•	•	
	IE	•	•	•	
	Q	•	•	•	•
	PCD	•	•	•	•
Self-Involvement	PCwRF	•	•	•	•
	PCwPB	•	•	•	•
	PCwSCB	•	•	•	•
	PCRC		•	•	
Evaluation	PCRCW		•	•	
	PI	•	•	•	•
	PF	•	•	•	•
	E		•	•	
Interpretation	ECP		•	•	•
	ECA		•	•	•
	VJPS		•	•	•
	AUS		•	•	•
Reflection	PRS		•	•	•
	PRRL		•	•	•
	RPRP		•	•	•
	RRPO		•	•	•
Reading Experience	R		•	•	•
	SE		•	•	•
	PNCR		•	•	•
	CAA		•	•	•

¹ **Explanation of Categories**

APS	= Anticipation/Prediction/Speculation
IE	= Imaginal Elaboration
Q	= Questions
PCD	= Problems/Confusions/Difficulties
PCwRF	= Personal Connections with other readings/films
PCwPB	= Personal Connections with reader's personal background
PCwSCB	= Personal Connections with reader's socio-cultural background
PCRC	= Personal Connection between reader and story character(s)
PCRCW	= Personal Connection between reader's world and story character(s) world
PI	= Personal Involvement
PF	= Personal Feelings
E	= Empathy
ECP	= Evaluation of story characters' personality
ECA	= Evaluation of story characters' actions
VIPS	= Value judgement about the plot of the story
AUS	= Appraisal of understanding of story
PRS	= Personal (re)construction of the text or story line
PRRL	= Personal relevance of story for reader's life
RPRP	= Reflections on personal reading process
RRPO	= Reflections on reading process of others
R	= Reasoning
SE	= Seeking Explanations
PNCR	= Comments of positive or negative nature about the reading
CAA	= Comments on author's aim

¹ **Frequency of categories in written and oral responses:**

- ▲ = in all written (TAP, PRQ, RJ) and oral (PI) response types
- = only in written (TAP, PRQ, RJ) response types for immersion categories, and in two written (TAP, RJ) and oral (PI) response types for evaluation and reflection categories
- = only in two written (TAP, RJ) response types for self-involvement categories, and in written (RJ) and oral (PI) response types for evaluation, interpretation, reflection, and reading experience categories
- ★ = only in one written (RJ) response type for self-involvement and reading experience categories

APPENDIX Q

Final Categorization Schema for Reader Response based on Background Knowledge

Final Categories
(aspects related to the framework of Iser's reader-response theory)

Responses based on reader's individual and socio-cultural background knowledge

1. Connections

1.1. Personal Assumptions/ Beliefs <i>(Influence of readers' individual background knowledge)</i>	Responses that indicate the influence of reader's background knowledge from personal life situations or personal beliefs when stating assumptions, hypotheses or predictions about the text
1.2. Personal Connections <i>(Influence of individually and socio- culturally determined aspects that occur during the reading process)</i>	Responses expressing the reader's thoughts, ideas, and comments that indicate connections between the text and - the reader's own experiences, (life or personal situations) - the reader's specific socio-cultural background - other texts, stories, books, and films the reader has read or seen

2. Involvement

2.1. Personal Involvement <i>(Experience the reader has during the reading process – i.e. What happens to the reader?) (Effects that the text has upon the reader)</i>	Responses indicating the reader's self-directed response expressing feelings and emotions that are connected with the story
--	---

2.2. Personal Involvement with Story <i>(Experience the reader has during the reading process – i.e. What happens to the reader?)</i> <i>(Effects that the text has upon the reader)</i>	Responses that express the reader's understanding of the text, also displaying likes and dislikes for the text. Responses may also include feelings that show empathy, compassion or rejection, indicating connections between the reader and the text
3. Evaluation	
3.1. Evaluation of Story Characters' Personality <i>(Influence of socially and culturally determined aspects that occur during the reading process)</i>	Responses that express the reader's opinions and comments regarding the assessment, appraisal and/or judgement of story characters' personality, based on reader's personal standards and behaviors
3.2. Evaluation of Story Character's Actions <i>(Influence of socially and culturally determined aspects that occur during the reading process)</i>	Responses indicating the reader's thoughts and comments regarding the assessment, appraisal and/or judgement of story characters' behaviors, which result in specific actions, based on reader's personal values, convictions and beliefs
4. Interpretation	
4.1. Personal Interpretation <i>(Effects that the text has upon the reader)</i> <i>(Adjustment or modification of reader's own focus to complete the "gaps" that are within the written text)</i>	Responses expressing reader's thoughts, ideas and opinions that indicate understanding of the text based on reader's comprehension of story events and story character's actions. Responses reveal critical thinking ability of reader by rendering statements in which inferences are made, conclusions are drawn, and solutions for problems are offered. Responses may also be related to classroom discussion or reader's prior personal background knowledge

4.2. Relevance of Personal Interpretation for Reader <i>(Effects that the text has upon the reader)</i> <i>(Adjustment or modification of reader's own focus to complete the "gaps" that are within the written text)</i>	Responses that express the reader's thoughts and comments about meanings derived or lessons learned (i.e. morals, standards, ideals) and the significance/importance of that meaning for reader's personal life. Responses may also include possible application of the text's meaning to the reader's life.
--	--

5. Reflection

5.1. Reflection on the personal reading process <i>(Possibility of alternative readings of the same text based on the readers' individual and socio-cultural background knowledge and their stance toward the text)</i> <i>(Adjustment or modification of reader's own focus to complete the "gaps" that are within the written text)</i>	Responses that reflect the reader's contemplation about the reading process, indicating personal observations made during that process. May also include possible adjustments and modifications of text comprehension that were influenced by reader's personal experiences and background knowledge
5.2. Reflection on the reading process of others <i>(Possibility of alternative readings of the same text based on the readers' individual and socio-cultural background knowledge and their stance toward the text)</i> <i>(Adjustment or modification of reader's own focus to complete the "gaps" that are within the written text)</i>	Responses that indicate the reader's reflection of comments from other readers. Responses may include possible adjustment and modifications of the individual reader's understanding of the story, based on other reader's comments, thoughts and ideas about the text.

APPENDIX R

Analysis diagram for evidence of final categories as documented in written and oral responses for selected short stories

(Example: *Jenö war mein Freund*)

Thomas

Evidence of Category as documented in Reader's Responses	Examples W = Written Responses, O = Oral Responses
Connections Personal Assumptions/ Beliefs	Jenö ist wahrscheinlich gestorben, sonst wird [wäre] der Titel Jenö ist mein Freund. Ich schätze diese Geschichte wird eine Tragödie.... Das Ende wird traurig, weil die Titel klingt traurig. (W) ¹
Personal Connections	Ich denke über [an] meinen eigenen Freunde, und was ich über meine Freunde denke. Meine Freunde aus meiner Kindheit, aber auch was Eltern über meine Freunde sagten. ...ich denke die Geschichte wird mir eine andere Perspektiv von Zigeuner geben. (W) Zigeuner sind Leute mit anderen Lebensverhältnissen als nicht-Zigeuner. Zigeuner glauben an die Freiheit ihres Lebens. (W) ...ich denke immer an das Beste von Kinder, ich denke, daß Kinder lügen und stehlen wenig...die sagen es einfach später...Erwachsene nicht so einfach sind. Die sind ein bißchen mehr hinterlistig. ... Ich denke, mit der Alter...Leute ändern ihre Perspektiven ein bißchen... es ist nicht so einfach mit Erwachsene zu sprechen als es ist mit Kinder...Meine Erfahrung...aus meinem Leben, ja... (O)

Involvement Personal Involvement Personal Involvement with Story	Was passiert mit den Roma(?) während der zweiter Weltkrieg war schrecklich. Die waren "unerwünscht" von den Nazis, genau wie den Juden. (W) [I felt] involved, ich wollte mich in der Geschichte setzen. Ich wollte denken als ob ich das Erzähler war. (W) [The story was] ein bisschen depressiv, aber trotzdem gut. (W)
Evaluation Evaluation of Story Character's Personality Evaluation of Story Character's Actions	Jenö...nett, ein guter Freund... Jenö ist kein schlechter Freund, sondern er macht alles was Kinder machen sollen, sie tauschen sogar Geschenke... (W) Jenö hat vielen Talenten, und zeigt der andere Junge wichtige Sachen.... Aber Jenö hat ein schlechtes Einfluss [auf den anderen Jungen], weil den anderen Junge geht nicht mehr in der Schule. (W) Der Vater ist ein sehr schlechter Mann... Der Vater hat die schlechten Dinge gemacht, nicht Jenö..., lügt [und] stiehlt um einen Punkt zu machen. (W) Der Vater ist unglaublich Gemein, und lehrt sein Sohn eine Gruppe zu hassen.... Ich habe Texte über Rassismus schon gelesen, aber nicht so schlimm wie der Vater lehrt sein Sohn andere Völker zu hassen. (W)
Interpretation Personal Interpretation	Ich dachte schon, dass der Vater stahl alles. Es gab viele Merkmale im Text. Der Vater sagte der Barometer war alt, und wenn Zigeuner kann nicht ihr Zukunft planen wieso brauchen sie ein Barometer [?]. (W) Aus meiner Ansicht war es der Vater weil, er denkt was die Nachbarn denken [denkt an das, was die Nachbarn denken oder sagen würden], nicht was er [der Vater] denkt.

