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About the Journal

Founded in 2013, the Journal of Teacher Action Research (ISSN: 2332-2233) is a peer-reviewed online journal indexed with EBSCO that seeks practical research that can be implemented in Pre-Kindergarten through Post-Secondary classrooms. The primary function of this journal is to provide classroom teachers and researchers a means for sharing classroom practices.

The journal accepts articles for peer-review that describe classroom practice which positively impacts student learning. We define teacher action research as teachers (at all levels) studying their practice and/or their students' learning in a methodical way in order to inform classroom practice. Articles submitted to the journal should demonstrate an action research focus with intent to improve the author's practice.

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GETTING UP CLOSE AND CULTURAL: THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL SIMULATION ON FLES LEARNER MOTIVATION

Lisa Peskar
Southern Oregon University

Jeremy W. Bachelor
Southern Oregon University

Abstract Individual differences (IDs) play an important role in the second language learning process and explain the varied experiences of the L2 learner. The two major IDs, language aptitude and motivation, can be primary factors in one's ultimate proficiency. While language aptitude is largely fixed, motivation is malleable and can aid in overcoming deficits in one's proficiency level. This action research study explores simulation techniques to gauge its impact on the motivation of 15 Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) students. Simulation and role play have demonstrated to be engaging techniques that enhance the learning experience in the second-language classroom; however, it remains to be seen if these techniques have an impact on L2 motivation in the FLES context, namely in regard to integrative orientation. In this mixed-methods study, FLES learner motivation was surveyed to measure change in integrative motivation and attitude toward L2 learning, the two variables in Gardner's (1985) socio-educational framework of motivation. Using a Likert scale L2 Motivation Survey, a Language Background and Perceptions questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and instructor field notes, findings were triangulated to form a conclusion surrounding this intervention's effectiveness. Quantitative results are conflicting: raw descriptive statistics show a promising correlation; however, they are mostly lacking in statistical significance. Despite this, when findings are combined with qualitative results, there is a concluded benefit for including cultural simulation in the FLES classroom.

Keywords: teacher action research, foreign language learning, foreign language in the elementary school, motivation

Introduction

Individual differences play an important role in the second language (L2) learning process in terms of the learner experience in the classroom and ultimate proficiency attained. With these individual differences in mind, we noticed that students at an international school in South Korea in a K-5 Spanish context were experiencing the same activity in very different ways. The younger students volunteered endlessly, loved learning about culture, and

accepted an immersion-like environment without question. Meanwhile, students in upper grades 4 and 5 showed little motivation toward cultural activities and language learning without an extrinsic reward, such as prizes or using iPads.

Purpose Statement. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact that cultural simulation had on the motivation of upper elementary Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) students in language learning. Cultural simulation requires participants to take on a new persona in the target culture through task-based activities in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome (Sánchez, 2004). This study relied on the socio-educational framework of Gardner (1985) for determining strategies that could motivate students. In short, this framework views motivation as consisting of feelings of integrativeness with the target culture, along with attitudes toward L2 learning. To influence both attitudes toward L2 learning and integrative motivation, the following research questions were identified:

1. To what extent does task-based cultural simulation influence L2 integrative motivation in upper elementary FLES students?
2. To what extent does task-based cultural simulation influence student attitudes toward learning the L2?

This action research and its results are of use to L2 teachers, students, and the field of L2 motivation, specifically in the FLES context. Results may provide support for incorporating task-based simulation in the classroom to impact motivation in novice language students through authentic communication and culture.

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the most crucial components relating to the proposed research questions, while ultimately seeking to tie all together to form the underpinning of this study. Therefore, the following topics are reviewed: Theoretical frameworks of motivation, cognitive characteristics of young learners, simulations, learner attitudes, and L2 tasks.