Relevance of Personal Interpretation for Reader	Der Vater ist unglaublich Gemein, und lehrt sein Sohn eine Gruppe zu hassen. Das passiert jeden Tag, aber es ist immer noch sehr unrecht. (W) Ich dachte an meiner Eltern, und ich hoffe...dass meine Eltern haben mir besser erzogen. It helped me to sort of relate the story to my own childhood, and how I would have felt if these things would have happened to me. (W)
Reflection Reflection on the personal reading process	Der Erzählers Vater wollte sein Kind schützen, in dem Sinne kann er nicht so schlecht sein. (W) Manchmal ist es schwer, zu erklären, was für Emotionen oder Gefühle man hat, wenn man schreibt, oder so...manchmal du hast diese Gefühle, aber du weißt nicht genau, wie man das...auslassen kann...Ah, so zum Beispiel, hat der Vater gelogen, oder nicht? Was werde ich machen in diese Situation, war es der Vater, der gelogen hat, oder Jenö? (O) [The response journal to] <u>Jenö war mein Freund</u> hab' ich sofort geschrieben, weil ich wollte nicht vergessen, was ich dachte über den Vater. (O) ...eigentlich, ich denke nicht daß ich meine Meinung viel geändert ist [habe]. Wahrscheinlich hab' ich Kleinigkeiten geändert, aber was ich schon früher dachte...ist praktisch...geblieben, wahrscheinlich nur ein bißchen vertieft, aber sonst nicht so stark, 180 Grad, geändert. (O) (no entries)
Reflection on the reading process of others	

Andrea

Evidence of Category as documented in Reader's Responses	Examples (W = Written Responses, O = Oral Responses)
Connections Personal Assumptions/ Beliefs	Ich denke dass diese Geschichte über zwei Leute die freunde waren, aber nicht mehr sind handelt. Ich denke auch dass eine Person ein Ausländer ist die andere Person Deutsch ist.ich denke dass dieser Text interessant zum lesen ist, weil es um Freundschaft geht und ...mir sehr viel an Freundschaft liegt... Eine Freundschaft geht zu Ende, weil eine Person die andere verraten hat. (W) <u>Jenö</u> war <u>mein Freund</u> hat mich an viele sachen und Leute erinnert, aber am meisten an meine Freundin (name) ... es ist anders seit wir nicht in der selben Stadt, den selben Kontinent wohnen... ich hatte Bilder von (name) im Kopf. (W) ...der Vather schützt seine Familie (W) eine arme, aber glückliche Familie... (W) ...eine Familie des Islamischen Glaubens (W)
Involvement Personal Involvement Personal Involvement with Story	Als ich die Geschichte hörte, hatte ich gemischte Gefühle. Auf einer Seite war ich glücklich, weil ich an (name) und unsere guten Zeiten dachte und auf der anderen Seite fühlte ich mich so lehr innerlich, weil ich jetzt nicht eine Freundin wie (name) habe. (W) ... ich weiss wie es ist wenn man jemanden als eine Freundin oder einen Freund sieht und dann plötzlich von der Person getrennt wird... Es kann einen sehr verändern, ich denke es hat mich verändert. (W)

	... ich denke, dass der Text sehr gut war, weil...die Geschichte mich an (name of friend) erinnert hat. (W)
Evaluation Evaluation of Story Character's Personality Evaluation of Story Character's Actions	(no entries) Der neunjährige Junge ging auch weniger zur Schule, denn dort lernte er nicht so viel, wie als er mit Jenö ist. (W)
Interpretation Personal Interpretation Relevance of Personal Interpretation for Reader	Ich denke dass diese Geschichte Leser aufmerksam machen möchte, dass es viele andere Kulturen in dieser Welt gibt und das wir alle Freunde sein können, auch wenn wir verschieden sind. (W) Es überraschte mich dass die Freundschaft nicht wegen der Unterschiede zwischen den beiden aus einander ging sondern, weil Jenö weg gezogen ist, oder weg ziehen musste. (W) Ich denke dass diese Geschichte zeigt dass man nicht jemanden mögen soll für was sie oder er hat, sondern für was sie oder er ist. (W) Ich fragte mich ob es mein Schicksal war, dass ich von (name of country) nach (name of country) und dann nach den USA gezogen bin und immer neu Anfangen musste, genau so wie Jenö mit seiner Familie herum zog. (W)
Reflection Reflection on the personal reading process	Am Anfang, sagen wir, ah... war ich eigentlich ganz froh, daß wir dieses Blatt hatten [respondent refers to the guide questions for response journals]. Manchmal hatt' ich noch dazu geschrieben... nach der Klassendiskussion, oder...manchmal war es noch zu tief...für mich, es war schwer, ...ich hatte Gefühle, verschiedene Gefühle, gemischte Gefühle, und dann wollt' ich das noch ausdrücken, und dann hab'...bin ich noch

zurückgegangen, und hab' einfach... was mir in mein'n Gedanken war... hab' ich eben noch geschrieben. (O) Manchmal [war] meine Meinung ein wenig mehr geöffnet, wenn ich die Kommentare von meinen Klassenkameraden gehört habe. (O)	Reflection on the reading process of others
--	--

Evidence of Category as documented in Reader's Responses	Examples W = Written Responses, O = Oral Responses
Connections Personal Assumptions/ Beliefs	Es ist eine Geschichte über die Verschlechterung einer Beziehung zwischen zwei Personen: der Hauptfigur und eine Person, die Jenö heißt. (W) Ich sage voraus, daß ein Streit zwischen der Hauptfigur und Jenö passieren wird.
Personal Connections	Der Titel erinnert mich an Leute, die in der Vergangenheit meine Freunde waren aber sind nicht mehr. (W) Zigeuner sind benachteiligte Menschen, die aus Ost Europa kommen, normalerweise nicht viel Geld haben und sind Nomaden. Zigeuner haben große Familien. Ich kenne keine Zigeuner, deswegen kann ich nicht sagen, was sie glauben. (W) Images of the Jewish Ghetto come to mind when the author talked about where Jenö lived. Obwohl Jenö in einem Wohnwagen wohnte, konnte ich immer noch Vorstellungen von Dreck und schlechte Lebensbedingungen des Ghettos sehen. (W) Der Text erinnert mich an die Geschichte von Anne Frank, und wie ihre Familie von den Nazis weggenommen wurde und zur [ins] Konzentrationslage gebracht [wurde]. (W) It reminds me the most of the italian movie "Life is Beautiful" because there's a couple in it that gets seperated [separated] because the man is Jewish and the woman is not, so he and his son are sent to a concentration camp. I also made me think about "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" which also has Gypsies. (W) ...die Themen, [über] die ich nicht so viel...Hintergrundinformationen...vorher gelernt habe, zum Beispiel...über Zeugener [Zigeuner] hab...wußte ich fast gar nichts... (O)

Involvement Personal Involvement Personal Involvement with Story	Der Titel erinnert mich an Leute, die in der Vergangenheit meine Freunde waren aber sind nicht mehr. Ich fühle mich traurig und einsam, wenn ich daran denke. (W) [Anne Frank's] Gesichte ist auch traurig, weil fast ihre ganze Familie ermordet wurde. Diese Gedanke ist fürchterlich. (W) I felt involved to the point where the only experience I've ever had with this type of situation is moving so many times during my childhood. (W) It sounds kind of mystical, where Jenö lives (The atmosphere). (W) Meine erste Reaktion zum Text war ein traueriges Gefühl, weil die SS Jenö und seine Familie weggenommen [<i>verschleppt</i>] hat. (W) ...having to leave friends behind is a horrible thing. (W) I do think it was a good text because it is so rare to hear or read about gypsies as victims of ethnic cleansing [<i>cleansing</i>] (W)
Evaluation Evaluation of Story Character's Personality Evaluation of Story Character's Actions	Jenö war ein guter Freund von dem Hauptfigur. (W) Jenö war ein komischer Typ, weil er nach Kokelfeuer und Pferdestall roch, und auch weil er Tabak rauchte, obwohl er nur [<i>erst</i>] acht Jahre alt war. (W)
Interpretation Personal Interpretation	I don't know what else could be more important besides the fact that Jenö and his family were unjustly taken away. I think that it's one of the author's underlying themes. (W) ...the meaning for me changed after we had discussed...like, right after I read...I was like, oohh, you know, but... our discussions pointed me to, like, the actual meaning, ...a lot better, I guess.