Motivation: History and current perspectives. While there are many individual differences that play a role in determining L2 attainment, a learner with high motivation can compensate and overcome more fixed traits, such as language aptitude (Dörnyei, 2005). For this reason, the study of motivation is significant to educators, students, and researchers in the L2 community. Over the years, motivation in L2 learning has passed through various phases of research, each building on previous terms and incorporating increasing degrees of integration with mainstream cognitive psychology, while remaining as a separate field of study due to unique social and cultural complexities involved in learning another language (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). Noting these complexities, Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two L2 motivational influences that created a foundation for a multitude of future frameworks, known as *integrative orientation* and *instrumental orientation*. Integrative orientation is defined as “reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture

represented by the other group"; and instrumental orientation as "reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language" (p. 132).

Reflecting on the cultural complexity of language, Gardner (1985) developed a socio-educational model of second language acquisition that states L2 learning motivation revolves around two groups of variables: *integrativeness* and *attitudes toward the learning situation*. Per this framework, motivation is fostered by developing positive attitudes toward the target culture, cultivating a desire to interact with or even become a member of this culture, while recognizing that attitudes toward the L2 learning environment also play a crucial role. With a wealth of empirical evidence, Gardner's framework dominated the L2 motivation field for nearly three decades, until advances in the field of cognitive psychology and the onset of Global English, a language booming for instrumental purposes, paved the way for new frameworks (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

As research in cognitive psychology progressed, the field of L2 motivation moved toward process-oriented and socio-dynamic approaches, largely dominated by evolving theories of Dörnyei. The socio-dynamic period, the most current focus of research, involves a dynamic systems approach that views motivation as complex with various interconnected components. This research also views motivation as ever-changing, even within the context of a particular activity. In response to cognitive psychology advancements and the phenomenon of Global English, a language for worldwide use despite country of origin, Dörnyei proposed several new frameworks ranging from the process-oriented model, possible L2 selves, and finally leading to the most recent framework: the L2 Motivational Self System. In this framework, Dörnyei proposes that there is an *ideal-L2 self,* a vision of the L2 speaking self that one hopes to attain in the future, and an *ought-to L2 self*, what one should do in the current to achieve the ideal L2 self; the framework suggests that both selves interact to motivate a learner. As a dynamic systems model, there is a third variable that holds considerable weight in determining motivation, the L2 learning experience (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

In response to the variety of frameworks now existing, many with overlapping characteristics, numerous researchers have implemented L2 motivation studies by picking and mixing various parts to suit their particular purpose or design. Even with the existence of newer frameworks, there has been a continued interest in and even reinterpretation of Gardner's socio-educational framework for motivation (Dörnyei, 2006). Indeed, Gardner (2012) has shown that integrative motivation can be reinterpreted to include Global English. In his 2012 study with 342 Polish students, integrative motivation was shown to have a significant correlation with English grades. In regard to Spanish as a second language, research is still finding a strong correlation between integrative orientation and L2 proficiency. Hernandez (2008) found that integrative orientation had a strong positive relationship with proficiency level achievement and student desire to continue studying Spanish after surveying 130 US college Spanish students.

Elementary student development and L2 motivation. Though the field of SLA often characterizes L2 motivation in terms generalizable to any age group, cognitive psychology

has specified that different age groups have distinct cognitive characteristics in their ability to distinguish amongst their experiences. According to Bandura, students 8 years or younger often see themselves as either "good" or "bad" at school as a whole, while students ages 8 to 11 are able to understand the separation of experiences in different classroom subjects, report more accurately on motivation, and more accurately self-assess (1997). Backed up by a study by Guay et. al (2010), results showed that after the age of eight, students were found to be able to differentiate in their perceptions of motivation across school subjects, and this becomes more discernible with age.

Understanding that younger learners are able to distinguish subject-specific motivation similarly to older learners, there have been several studies on L2 motivation in elementary-aged students. Cortés (2002) conducted a study on instrumental and integrative motivation with 209 elementary student participants across two schools, while also analyzing student attitudes toward the L2 learning experience. Interestingly, the two schools differed in regard to results of L2 attitude by grade. In one school, attitudes grew more positive by grade level, and in another, less positive. The author noted that from qualitative data, students had indicated that the teacher and activities were a key variable in their learning, indicating that their attitude can be greatly affected by these components.

Simulation. As both *attitude toward the L2 environment* and *integrativeness* toward the L2 culture are components of Gardner's socio-educational model of L2 motivation, there is a need for further study of pedagogical implications that can affect both simultaneously. Investigators Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) and Yu (2018) reaffirm the importance of culture in L2 motivation, and suggest including authentic language contexts as well as opportunities to interact with the L2 culture as a vehicle for increasing *integrativeness*. According to Kramsch (1995), participation in culture entails "linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community" (p. 195). In the absence of the ability to have real contact with target culture or its speakers, simulation may serve as an educational tool to bridge this gap.
Working from Jones' (1984) definition and conceptualization of simulation, Levine (2004) discusses three subcomponents characteristic to simulation: *reality of function, simulated environment,* and *structure*. *Reality of function* entails students taking on a new persona, not as play acting, but in a genuine way as though they were that person in a real situation. Levine further explains that *simulated environment* means the environment, being simulated and not real, is a safe environment for participants. Additionally, there is a *structure* defined by the organizer or teacher in which participants must function. The author further adds that there must be a briefing and debriefing phase.
Students may be placed in the simulation at various times within the learning process. Crookall et al. (2009) define three broad types of simulation, depending on the learning outcome: Knowledge-to-Action (K-A), Action-to-Knowledge (A-K), and Integrating-Action-Knowledge (I-A-K). Knowledge-to-Action, in which content is learned then applied in the simulation, followed by a light debrief for verification, was discussed to be the most commonly implemented.

In addition to discussing Jones' characteristics of simulation, Levine (2004) further states that in order for a simulation to function in an L2 classroom, it must, by definition, be task-

based. Although there are several different approaches to task-based language teaching (TBLT), created by Long (1985), Skehan (1998), and Ellis (2003), Ellis (2009) states that *authenticity*, or opportunities for natural language use, is important in all three. Ellis (2009) provides four criteria for L2 tasks: 1) meaning is the primary focus, 2) there is a need to convey information, such as an authentic problem or scenario, 3) the learner uses their own linguistic resources, and 4) there is a non-linguistic outcome. These criteria provided guidance in this study to ensure that valid language tasks are created as part of a task-based simulation.

L2 Learner Attitude. By connecting literature definitions and empirical studies, a cultural, task-based simulation may provide conditions to which both *attitude toward the L2 environment* and *integrativeness* can be impacted to see a change in L2 learner motivation. With a multitude of educational strategies shown to influence learner attitudes in education, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) surveyed 200 English teachers in Hungry to form a narrowed list of ten macro-strategies for L2 teachers that have an impact on the L2 learning situation and hence, student attitudes. Three of the resulting macro-strategies can be found readily in simulation as an L2 learning activity: make class interesting, promote learner autonomy, and familiarize students with the target language culture. Simulation, through *reality of function*, provides students with opportunities to make choices of interest to them based on the simulation at hand. As students have choice and the teacher minimizes external control, this supports student autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Finally, the design of a simulation can be constructed to incorporate the target culture.

According to Sharifi et al. (2017), previous studies have shown numerous positive effects of simulation in L2 learning. Increased student enjoyment in autonomy, increased motivation, and improvement in L2 skills have been noted benefits. In their study with 51 female Iranian middle school participants, they measured simulation's impact on: interest, challenge, choice, and joy. Results showed that all four areas of student perception had a significant positive change post-survey in comparison with the control group. Similarly, a study by Dicks and Le Blanc (2009) used drama and simulation as learning techniques in six French classrooms. Qualitative data showed that both students and teachers in Canada found it to be a positive experience, and students took more ownership of their learning. In addition, quantitative data from this study suggests that attitude toward L2 learning increased, thus impacting motivation. These studies provide evidence that simulation can be an agent of change in student perception of language learning, and in turn, motivation.