Relevance of Personal Interpretation for Reader	(O) His dad [the story character's fathers] is more open-minded than mine. (W)
Reflection Reflection on the personal reading process	When [student's name] mentioned the idea of his [Jenö's] father taking the train, ...that's when I realized that my stereotypes for gypsies were being reinforced and that maybe I should think more critically about the story. (W) [The most difficult thing for me in reading the text was] Probably figuring out if he really (Jenö I mean) stole that stuff, because it's not explicitly stated in the text. (W) Now that [student's name] brought up that point of the whole stealing situation, I can't stop thinking about it! (W)
Reflection on the reading process of others	

Evidence of Category as documented in Reader's Responses	Examples
	W = Written Responses, O = Oral Responses A story about ex friends who after long friendship disagreed and split their friendship. (W) It [<i>the story</i>] will probably be negative and depressing. (W) ... a sad story with a depressive end. It may include a tragedy or a disagreement of some kind. When I saw the "war" word I immediately thought [<i>thought</i>] about my ex friend. (W) Ich dachte das these Bild [of an Eastern-European family] viel mit meine eigene Kultur eigenschaften hat. Es ist wahrscheinlich eine große familie in einem Dorf. Sie alle leben zusammen und arbeiten sehr viel um ihre Leben zu verbessern. Sie haben keine spezifische Berufe aber sie können viele dinge machen und brauchen nicht viel [<i>Anleitung</i>] es zu erledigen. (W) The first memories were back from Europe since there are many gypsies in that part of world. I briefly thought about a Gypsi that I tried to help with food and clothing back in [name of country]....I constantly pictured a small village (Neighborhood) in Chicago that actually reminded me of a gypsi life. (W) ...ich wußte nicht, daß es ein Zigeuner war...danach wir es diskutiert haben, ich wußte viel mehr...über den Text. (O) ...[ich dachte, daß Jenö] ein Flüchtlinge, ein Ausländer, oder nur...ein Mensch...aus irgendwelche Land...das [<i>der</i>] keine Geld hatte und mußte auf die Straße leben. (O)
Connections Personal Assumptions/ Beliefs	
Personal Connections	

Involvement Personal Involvement Personal Involvement with Story	I saw my personal experiences in which I was taken away from my friends by soldiers and was not given a choice. I felt the sadness and emptiness while reading the text. (W) ... it actually turned out to be a sad story but with some very positive developments. It was a nice gesture from the family to accept a gypsy [gypsy] as a friend, but eventually he had to go away. (W) I initially felt good when Jenö got accepted as a friend and given some privileges [privileges] that he before may not [have] had. Later at the end I was sad because Jenö had to leave... (W)
Evaluation Evaluation of Story Character's Personality Evaluation of Story Character's Actions	Just wants to be a bad boy (Jenö) (W) (no entries)
Interpretation Personal Interpretation Relevance of Personal Interpretation for Reader	Due to the political situation, Jenö had to go somewhere else. (W) All humans are created equal! Are We? (W) I think...that culture gives us the norms that we are supposed to follow. (W) Overall I liked the text and I actually related [related] it to my own experience. (W) Well, it made me think...realize...that we are all different, and that there are people actually trying to raise the concern about inequalities...about...being different, or...such things. (O)

Reflection Reflection on the personal reading process Reflection on the reading process of others	I had to read couple of times in order to better understand it [the text]... (W) ... I believe the text is like a puzzle that has to be put together. (W) ---
---	---

¹ Participant's written and oral responses are cited here in the original. No changes, modifications or corrections have been made to the language. For misspelled words and/or incorrectly used grammatical features that could potentially compromise the understanding of the study participant's responses in context the author has occasionally included the correct spelling of words and/or the correct use of grammatical features in brackets [].

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Adams, S. J. (1982). Scripts and the recognition of unfamiliar vocabulary: Enhancing second language reading skills. *Modern Language Journal*, 66, 155-159.
- Adams, M. J., & Collins, A. (1979). A schema theoretic view of reading. In R. O. Freedle (Ed.), *New directions in discourse processing* (pp. 1-22). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1998). Observational techniques. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 79-109). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Afflerbach, P. (1990). The influence of prior knowledge and text genre on reader's prediction strategies. *Journal of Reading Behavior XXII*(2), 131-148.
- Aichinger, I. (1958). Das Fenster-Theater. In I. Aichinger, *Der Gefesselte* (pp. 61-63). Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Verlag.
- Alderson, J. C., & Urquhart, A. H. (Eds.). (1984). *Reading in a foreign language*. New York: Longman.
- Ali, S. (1994). The reader-response approach: An alternative for teaching literature in a second language. *Journal of Reading*, 37, 288-296.
- Anderson, R. C. (1984/1994). Role of the reader's schema in comprehension, learning and memory." (469-482). In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). (pp. 469-482). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.
- Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1988). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In P. L. Carell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 37-55). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arcuri, G. (1990). Pre-reading and pre-writing activities to prepare and motivate foreign language students to read short stories. *Hispania*, 73(1), 262-266.
- Arens, C. (2002). Canons, Generations, Bridges: Rethinking Our Gardens. *ADFL Bulletin*, 34(1), 21-25.
- Asselin, M. (2000). Reader response in literature and reading instruction. *Teacher Librarian*, 27(4), 62-63.

- Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1998). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 110-136). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Attinasi, J. & Friedrich, P. (1995). Dialogic breakthrough: Catalysis and synthesis in life-changing dialogue. In D. Tedlock & B. Manheim (Eds.), *The dialogic emergence of culture* (pp. 33-53). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. W. McGee, Trans., C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Eds.). Austin: University of Texas Press. (Original work published 1979)
- Barnes-Karol, G. (2000). Revising a Spanish novel class in the light of Standards for Foreign Language Learning. *ADFL Bulletin*, 31(2), 44-48.
- Barnes-Karol, G. (2003). Teaching literature to the undergraduate foreign language major: A framework for a methods course. *ADFL Bulletin*, 34(2), 20-27.
- Barnett, M. A. (1989). *More than meets the eye. Foreign language reading: Theory and practice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Barnett, M. A. (1991). Language and literature: False dichotomies, real allies. *ADFL Bulletin*, 22(3), 7-11.
- Barry, S., & Lazarte, A. (1995). Embedded clause effects on recall: Does high prior knowledge of context domain overcome syntactic complexity in students of Spanish? *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 491-504.
- Barthes, Roland (1974). *S/Z*. (R. Miller, Trans.). New York: Hill & Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977). The death of the author. In S. Heath (Trans.). (Ed.), *Image-Music-Text*. New York: Hill & Wang.
- Bartlett, F.C. (1932). *Remembering*. London: Cambridge University.
- Beach, R. (1993). *A teacher's introduction to reader-response theories*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Beach, R. (1998). Constructing real and text worlds in responding to literature. *Theory into Practice*, 37(3), 176-185.
- Beach, R., & Appleman, D. (1984). Reading strategies for expository and literary text types. In A. C. Purves & O. S. Niles (Eds.), *Becoming readers in a complex society* (pp. 115-143). Chicago: NSSE.

- Benton, M. (1992). Possible worlds and narrative voices. In J. Many & C. Cox (Eds.), *Reader stance and literary understanding: Exploring the theories, research, and practice*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Benton, M., Teasy, J., Bell, R. & Hurst, K. (1988). *Young readers responding to poems*. London: Routledge.
- Berman, R. (1996). Reform and continuity: Graduate education toward a foreign language literacy. *ADFL Bulletin*, 27(3), 40-46.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1986a). Proficient texts or proficient readers? *ADFL Bulletin*, 18(1), 25-28.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1986b). Reading in the foreign language. In B. H. Wing & H. S. Lepke (Eds.), *Listening, reading, writing: Analysis and application*. Reports of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (pp. 93-115). Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1990a). Knowledge-based inferencing in second language comprehension. *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics* 1990, 271-284.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1990b). A model of L2 text construction: The recall of literary texts by learners of German. In A. Labarca & L. Bailey (Eds.), *Issues in L2: Theory as practice/ practice as theory* (pp. 21-45). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1991a). A psycholinguistic perspective on second language literacy. *AILA Review*, 8, 31-44.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1991b). *Reading development in a second language: Theoretical, empirical, and classroom perspectives*. New Jersey: Ablex.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1991c). Developments in second language literary research: Retrospective and prospective views for the classroom. In B. Freed (Ed.), *Foreign language acquisition research in the classroom* (pp. 221-251). Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (1995). Teaching literature or teaching students. *ADFL Bulletin*, 26(2), 5-6.
- Bernhardt, E. B. (2002). Research into the teaching of literature in a second language: What it says and how to communicate it to graduate students. In V.M. Scott & H. Tucker (Eds.), *SLA and the literature classroom: Fostering dialogues* (pp. 195-210). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