While there has been empirical evidence showing simulation to have a positive impact on L2 learner attitude through autonomy, enjoyment and interest, under Gardner's socio-educational model of L2 motivation, there also lays another crucial *integrativeness* component. In reviewing previously carried out research, there are gaps in research on simulation's ability to impact integrative motivation. However, Pyun (2013) found a positive correlation between task-based language learning and student integrative motivation when surveying 91 Korean college students. Pyun goes on to suggest that authentic cultural materials in language tasks may promote and fulfill integrative motivation.

There is room for further investigation on instructional strategies that test both L2 learner attitude and integrativeness components of Gardner's socio-educational framework of motivation. Among elementary students, cultural perceptions and L2 learner attitude are both important components of a FLES program that can be greatly influenced by teacher activities and classroom environment. When elementary students can more effectively be reached to increase L2 attitude and integrative orientation, this can lead to greater L2 achievement as well as increased persistence, desire, and motivation for language learning as they continue through the L2 learning process. By embodying macro-strategies to impact L2 learner attitude, and characteristics of authentic cultural context and tasks, a task-based cultural simulation holds potential to be a successful agent of change in upper elementary FLES student motivation as supported by theoretical and empirical literature.

Methodology

Participants. The participants of this study consisted of fifth grade Spanish students at a Pre-K through Grade 12 international school in Seoul, South Korea. Per government regulations, international schools in South Korea must have at least 70% of the student population with at least one parent of foreign citizenship. The remaining 30% may be from families of Korean citizenship but must have lived 3 years overseas (Korea International School, n.d.). Being a private, international school, students come from a variety of backgrounds with many different cultures and worldwide experiences living or travelling abroad. While some students are native English speakers, others have learned English through immersion at school and additional ESL support. In the elementary division, the population is around 400 students, with students representing 23 different nationalities and 17 native languages. The entire pre-kindergarten to grade 12 population hovers around 1,200 students, and the school follows an American curriculum culminating with 18 Advanced Placement offerings at the high school level (Korea International School, n.d.).

All elementary students participate in a K-5 World Language program that involves both FLES and Foreign Language Elementary Experience (FLEX) courses. In kindergarten and first grade, students sample French, Spanish, and Chinese languages via a FLEX program, for a total of 10 hours of instruction per year. Starting in second grade, students pick one of the three languages to study until fifth grade via a FLES program. In this program, students receive instruction twice every six-day rotation, for 50 minutes each meeting, averaging to roughly 50 hours of instruction per school year.

There were 23 students enrolled in fifth grade Spanish at the commencement of the 2019-2020 school year, divided amongst four separate classes. The class sizes for this study ranged from four to eight students in each class. After handing out consent forms in September, 15 students returned student and parent consent allowing them to participate in the study. The participant makeup consisted of 7 female and 8 male students between the ages of 10 to 11. All students self-identified as bilingual in the Language Background Questionnaire, in addition to two students identifying as trilingual. The majority of students, 12 out of 15, spoke both Korean and English at school, home and/or with friends. Two

students were English/Spanish bilingual and had Spanish-speaking relatives, and one student had five years of English/Spanish dual-immersion instruction at a previous school.

Study Design and Intervention. The purpose of this study was to describe the impact of cultural simulation on student integrative motivation and attitude toward learning the L2. To satisfy this purpose, a mixed-methods design was implemented using a Language Background and Perspectives Questionnaire (Appendix B), a Likert-style Motivation Survey (Appendix A), field notes throughout the intervention, and a semi-structured interview post-intervention (Appendix C). Pre-intervention, students completed a 14 item Language Background and Perspectives questionnaire, as well as the 15 item L2 Motivation Survey. The L2 Motivation Survey was administered pre- and post-simulation to gauge changes in motivation throughout the intervention. An explanation of the intervention is provided below, and an example is provided in Figure 2.

The Motivation Survey and Language Background Questionnaire were administered in early September of 2019, nearing the end of the first unit, yet prior to beginning the simulation and first cultural task. Subsequently, the simulation was introduced and students completed 1-2 cultural tasks per unit followed by a debrief. After the completion of tasks for all units, the L2 Motivation Survey was administered again in February of 2020 to gauge changes in student motivation. At this time, volunteer participants sat through a semi-structured interview conducted by the teacher. Throughout the intervention, field notes were recorded to further document qualitative information related to the study.