- Bernhardt, E. B. (2003). Challenges to reading research from a multilingual world. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(1), 104-117.
- Bernhardt, E. B. & Kamil, M. L. (1995). Interpreting relationships between L1 and L2 reading: consolidating the linguistic threshold and the linguistic interdependence hypotheses. *Applied Linguistics*, 16(1), 15-34.
- Blake, E. B. (1998). "Critical" reader response in an urban classroom: creating cultural texts to engage diverse readers. *Theory in Practice*, 37(3), 238-243.
- Blake, E. B., & Blake, R. W. (2002). *Literacy and learning. A reference handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clío.
- Block, E. (1986). The comprehension strategies of second language readers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 463-494.
- Block, E. (1992). See how they read: Comprehension monitoring of L1 and L2 readers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26, 319-341.
- Böll, H. (1973). Anekdote zur Senkung der Arbeitsmoral. In H. Böll, *Erzählungen 1950-1970*. Frankfurt/M.: Büchergilde Gutenberg.
- Borchert, W. (1946). Das Brot. In W. Bellmann (Hrsg.). (2003). *Klassische deutsche Kurzgeschichten* (pp. 18-20). Stuttgart: Reclam.
- Boyd, F. B. (2002). Conditions, concessions, and the many tender mercies of learning through multicultural literature. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 42, 58-92.
- Bransford, J. D. (1984/1994). Schema activation and schema acquisition: Comments on Richard C. Anderson's remarks. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). (pp. 483-495). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.
- Brantmeier, C. (2003). Beyond linguistic knowledge: Individual differences in second language reading. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(1), 33-43.
- Brecht, B. (1939/1949). Die unwürdige Greisin. In E. Mittelberg (Hrsg.). (1988). *Klassische und moderne Kurzgeschichten* (6th ed.). (pp. 98-102). Berlin: Cornelsen.
- Bredella, L. (1996). The anthropological and pedagogical significance of aesthetic reading in the foreign language classroom. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 1-29). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

- Bredella, L., & Delanoy, W. (Eds.). (1996). *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Bredella, L. & Delanoy, W. (Hrsg.). (1999). *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht. Einleitung* (pp. 11-31). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Breen, M. P., & Candlin, C. N. (1980). The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 89-112.
- Bretz, M. L. (1990). Reaction: Literature and communicative competence: A springboard for the development of critical thinking and aesthetic appreciation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23(4), 335-338.
- Brisbois, J. E. (1995). Connections between first-and second-language reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 27(4), 565-584.
- Britton, J. (1984). Viewpoints: The distinction between participant and spectator role language in research and practice. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 18, 320-331.
- Brown, C. (1998). L2 reading: An update on relevant L1 research. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31, 191-202.
- Brueggemann, B. J. (1996). Still-Life: Representation and silences. In P. Mortensen & G. E. Kirsch (Eds.), *Ethics and representation in qualitative studies of literacy* (pp. 17-39). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Brumfit, C. J. (1985). *Language and literature teaching: From practice to principle*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Bruner, E. M. (1993). Introduction: The ethnographic self and the personal self. In P. J. Benson (Ed.), *Anthropology and literature* (pp. 1-26). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Byram, M. (1989). *Cultural studies in foreign language education*. Philadelphia, PA: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Byrnes, H. (1998). Constructing curricula in collegiate foreign language departments. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages* (pp. 262-295). New York: Modern Language Association of America.

- Byrnes, H. (1999). Of language learning, literature, and culture: Metaphors we live by. Retrieved April 12, 2003 from [http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/byrnes/Manuscript/Of language learning.htm](http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/byrnes/Manuscript/Of%20language%20learning.htm)
- Byrnes, H. (2000). Meaning and form in classroom-based SLA research: Reflection from a college foreign language perspective. In J. Lee & A. Valdman (Eds.), *Form and meaning: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 125-179). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Byrnes, H., & Kord, S. (2002). Developing literacy and literacy competence: Challenges for foreign language department. In V. M. Scott & H. Tucker (Eds.), *SLA and the literature classroom: Fostering dialogues* (pp. 35-74). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Campbell, A. J. (1981). Language background and comprehension. *Reading Teacher*, 35, 10-14.
- Campbell, N. (1996). Narration and narrators: How learners perceive speakers in narrative texts. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 108-124). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Carrell, P. L. (1983a). Some issues in studying the role of schemata, or background knowledge, in second language comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 1(2), 81-92.
- Carrell, P. L. (1983b). Three components of background knowledge in reading comprehension. *Language Learning*, 33(2), 183-207.
- Carrell, P. L. (1984). Evidence of a formal schema in foreign language comprehension. *Language Learning*, 34, 87-112.
- Carrell, P. L. (1987). Content and formal schemata in ESL reading. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(3), 461-481.
- Carrell, P. L. (1988a). Interactive text processing: Implications for ESL/second language reading classrooms. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 239-259). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carrell, P. L. (1988b). Text-boundedness and schema inference. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 101-113). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carrell, P. L., & Eisterhold, J. C. (1983). Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(4), 553-573.

- Carrell, P. L., & Eisterhold, J. C. (1988). Schema theory and ESL writing. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 73-92). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carrell, P. L., & Wise, T. E. (1998). The relationship between prior knowledge and topic interest in second language reading. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20, 285-309.
- Carrell, P. L., Devine, J., & Eskey, D. E. (Eds.). (1988). *Interactive approaches to second language reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cavalcanti, M. C. (1987). Investigating FL reading performance through pause protocols. In C. Faerch & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Introspection in second language research* (pp. 230-250). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Cazden, C., John, V. P., & Hymes, D. (Eds.). (1972). *Functions of language in the classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Chapelle, C. A., & Duff, P. A. (Eds.). (2003). Some guidelines for conducting quantitative and qualitative research in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(1), 157-178.
- Chen, H.-C., & Graves, M. F. (1995). Effects of previewing and providing background knowledge on Taiwanese college students' comprehension of American short stories. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(4), 663-686.
- Christ, H. (1996). Fremdverstehen und interkulturelles Lernen. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht [Online]*, 1(3), 22 pp. Retrieved April 15, 2003, from http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_ejournal/jg_01_3/beitrag/christ.htm
- Christ, H. (1999). Mehrsprachigkeit und multikulturelle Perspektiven. Nachdenken über eine dritte Sprache und eine dritte Kultur. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Hrsg.), *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht* (pp. 290-311). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Coady, J. (1979). A psycholinguistic model of the ESL reader. In R. Mackey, B. Barkman, & R. Jordan (Eds.), *Reading in a second language* (pp. 5-12). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Connor, U. (1984). Recall of text: Differences between first and second language readers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 18, 239-255.

- Cooper, M. (1984). Linguistic competence of practiced and unpracticed non-native readers of English. In J. C. Alderson & A. H. Urquhart (Eds.), *Reading in a foreign language* (pp. 122-135). New York: Longman.
- Courtland, M. C., French, M. E., Owston, S., & and Stead, V. (1998). Literary text, the reader, and the power of shared response. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 23(3), 329-341.
- Cox, C., & Zarillo, J. (1990, April). *Teaching with literature in the elementary school: A qualitative study applying Rosenblatt's transactional theory*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston.
- Curtain, H., & Pesola, C. A. (1994). *Languages and children: Making the match* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Dautermann, J. (1996). Social and institutional power relationships in studies of workplace writing. In P. Mortensen & G. E. Kirsch (Eds.), *Ethics and representation in qualitative studies of literacy* (pp. 241-259). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Davey, B. (1983). Think aloud: Modeling the cognitive processes of reading comprehension. *Journal of Reading*, 27, 44-47.
- Davis, J. (1989). The act of reading in the foreign language: Pedagogical implications of Iser's reader-reponse theory. *Modern Language Journal*, 73, 420-428.
- Davis, J. (1992). Reading literature in foreign language: The comprehension/response connection. *French Review*, 65, 359-370.
- Davis, J. N., & Bistodeau, L. (1993). How do L1 and L2 reading differ? Evidence from think aloud protocols. *Modern Language Journal*, 77(4), 459-472.
- Davis, K. A. (1995). Qualitative theory and methods in applied linguistics research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 427-453.
- Day, R.R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deeney, J. J. (1991). Teaching comparative literature to undergraduates: Translation and reader response application. *Tamkang Review: A Quarterly of Comparative Studies between Chinese and Foreign Literatures*, 22(1-4), 125-141
- Delanoy, W. (1996). The complexity of literature teaching in the language classroom: A reflective practitioner's view. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 62-90). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Denzin, N. K. (1998). The art and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 313-344). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Y. S. Lincoln. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dias, P. (1994). Using literature in middle school and secondary classrooms. In M. C. Courtland & T. J. Gambell (Eds.), *Curriculum planning in the language arts K-12: An holistic perspective* (pp. 177-192). North York, ON: Captus.
- Dias, P., & Hayhoe, M. (1988). *Developing response to poetry*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Donnerstag, J. (1996). Improving the expressive competence of foreign-language learners through literary reading. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 144-161). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary theory. An introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Edmonson, W., & House, J. (1998). Interkulturelles Lernen: Ein überflüssiger Begriff. *ZFF*, 9(2), 161-188.
- Elliot, R. (1990). Encouraging reader-response to literature in ESL situations. *ELT Journal*, 44, 191-198.
- Eskey, D. E. (1986). Theoretical foundations. In F. Dubin, D.E. Eskey, & W. Grabe (Eds.), *Teaching second language reading for academic purposes* (pp. 2-23). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Eskey, D. E. (2002). Reading the teaching of L2 reading. *TESOL Journal*, 11(1), 5-9.
- Esplugas, C., & Landwehr, M. (1996). The use of critical thinking skills in literary analysis. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29, 449-461.
- Essif, L. (1998). Teaching literary-dramatic texts as culture in process in the foreign language theater practicum: The strategy of combining texts. *ADFL Bulletin*, 29(3), 24-33.