The L2 Motivation Survey contained 15 items total: 5 items evaluating *integrativeness*, and 10 items referencing *attitudes toward L2 learning,* to quantitatively address research questions one and two regarding change in integrative motivation and attitude toward the L2 learning environment. These sections were taken from a wider L2 motivation survey by Al Khalil (2011), with modifications including clipart smileys to make the survey elementary friendly.

Throughout the intervention, a teacher-created, task-based cultural simulation dictated the learning process, materials, and procedures for the intervention. The simulation and tasks were created following criteria for tasks and simulations outlined in the literature review, and by considering realistic scenarios for the age of the participants. During three units of study (Introductions, House Vocabulary, and Descriptions of People), the intervention consisted of 5 tasks during the cultural simulation. An example can be seen in Figure 2.

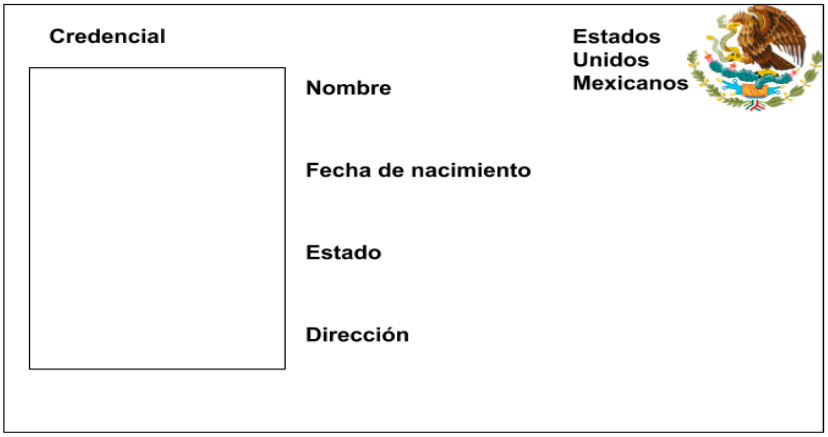

Figure 2. Instructional Material: Task 1
As you are new to the city, you and your family go to the city center to fill out any necessary documents. While there, you are given a paper to fill in information for your new ID card! Your task is to obtain this ID card by providing all necessary information.

Following the Knowledge-to-Action simulation model explained by Crookall et al. (2009), students learned the knowledge (language/vocabulary), then put it into action in a task-based simulation, followed by a short debrief.

To carry out this process and leading to the tasks, students had to establish key components of their new identity for the simulation: their name and address, including an ID card that they used throughout the study. This encompassed cultural exploration by students 1) learning about names in Spanish-speaking countries, 2) using Google Map activity to virtually "walk" through several streets of Guanajuato, Mexico to choose their "address", 3) exploring common interiors of Mexican houses through AirBNB Guanajuato, and 4) learning about their new school in Guanajuato (Escuela Luis Gonzalez Obregon).

For every subsequent class during the intervention, students entered by being called their new "name" that they had chosen in the target culture in order to solidify their new persona. In addition, the students received their ID card upon entering and described the weather forecast for Guanajuato each day in order to remind them of their new identity and city.

The present study investigated the impact of task-based cultural simulation on the motivation of upper elementary FLES students. As this study was a mixed method design, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to determine results. The quantitative component included 15 Likert scale items in the Motivation Survey to gather data on changes in integrative motivation and attitude toward the L2 learning experience. In order to view changes pre- and post-survey, measures of central tendency were calculated for each item in the survey, along with the standard deviation. The final calculation included a paired samples *t*-test using the mode of each item to test for statistical significance.

As participants in a motivation study are self-documenting their perceptions, the qualitative data was essential in gathering insight to further analyze findings. Comments from the

Language Background and Perspectives Questionnaire, field notes, and semi-structured interview were entered into a document to identify themes that could help explain changes in integrative motivation or attitudes toward the L2 learning experience. Inductive analysis was used to triangulate the qualitative data along with the quantitative findings. The results are summarized under each research question.

Results

Research Question 1: Cultural Simulation and Integrative Motivation. The first research question evaluated the null hypothesis that there is no change in integrative motivation due to implementation of task-based cultural simulations. A Likert-style Motivation Survey was administered pre- and post-intervention with five items pertaining to integrativeness. For each item, students selected responses on a 1-6 scale indicating how they felt about each statement, ranging from "*Not true at all"* to "*Absolutely true.*" Each response was given a corresponding number to analyze the data quantitatively: 1-Not true at all, 2-Not really, 3-Partly untrue, 4-Somewhat true, 5-Mostly true, and 6-Absolutely true. In reading the descriptive statistics, a higher score indicates higher agreement with the statement. Table 1 summarizes the pre- and post-survey mean, mode, and result of the paired *t*-test (p-value).

Table 1. Motivation Survey (integrative motivation) results

Item	**Pre-survey mean (*M*)**	**Post-survey mean (*M*)**	**Pre-survey mode**	**Post-survey mode**	**p-value *(p)***
1) Studying Spanish is important because it will allow me to make good friends among speakers of Spanish.	4	5	4	5	.046
2) In some ways, I want to become more similar to speakers of Spanish.	4.07	4.73	4	6	.065
3) Studying Spanish is important because it will allow me to participate in cultural activities of another group.	4.46	4.93	4	6	.22
4) Studying Spanish is important because it will allow me to talk with more types of people.	5.33	5.53	6	6	.458
5) Study Spanish is important because it will help me	4.27	4.67	5	6	.458

appreciate Hispanic life and cultures.

It can be seen that prior to the intervention, participants overall rated themselves as having positive integrative orientation toward the target culture with mean scores ranging from 4-5.33. In general, statements from the survey were perceived as *Somewhat true* or *Mostly true*. All items showed mean increases post-survey, and all except item four increased in mode.

As students self-reported their perceptions of integrative motivation on the Motivation Survey, it was important to examine qualitative data to form a holistic conclusion based on multiple data types. At the end of each unit, debriefs were conducted to engage students in conversation and self-reflection throughout the simulation. In the field notes, comments from the debriefs proved to be insightful regarding the simulation's impact on integrative motivation. Figure 3 shows student responses to the debrief question: Could you see yourself living in a Spanish-speaking country and going through this situation?