- Fecteau, M. L. (1999). First-and second language reading comprehension of literary texts. *Modern Language Journal*, 83, 475-493.
- Feldman, D. S. (1990). The role of universal knowledge versus culture-specific knowledge for comprehending texts. In A. Labarca & L. Bailey (Eds.), *Issues in L2: Theory as practice/ practice as theory* (pp. 88-105). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Feldman, M. S. (1995). *Strategies for interpreting qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fine, M. (1998). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 130-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fish, S. (1980a). *Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fish, S. (1980b). Literature in the reader: Affective stylistics. In S. Fish, *Is there a text in this class?* (pp. 21-67). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fish, S. (1981). Why no one's afraid of Wolfgang Iser. *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism*, 11(1), 2-13.
- Flavell, J. H. (1976). Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L. B. Resnick (Ed.), *The nature of intelligence* (pp. 231-235). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive-developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34, 906-911.
- Flavell, J. H. (1981). Cognitive monitoring. In W. P. Dickson (Ed.), *Children's oral communication skills* (pp. 35-60). New York: Academic.
- Fleischer, C. (1995). *Composing teacher-research: A prosaic history*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Flick, U. (2002). *An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Floyd, P., & P. L. Carrell. (1987). Effects on ESL reading of teaching cultural content schemata. *Language Learning*, 37, 89-108.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Frantzen, D. (2002). Rethinking foreign language literature: Towards an integration of literature and language at all levels. In V.M. Scott & H. Tucker (Eds.), *SLA and the literature classroom: Fostering dialogues* (pp. 109-130). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Freund, E. (1987). *The return of the reader. Reader-response criticism*. London: Methuen.
- Friedman, E. H. (1992). Effective stylistics; or the pressure of the text: Foreign literature and the undergraduate. *ADFL Bulletin*, 23(3), 18-22.
- Friedrich, I., & Heinrich, A. (Hrsg.). (1998). *Grimms Märchen*. Limassol, Cyprus: Lechner Publishing Ltd.
- Fry, D. (1985). *Children talk about books: Seeing themselves as readers*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Fühmann, F. (1962). Das Judenauto. In E. Mittelberg (Hrsg.). (1988). *Klassische und moderne Kurzgeschichten* (6th ed.). (pp. 80-86). Berlin: Cornelsen.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York: The Seabury Press.
- Gamel, M.-K. (1984). Language and literature: Allies not enemies. *ADFL Bulletin*, 15(3), 8-11.
- Garner, R. (1994). Metacognition and executive control. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). (pp. 715-732). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.
- Gascoigne, C. (2002a). Documenting the initial second language experience: The readers speak. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(5), 554-560.
- Gascoigne, C. (2002b). Reviewing reading: Recommendations versus reality. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(3), 343-348.
- Gee, J. P. (1998). What is literacy? In V. Zamel & R. Spack (Eds.), *Negotiating academic literacies: Teaching and learning across languages and cultures* (pp. 51-59). Mahwah: Erlbaum.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Godev, C. B., Martinez-Gibson, E. A., & Toris, C. M. C. (2002). Foreign language reading comprehension test: L1 versus L2 in open-ended questions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(2), 202-212.

- Goethe, J. W. (1774). *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. Ditzingen: Reclam, 2002.
- Goodman, K. S. (1968). *The psycholinguistic nature of the reading process*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Gough, P. B. (1972). One second of reading. In J. F. Kavanagh & I. G. Mattingley (Eds.), *Language by ear and by eye* (pp. 331-358). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Graesser, A. C., Haberlandt, K., & Koizumi, D. (1987). How is reading time influenced by knowledge-based inferences and world knowledge? In B. K. Britton & S. M. Glynn (Eds.), *Executive control processes in reading* (pp. 217-251). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Grisham, D. L. (2001). Developing pre-service teacher's perspective on reader response. *Reading Horizons*, 41(4), 211-238.
- Grittner, F. M. (1990). Bandwagons revisited: A perspective on movements in foreign language. In D. W. Birckbichler (Ed.), *New perspectives and new directions in foreign language education* (pp. 9-41). Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Gruber, M. (1984). Der Mongo. In M. Gruber, *Antwort auf keine Frage. Liebesgeschichte für Jugendliche*. Wien: Jugend und Volk Verlag.
- Hakuta, K. (1976). A case study of a Japanese child learning English. *Language Learning*, 26, 321-351.
- Hakuta, K. (1986). *Mirror of language: The debate on bilingualism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Explorations in the functions of language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hamilton, C. (2002). From Iser to Turner and beyond: Reception theory meets cognitive criticism. *Style*, 36(4), 640-658.
- Hammadou, J. A. (1991). The effects of analogy on French reading comprehension. *French Review*, 64, 239-252.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London: Tavistock.
- Hancock, M. R. (1993). Exploring the meaning-making process through the content of literature response journals. A case study investigation. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 27(4), 335-368.

- Harris, M. (2002). Writing center administration: Making local, institutional knowledge in our writing centers. In P. Gillespie, A. Gillam, L. F. Brown, & B. Stay (Eds.), *Writing center research: Extending the conversation* (pp. 75-89). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Harten, R. (1978). Reader's responses to literature in translation: Effects of cultural background on American readers of contemporary Hebrew literature. (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1978). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 38, 7308A.
- Harste, N. (1985). Portrait of a new paradigm: Reading comprehension research. In A. Crismore (Ed.), *Landscapes: A state-of-the-art assessment of reading comprehension research, 1974-1984* (pp. 12-24). Bloomington, IN: Center for Reading and Language Studies, University of Indiana.
- Hatch, E. (Ed.). (1978). *Second language acquisition: A book of readings*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Hauptmann, P. C. (2000). Some hypotheses on the nature of difficulty and ease in second language reading: An application of schema theory. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(6), 622-631.
- Hirvela, A. (1996). Reader response theory and ELT. *ELT Journal*, 50, 127-134.
- Heap, J. (1991). A situated perspective on what counts as reading. In C. D. Baker & A. Luke (Eds.), *Towards a critical sociology of reading pedagogy* (pp. 103-139). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Benjamins.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Blackwell. (Original work published 1927.)
- Henning, S. D. (1993). The integration of language, literature, and culture: Goals and curricular design. *ADFL Bulletin*, 24(2), 51-55.
- Hewitt, N. M. (1990). Reading, cognitive style, and culture: A look at some relationships in second-language acquisition. In A. Labarca & L. Bailey (Eds.), *Issues in L2: Theory as practice/ practice as theory* (pp. 62-87). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Hoffmann, E. F., & James, D. (1986). Toward the integration of language and literature teaching at all levels of the college curriculum. *ADFL Bulletin*, 18(1), 29-33.
- Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Holub, R. C. (1984). *Reception theory. A critical introduction*. London and New York: Methuen.
- Hopper, R. (1991). Ethnography and conversation analysis after "Talking Culture". *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 24, 161-170.
- Hosenfeld, C. (1977). A preliminary investigation of the reading strategies of successful and unsuccessful second language learners. *System*, 5, 11-123.
- Hosenfeld, C., Arnold, V., Kirchofer, J., Laciura, J., & Wilson, L. (1981). Second language reading: A curricular sequence for teaching reading strategies. *Foreign Language Annals*, 14, 415-422.
- Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1998). Data management and analysis methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 179-210). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hudelson, S. (1989). A tale of two children: Individual differences in ESL children's writing. In D.M. Johnson & D. H. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in writing: Empowering ESL students* (pp. 84-99). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Hudson, T. (1982). The effects of induced schemata on the 'short circuit' in L2 reading: Non-decoding factors in L2 reading performance. *Language Learning*, 32, 1-32.
- Hymes, D. H. (1972). Introduction. In C. Cazden, V.P. John, & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Functions of language in the classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ibsen, E. B. (1990). The double role of fiction in foreign language learning: Towards a creative methodology. *English Teaching Forum*, 28(3), 2-9.
- Iser, W. (1974). *The implied reader: Patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Iser, Wolfgang (1978). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Iser, W. (1979). The current situation of literary theory: Key concepts and the imaginary. *New Literary History*, 11, 1-20.
- Iser, W. (1989). Towards a literary anthropology. In R. Cohen (Ed.), *The future of literary theory* (pp. 208-228). New York: Routledge.
- Iser, W. (2000). Do I write for an audience? *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 115(3), 310-314.

- James, H. (1986). The figure in the carpet. In F. Kermode (Ed.), *The figure in the carpet and other stories*. London: Penguin. (First published in Cosmopolis, January 1896)
- Janesick, V. J. (1998). The dance of qualitative research design: Methaphor, methodolatry, and meaning. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 35-55). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Janesick, V. J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design: Minuets, improvisations, and crystallization. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 379-399). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Janssen, T. (1996). Asking for trouble. Teacher questions and assignments in the literature classroom. *SPIEL*, 15(8), 8-23.
- Jauss, H.-R. (1974/1982). *Towards an aesthetic of reception*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jauss, H.-R. (1975). Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft. In R. Warning (Ed.), *Rezeptionsästhetik* (pp. 126-162). München: Fink.
- Johnson, D. M. (1992). *Approaches to research in second language learning*. New York: Longman.
- Johnson, D. M. (1993). Classroom-oriented research in second-language learning. In A. Omaggio Hadley (Ed.), *Research in language learning: Principles, processes, and prospects* (pp. 1-23). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Johnson, P. (1981a). Effects of comprehension on building background knowledge. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16, 503-516.
- Johnson, P. (1981b). Effects of reading comprehension on language complexity and cultural background of text. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 169-181.
- Johnston, P. H. (1983). *Reading comprehension assessment: A cognitive basis*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Jones, M. O. (1989). In search of meaning: Using qualitative methods in research and application. In M. O. Jones, M. D. Moore, & R. C. Snyder, *Inside organizations: Understanding the human dimension* (pp. 31-47). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kadish, D. Y. (1999). Teaching literature in the foreign language classroom: Where have we been and where do we go now? In P. Franklin, D. Laurence & E. B.

- Welles (Eds.), *Preparing a nation's teachers* (pp. 398-411). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Kadish, D. Y. (2000). The challenge we face: Applying national standards to the college foreign language curriculum. *ADFL Bulletin*, 31(2), 49-52.
- Kamil, M. L. (1986). Reading in the native language. In B. H. Wing & H. S. Lepke (Eds.), *Listening, reading, writing: Analysis and application* (pp. 71-91). Reports of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference.
- Karolides, N.J. (Ed.). (1997). *Reader response in elementary classrooms: Quest and discovery*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kauffmann, R. A. (1996). Writing to read and reading to write: Teaching literature in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29, 396-402.
- Keating, E., & Sherzer, J. (2003). Ethnography of speaking. In W. J. Frawley (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics: Vol. 2* (2nd ed.). (pp. 1-3). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keller, B. (1997). Rereading Flaubert: Toward a dialogue between first- and second language literature teaching practices. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 112(1), 56-68.
- Kempf, F. R. (1995). The dialectic of education: Foreign language, culture, and literature. *ADFL Bulletin*, 27(1), 38-46.
- Kern, R. (1994). The role of mental translation in second language reading. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16(4), 441-461.
- Kern, R. (2000). *Literacy and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kern, R. (2002). Reconciling the language-literature split through literacy. *ADFL Bulletin* 33(3), 20-24.
- Kharbutli, M., & Shakir, A. (1995). The impact of culture on reading in a foreign language and literature. *Interface: Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 79-89.
- Kintsch, W. & Van Dijk, T.A. (1978). Toward a model of text comprehension and production. *Psychological Review*, 85(5), 363-394.
- Klein, R. B. (1987). Advanced literary study in the smaller department: Leaving the past and moving toward an uncertain future. *ADFL Bulletin*, 18(2), 9-12.
- Kornienko, E. (2000). Foreign text perception and comprehension. *IRAL*, 38(3), 331-343.

- Kramer, J. (1999). Bedeutung der Kulturwissenschaft für das Englischlehren- und -lernen. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Hrsg.), *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht* (pp. 46-64). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Kramsch, C. (1983). Interaction in the classroom: Learning to negotiate roles and meanings. *Unterrichtspraxis*, 16(2), 175-190.
- Kramsch, C. (1985). Literary texts in the classroom: A discourse. *Modern Language Journal*, 69(3), 356-366.
- Kramsch, C. (1991a). Culture in language learning: A view from the United States. In K. de Bot, R. B. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 217-240). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Kramsch, C. (1991b). The order of discourse in language teaching. In B. Freed (Ed.), *Foreign language acquisition research in the classroom* (pp. 191-204). Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company.
- Kramsch, C. (1992). The dialogic emergence of culture in the language classroom. *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*, pp. 465-488.
- Kramsch, C. (1993a). Foreign languages for a global age. *ADFL Bulletin*, 25(1), 5-12.
- Kramsch, C. (1993b). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (1996a). Wem gehört die deutsche Sprache? *Unterrichtspraxis*, 29(1), 1-11.
- Kramsch, C. (1996b). Stylistic choice and cultural awareness. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 162-184). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Kramsch, C. (1996c). The cultural component of language teaching. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht [Online]*, 1(2), 13 pp. Retrieved April 16, 2003, from http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_ejournal/jg_01_2/beitrag/kramsch2.htm
- Kramsch, C. (1998a). Constructing second language acquisition research in foreign language departments. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages: Perspectives in research and scholarship* (pp. 23-28). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Kramsch, C. (1998b). The privilege of the intercultural speaker. In M. Byram & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Language learning in intercultural perspective: Approaches*

- through drama and ethnography* (pp. 16-31). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2002). Language and culture: A social semiotic perspective. *ADFL Bulletin*, 33(2), 8-15.
- Kramsch, C. (Ed.). (1995). *Redefining the boundaries of language study*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Kramsch, C. & von Hoene, L. (2001). Cross-cultural excursions: Foreign language study and feminist discourses of travel. In A. Pavlenko, A. Blackledge, I. Piller, & M. Teutsch-Dwyer (Eds.), *Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender* (pp. 283-306). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kramsch, C., & Kramsch, O. (2000). The avatars of literature in language study. *Modern Language Journal*, 84(4), 553-573.
- Kramsch, C., & Nolden, T. (1994). Redefining literacy in a foreign language. *Unterrichtspraxis*, 27(1), 28-35.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman.
- Krashen, S. D. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Krueger, M., & Ryan, F. (1993). *Language and content: Discipline-and content based approaches to language study*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.
- Krumm, H.-J. (1994). Interkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. In K.-R. Bausch, H. Christ, & H.-J. Krumm (Hrsg.), *Interkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht* (pp. 116-127). Tübingen: Francke.
- Krumm, H.-J. (1995). Interkulturelles Lernen und interkulturelle Kommunikation". In K.-R. Bausch, H. Christ, & H.-J. Krumm (Hrsg.), *Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht* (pp. 156-161). Tübingen: Francke.
- Kunze, R. (1978). Element. In B.M. Turneure. (1996). *Der Treffende Ausdruck: Texte, Themen, Übungen* (2nd ed.). (pp. 209-213). New York: Norton.
- Kurtz, G. (1997). "Interkulturell" – Ein Schlagwort, betrachtet am 01.04.2021. Der Interkulturalitätsbegriff – Geschichte und Entwicklung bis zu seiner Renaissance im Interklassenansatz der WDSE/V. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht [Online]*, 2(1), 6 pp. Retrieved April 16, 2002, from http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_ejournal/jg_02_1/beitrag/kurtz3.htm

- Kusiak, M. (2001). The effect of metacognitive strategy training on reading comprehension and metacognitive knowledge. *EUROSLA Yearbook: Annual Conference of the European Second Language Association 1*, 255-74
- LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading. *Cognitive Psychology*, 6, 293-323.
- Lally, C. (1998). The application of first language reading models to second language study: A recent historical perspective. *Reading Horizons*, 38, 267-277.
- Lange, D. L. (1999). Planning for and using the national culture standards. In J. K. Phillips & R. M. Terry (Eds.), *Foreign language standards: Linking research, theories and practices* (pp. 57-135). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Larson-Freeman, D., & Long, M. H. (1991). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. London: Longman.
- Lazar, G. (1996). Literature and language teaching: Exploring literary texts with the language learner. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(4), 773-776.
- Lazaraton, A. (1995). Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A progress report. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 455-472.
- Lazaraton, A. (2003). Evaluative criteria for qualitative research in applied linguistics: Whose criteria and whose research? *Modern Language Journal*, 87(1), 1-12.
- Lee, J. (1986a). Background knowledge and L2 reading. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 350-354.
- Lee, J. (1986b). On the use of the recall task to measure L2 reading comprehension. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 8, 83-93.
- Lee, J. (1997). Non-native reading research and theory. In K. Bardovi-Harlig & B. Hartford (Eds.), *Beyond methods: Components of second language teacher education* (pp. 152-171). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lee, J., & Musumeci, D. (1988). On hierarchies of reading skills and text types. *Modern Language Journal*, 72, 173-187.
- Lee, J., & Van Patten, B. (1995). *Making communicative language teaching happen*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Legutke, M. K. (1996). "Welcome to the Holden Show...": Learner texts and the teaching of literature in the EFL classroom. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.),

Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom (pp. 91-107).
Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

- Lehmann, O. (Producer), & Harlan, V. (Writer/Director). (1940). *Jud Süß* [Motion picture]. (Available from Terra Film, Lienfeldergasse 39, A – 1160 Vienna)
- Levine, M., & Haus, G. (1985). The effect of background knowledge on the reading comprehension of second language learners. *Foreign Language Annals* 18, 391-397.
- Lessing, G. E. (1779) *Nathan der Weise*. Stuttgart: Reclam Universal-Bibliothek Nr. 3[2], 1990.
- Liaw, M.-L. (2001). Exploring literary responses in an EFL classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(1), 35-45.
- Long, M. (1991). A feeling for language: The multiple values of teaching literature. In C. J. Brumfit & R. A. Cater (Eds.), *Literature and language teaching* (pp.150-166). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lyman-Hagar, M. A., & Burnett, J. (1999). Meeting the needs of all learners: Case studies in computer-based foreign language reading. In J. K. Phillips & R. M. Terry (Eds.), *Foreign language standards: Linking research, theories and practices* (pp. 219-239). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Mailloux, S. (1981). How to be persuasive in literary theory: The case of Wolfgang Iser. *Centrum: Working Papers of the Minnesota Center for Advanced Studies in Language* 1(1), 65-73.
- Mailloux, S. (1982). *Interpretive conventions: The reader in the study of American fiction*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Many, J. E., Wiseman, D. L., & Altieri, J. L. (1996). Exploring the influences of literature approaches on children's stance when responding and their response complexity. *Reading Psychology: An International Quarterly*, 17(1), 1-41.
- Martinez-Lage, A. (1998). Benefits of keeping a reading journal in the development of second language reading ability. *Dimension*, 65-79.
- Mathewson, G. C. (1994). Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 1131-1161). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Maxim, H. H. (2000). Integrating language learning and cultural inquiry in the beginning foreign language classroom. *ADFL Bulletin*, 32(1), 12-17.