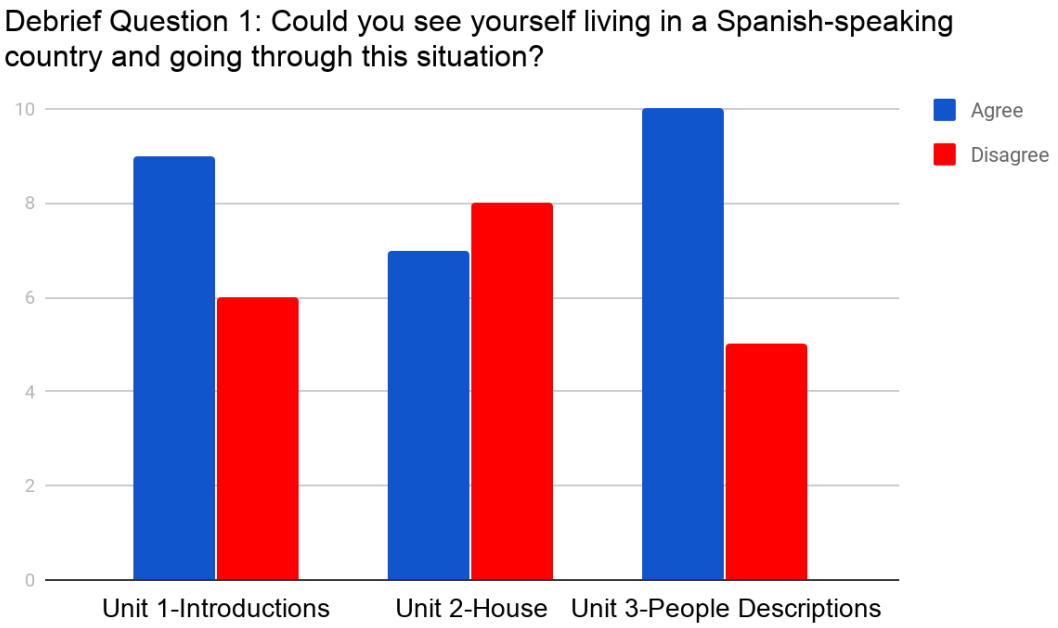

Figure 3. Debrief Question 1 responses

The Unit 2 debrief showed that a slight majority (*n*=8) disagreed with the statement, while Unit 1 and 3 debriefs show that a majority of participants felt that they could envision themselves living in a Spanish-speaking country and partaking in the task or event.

With regard to the semi-structured interview, several of the questions were written to target integrative motivation, or participant interest or desire to become a part of the target culture. These four questions were: After participating in the simulation:

- Do you want to learn more (about Mexican culture)?,
- Do you want to speak more with people in Spanish?,
- Do you want to learn Spanish more? And

- Do you have more interest in visiting Mexico or another Spanish-speaking country?

Participants were asked to answer all questions regarding their experience going through the simulation. All four questions received overwhelmingly positive responses from the 15 participants, ranging from "somewhat agree" to enthusiastic agreement, mixed with a handful of disagreeing responses. For example, one participant did not want to learn more about Mexican culture but acknowledged interest in visiting another Spanish-speaking country. Another participant cited the second task, "meeting a neighbor," as a reason for wanting to speak more with people in Spanish.

Research Question 2: Cultural Simulation and Attitude toward L2 learning. The second research question tested the null hypothesis that there is no change in student attitude toward learning the L2 after implementation of task-based cultural simulations. In order to gauge student perceptions toward L2 learning and its origins, a Language Background and Perceptions Questionnaire was administered before the start of the intervention (Appendix B). In addition to ten items about student language background, this questionnaire included four items targeting perceptions toward L2 learning in Spanish class. These four items asked students to write their favorite and least favorite activities in Spanish class, and also included two fill-in-the-blank items: *I like it when my Spanish teacher* _____, and *I wish my Spanish teacher* _____. The data was then categorized and calculated by "type of activity" for all responses. Before implementing the intervention, observations of student preferences toward games were validated by seeing it was the most highly listed response for favorite activities and the two fill-in-the-blank items, appearing as a response 21 times between the three items. In total, of the 41 responses, 52% cited games as favorite or desired activities, while 5% cited an activity related to culture, appearing only two times in this category. Among an additional 14% of cited responses, the favorite or desired activities were getting treats and prizes. Participants responded that their least favorite activity was reviewing vocabulary (40%), while another 40% responded that they did not have a least favorite activity. As a baseline, it can be seen that cultural activities are mostly considered neutral activities to students, neither contributing nor taking away from their attitude toward L2 learning.

In the Motivation Survey administered pre- and post-intervention, there were ten items pertaining to student attitudes toward L2 learning. For seven of the items, students selected responses on a 1-6 range indicating how they felt about each statement, ranging from "*Not true at all"* to "*Absolutely true*". The last three items on the survey were formed as questions rather than statements. As such, for items 13-15, students selected similar responses in a 1-6 range, with each item corresponding to the following numbers for quantitative analysis: 1-Not at all, 2-Not so much, 3-So-so, 4-A little, 5-Quite a lot, and 6-Very much. Following the same pattern as the previous items, a higher score indicates a more positive response to each item. Table 2 summarizes the pre- and post-survey mean, mode, and result of the paired *t*-test (p-value).