- McCarthy, J. A. (1998). W(h)ither literature? Reaping the fruit of language study before it's too late. *ADFL Bulletin*, 29(2), 10-17.
- Mead, R. G. (1980). On teaching literature in today's world. *Hispania*, 63, 536-539.
- Menke, D., & Pressley, M. (1994) Elaborative interrogation: Using "why" questions to enhance the learning from text. *Journal of Reading*, 37(2), 642-645.
- Miall, D. S., & Kuiken, K. (1995). Aspects of literary response: A new questionnaire. In G. Rusch (Ed.), *Empirical approaches to literature* (pp. 359-367). *Proceedings of the Fourth Biannual Conference of the International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature-IGEL*, Budapest, August 1994. Siegen: LUMIS-Publications.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Mittman, E. (1999). In search of a coherent curriculum: Integrating the third-year foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 32, 480-493.
- Mohammed, M. A. H., & Swales, J. M. (1984). Factors affecting the succesful reading of technical instructions. *Reading in a foreign language*, 2, 206-217.
- Morson, G. S. (Ed.). (1986). *Bakhtin: Essays and dialogues on his work*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mueller, M. (1991). Cultural literacy and foreign language pedagogy. *ADFL Bulletin*, 22(2), 19-24.
- Murtagh, L. (1989). Reading in a second or foreign language: Models, processes, and pedagogy. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, 2(2), 91-105.
- Murti, K. (1996). Teaching literature at the first-year graduate level: The quantum leap from language to literature. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 185-204). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Nance, K. A. (1994). Developing students' sense of siterature in the introductory foreign language literature course. *ADFL Bulletin*, 25(2), 23-29.
- Nance, K. A. (2002). Authentic and surprising news of themselves: Engaging students' preexisting competencies in the introductory literature course. *ADFL Bulletin*, 34(1), 30-34.

- Nassaji, H. (2002). Schema theory and knowledge-based processes in second language reading comprehension: A need for alternative perspectives. *Language Learning*, 52, 439-481.
- National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (1999). *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press, Inc.
- Newkirk, T. (1992). The narrative roots of the case study. In G. Kirsch & A. Sullivan (Eds.), *Methods and methodology in composition research* (pp. 130-152). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1985). Content familiarity and the perception of textual relationships in second language reading. *RELC Journal*, 16, 43-51.
- Nunan, D. (1991). Methods in second language classroom-oriented research: A critical review. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13(2), 249-274.
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Olson, G. M., Duffy, S. A., & Mack, R. L. (1984). Thinking-out-loud as a method of studying real-time comprehension processes. In D. E. Kieras & Just, M. A. (Eds.), *New methods in reading comprehension processes* (pp. 253-286). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Omaggio Hadley, A. (1979). Pictures and second language comprehension: Do they help? *Foreign Language Annals*, 12, 107-116.
- Omaggio Hadley, A. (1993). *Teaching language in context* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Oster, L. (2001). Using the think-aloud for reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(1), 64-69.
- Palmer, H. E. (1921/1964). *The principles of language-study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Papalia, A. (1987). Interaction of reader and text. In W. M. Rivers (Ed.). *Interactive language teaching* (pp. 70-82). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parry, K. J. (1987). Reading in a second culture. In J. Devine, P. L. Carrell, & D.E. Eskey (Eds.), *Research in reading as a second language* (pp. 59-70). Washington, DC: TESOL.
- Patrikis, P. C. (2002). The return of the text. *ADFL Bulletin*, 34(1), 51-53.

- Pearson, P. D., & Spiro, R. J. (1981). Toward a theory of reading comprehension instruction. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 1, 71-88.
- Peck, J. M. (1992). Toward a cultural hermeneutics of the 'foreign' language classroom: Notes for a critical and political pedagogy. *ADFL Bulletin*, 23(3), 11-17.
- Pennycook, A. (1989). The concept of method, interested knowledge, and the politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23, 589-618.
- Perkins, K., & Angelis, P. J. (1985). Schematic concept formation: Concurrent validity for attained English as a second language reading comprehension? *Language Learning*, 35, 269-283.
- Perrig, W., & W. Kintsch (1985). Propositional and situational representations of text. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 24, 503-518.
- Peyton, J. K., & Seyoum, M. (1989). The effect of teacher strategies on students' interactive writing: The case of dialogue journals. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 23(2), 310-334.
- Pfeiffer, P. C. (2002). Preparing graduate students to teach literature and language in a foreign language department. *ADFL Bulletin*, 34(1), 11-14.
- Phillips, J. K. (1984). Practical implications of recent research in reading. *Foreign Language Annals* 17, 285-296.
- Pritchard, R. (1990). The effects of cultural schemata on reading processing strategies. *Reading Research Quarterly XXV*(4), 273-295.
- Probst, R. E. (1988). Transactional theory in the teaching of literature. *Journal of Reading*, 31(4), 378-381.
- Probst, R. E. (1988b). Dialogue with a text. *English Journal*, 77(1), 32-38.
- Purves, A. C. (1973). *Literature education in ten countries: An empirical study*. International Studies in Evaluation, Vol 2. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Purves, A. C., & Beach, R. (1972). *Literature and the reader: Research in response to literature, reading, interest, and the teaching of literature*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Purves, A. C., Rogers, T., & Soter, A. O. (1995). *How porcupines make love: Readers, texts, cultures in the response-based literature classroom*. New York: Longman.

- Ray, R. E. (1996). Afterword: Ethics and representation in teacher research. In P. Mortensen & G. E. Kirsch (Eds.), *Ethics and representation in qualitative studies of literacy* (pp. 287-300). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Reynolds, R. E., Taylor, M. A., Steffensen, M. S., Shirey, L. S., & Anderson, R. C. (1982). Cultural schemata and reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 3, 353-366.
- Richards, J.C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (2nd ed.). Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Ripley, L. J. (1982). Why do we teach literature? *ADFL Bulletin* 14(2), 17-17.
- Roller, Cathy M. (1990). Commentary: The interaction between knowledge and structure variables in the processing of expository prose. *Reading Research Quarterly* XXV(2), 79-89.
- Roller, C. M., & Matambo, A. R. (1992). Bilingual reader's use of background knowledge in learning from text. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26, 129-141.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1938/1995). *Literature as exploration* (5th ed.). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1982). The literary transaction. Evocation and response. *Theory into Practice*, 21, 268-277.
- Ruiz-Funes, M. (1999). Writing, reading, and reading-to-write in a foreign language: A critical view. *Foreign Language Annals*, 32(4), 514-526.
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1977). Toward an interactive model of reading. In S. Dornic (Ed.), *Attention and performance* (pp. 573-603). New York: Academic Press.
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). Schemata: the building blocks of cognition. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer (Eds.), *Theoretical issues in reading comprehension* (pp. 33-58). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1987). Schemata: The building blocks of cognition. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed.), *Comprehension and teaching research review* (pp. 3-26). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2000). Data management and analysis methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 769-802). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 769-802.

- SAID. (1985). Ein Märchen. In T. Baginski, & J. I. Lontas (1994). *Gesichtspunkte: Aktuelle Lesetexte von gestern, heute und morgen* (pp. 25-28). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Samuels, S. J. (1994). Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading revisited. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). (pp. 816-837). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.
- Schank, R.C., & Abelson, R. P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals, and understanding*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Scher, H. (1976). Teaching foreign literatures in college: Premises, problems, proposals. *Unterrichtspraxis*, 9, 55-61.
- Schnurre, W. (1958). Jenö war mein Freund. In E. Mittelberg (Hrsg.). (1988). *Klassische und moderne Kurzgeschichten* (6th ed.). (pp. 53-56). Berlin: Cornelsen.
- Schönemann, S. (Producer), & Schönemann, S. (Writer/Director). (1991). *Verriegelte Zeit* [Documentary film]. (Available from Zeitgeist Films, 247 Center Street, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10013)
- Schreier, M. (2001). Qualitative methods in studying text reception. In *The psychology and sociology of literature: In honor of Elrud Ibsch* (pp. 35-56). Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature, 0167-8175, 35. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
- Schultz, J. M. (2002). The Gordian knot: Language, literature, and critical thinking. In V.M. Scott & H. Tucker (Eds.), *SLA and the literature classroom: Fostering dialogues* (pp. 3-31). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Schwalm, D. E. (1995). E pluribus unum: An administrator rounds up mavericks and money. In B. L. Stay, C. Murphy, & E. H. Hobson (Eds.), *Writing center perspectives* (pp. 53-62). Emmitsburg, MD: NWCA Press.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scott, V. M., & Huntington, J. A. (2002). Reading culture: Using literature to develop C2 competence. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35, 622-631.
- Scott, V. M., & Tucker, H. (Eds.). (2002). *SLA and the Literature Classroom: Fostering Dialogues*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

- Selden, R. (1985). *A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Selden, R. (1989). *Practicing theory and reading literature. An introduction*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Seletzky, M. (1999). Multiculturalism in the German classroom, 1993-1997. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy, W. (Hrsg.), *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht* (pp. 76-89). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Shanahan, D. (1997). Articulating the relationship between language, literature, and culture: Toward a new agenda for language teaching and research. *Modern Language Journal*, 81, 164-174.
- Shrum, J. L., & Glisan, E. W. (2000). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Shumway, N. (1990) Language teaching in literature departments: Natural partnership or shotgun marriage? *ADFL Bulletin*, 21(3), 40-43.
- Silverman, D. (2000). Analyzing talk and text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 821-834). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 769-802.
- Simensen, A. M. (1987). Adapted readers: How are they adapted? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 4(1), 41-57.
- Simpson, P. (1997). *Language through literature*. London: Routledge.
- Sinah, S. (1995). *The role of culture in children's response to literature*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Sinha, S., & Janisch, C. (1994). A view of reading practices in the intermediate grades: Treatment of discourse types. In R. J. Kreuz & M. S. MacNealy (Eds.), *Empirical approaches to literature and aesthetics*. (pp. 495-512). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2001). If meaning is constructed, what is it made from? Toward a cultural theory of reading. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(1), 133-169.
- Smith, F. (1971/1978). *Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Smith, M. W. (1991). Constructing meaning from text: An analysis of ninth-grade reader responses. *Journal of Educational Research*, 84, 262-271.

- Snow, M. A., & Brinton, D. M.(1997). *The content-based classroom*. New York: Longman.
- Squire, J. (1964). *The responses of adolescents while reading four short stories*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Stake, R. E. (1988). Case study methods in educational research: Seeking sweet water. In R. M. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education* (pp. 253-278). Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.
- Stake, R. E. (2000). Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steffensen, M. S., Joag-Dev, C., & Anderson, R. C. (1979). A cross-cultural perspective on reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly* 15,(1), 84-93.
- Steffensen, M. S., & Joag-Dev, C. (1984). Cultural knowledge and reading. In J. C. Alderson & A. H. Urquardt (Eds.), *Reading in a foreign language* (pp. 48-61). London: Longman.
- Stewart, A. (1998). *The ethnographer's method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sumara, D. J. (1995, June). *Understanding response to reading as a focal practice*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Montreal, Quebec.
- Sumara, D. J. (1998). Fictionalizing acts: reading and the making of identity. *Theory into Practice*, 37(3), 203-210.
- Swaffar, J. (1988). Readers, texts, and second languages: The interactive process. *Modern Language Journal*, 72, 123-149.
- Swaffar, J. (1989). Competing paradigms in adult language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, 73(3), 301-314.
- Swaffar, J. (1998). Major changes: The Standards project and the new foreign language curriculum. *ADFL Bulletin*, 30(1), 1-4.
- Swaffar, J. (1999). The case for foreign languages as a discipline. *ADFL Bulletin*, 30(3), 6-12.
- Swaffar, J. (2002). Reading the patterns of literary works: Strategies and teaching techniques. In V.M. Scott & H. Tucker (Eds.), *SLA and the literature classroom: Fostering dialogues* (pp. 131-154). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

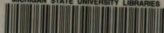
- Swaffar, J., & Bacon, S. (1993). Reading and listening comprehension: Perspectives on research and implications for practice. In A. Omaggio Hadley (Ed.), *Research in language learning: Principles, processes and prospects* (pp. 124-155). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Swaffar, J., Arens, K., & Byrnes, H. (1991). *Reading for meaning. An integrated approach*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Symons, S., & Pressley, M. (1993). Prior knowledge affects text search success and extraction of information. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 28(3), 251-261.
- Taillefer, G., & Pugh, T. (1998). Strategies for professional reading in L1 and L2. *Journal of Research on Reading*, 21(2), 79-95.
- Tedlock, B. (1991). From participant observation to the observation of participation: The emergence of narrative ethnography. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 47, 69-94.
- Tedlock, B. (2000). Ethnography and ethnographic representation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 455-486). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Terry, P. (1994). Things your mentor never told you: Discovering writing lab identity in the institutional environment. *Writing Lab Newsletter*, 18(7), 1-5.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. New York: The Falmer Press.
- Tesser, C. C. (1999). The nonnative speaker and literary studies: Instruction, scholarship, and translation. *ADFL Bulletin*, 31(1), 20-25.
- Tesser, C. C., & Long, D. R. (2000). The teaching of Spanish literature: A necessary partnership between the language and literature sections of traditional departments. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33, 605-613.
- Thomas, B. (1991). *The new historicism and other old-fashioned topics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Thomas, B. (2000). Restaging the reception of Iser's early work; or, sides not taken in discussions of the aesthetic. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, 31(1), 13-43.
- Thury, E. M., & Friedlander, A. (1995). The impact of expertise: The role of experience in reading literary texts. In G. Rusch (Ed.), *Empirical approaches to literature* (pp. 61-71). *Proceedings of the Fourth Biannual Conference of the International*

Society for the Empirical Study of Literature-IGEL, Budapest, August 1994.
Siegen: LUMIS-Publications.

- Tierney, R. J., & Pearson, P. D. (1994). Learning to learn from text: A framework for improving classroom practice. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). (pp. 496-513). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Tompkins, J. P. (Ed). (1980). *Reader-response criticism. From formalism to post-structuralism*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Tompkins, J. P. (1987). *Understanding teenagers reading*. Melbourne, Australia: Methuen.
- Trommler, F. (2002). Learning from Claire Kramsch: An appraisal. *ADFL Bulletin*, 34(1), 54-57.
- Tucker, H. (2000). The place of the personal: The changing face of foreign language literature in a standards-based curriculum. *ADFL Bulletin*, 31(2), 53-58.
- Ulijn, J. M. (1984). Foreign language (FL) reading: Conceptual and syntactic strategies and their consequences for the role of the native language (NL). *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 22, 71-73.
- Ulijn, J. M., & Salager-Meyer, F. (1998). The professional reader and the text: Insights from L2 research. *Journal of Research on Reading*, 21(2), 79-95.
- Urquhart, A.H. (1984). The effect of rhetorical ordering on readability. In J. C. Alderson & A. H. Urquhart (Eds.), *Reading in a foreign language* (pp. 160-180). New York: Longman.
- Van Dijk, T. A., & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of discourse comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.
- Vidich A. J., & Lyman, S. M. (2000). Qualitative methods: Their history in sociology and anthropology. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 23-59). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wade, S. (1990). Using think alouds to assess comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 44, 442-451.
- Weber, H. (1996). Gardeners in the DaF classroom: Poems and stories in intercultural learning. In L. Bredella & W. Delanoy (Eds.), *Challenges of literary texts in the foreign language classroom* (pp. 233-247). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

- Weber, H. (2002). *Vorschläge 1: Literarische Texte für den Unterricht Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (5th ed.). Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes.
- Werderich, D. E. (2002). Individualized responses: Using journal letters as a vehicle for differentiated instruction. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 45(8), 746-754.
- West, M. (1926/1955). Learning to read a foreign language. In M. West, *Learning to read a foreign language and other essays on language-teaching* (2nd ed.). (pp. 1-46). London: Longmans.
- Wohmann, G. (1978). Ein netter Kerl. In G. Wohmann (1980). *Vor der Hochzeit: Erzählungen*. Reinbeck: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1990). On seeking and rejecting: Validity in qualitative research. In W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate* (pp. 121-152). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wolfreys, J., Robbins, R., & Womack, K. (2001). Key concepts in literary theory. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.
- Wright, T. (1995). Reader-response under review: An art, a game, or a science? *Style*, 29, 529-548.
- Yekovich, F. R., & C. H. Walker. (1987). The activation of scripted knowledge in reading about routine activities. In B. K. Britton, & S. M. Glynn (Eds.), *Executive control processes in reading* (pp. 145-171). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Zuck, L. V., & Zuck, J. G. (1984). The main idea: Specialist and non-specialist judgement. In A. K. Pugh & J. M. Ulijn (Eds.), *Reading for professional purposes: Studies and practices in native and foreign languages*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Zwaan, R. A. & Brown, C. M. (1996). The influence of language proficiency and comprehension skill on situation-model construction. *Discourse Processes: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 21(3), 289-327.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02504 3393