Table 2. Motivation Survey (attitude toward L2 learning) results

Item	Pre-survey mean (*M*)	Post-survey mean (*M*)	Pre-survey mode	Post-survey mode	p-value *(p)*
6) Learning Spanish is really great.	5.13	5.47	5	6	.096
7) I always look forward to Spanish class.	5	5.2	5	5	.384
8) I plan to learn as much Spanish as possible.	5.2	5.2	5	6	1
9) I find learning Spanish really interesting.	4.73	4.8	5	5	.719
10) Learning Spanish is one of the most important things for me as I grow as a person.	3.67	4.33	4	4	.086
11) I like the atmosphere of my Spanish class.	5.13	5	5	6	.433
12) I really enjoy learning Spanish.	4.87	5.4	5	6	.104
13) How much do you like Spanish?	5.07	5.27	5	6	.119
14) Would you like to have more Spanish lessons?	4.53	4.93	6	6	.229
15) Do you think time passes quickly while you are practicing Spanish?	4.33	4.47	5	5	.498

As seen in Table 2, participants reported quite positive pre-survey responses for all items except number ten. For all other items, the pre-intervention mean ranged between 4.33-5.2, and showed a mode of 5 or 6. On the post-survey, most items showed a mean increase, although in some items this increase was small (items 7, 9, 13, 15). While these scores are positive, the p-value does not show statistical significance and thus suggest higher probability that results are due to chance rather than correlation.

With many marginal mean increases, the mode and range were more telling of changes in participant perceptions pre- and post-intervention. In five of the ten items, the mode increased, and in four items the range of scores decreased due to more students selecting

responses in the positive range post-survey. Figure 4 shows the distribution of pre- and post-survey responses for item 14.

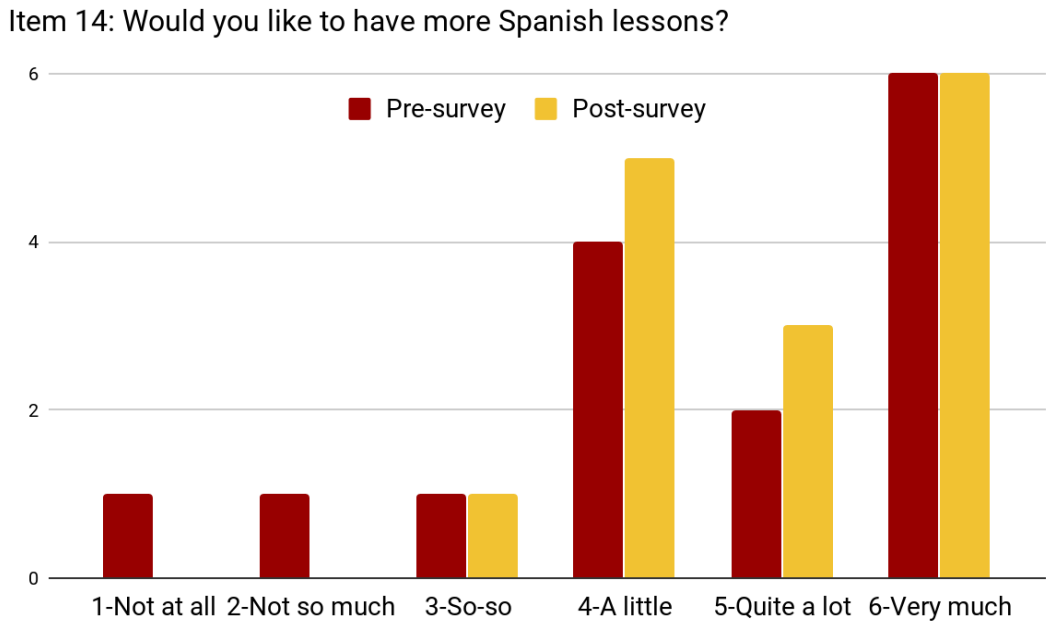

Figure 4. Motivation survey pre- to post-responses, Item 14

As students are self-reporting their perceptions, it was important to analyze qualitative data to provide a more complete picture of the effectiveness of the intervention. During the intervention, student comments were recorded pertaining to student attitudes and engagement during the simulation for qualitative analysis. The data revealed that students held both positive and negative perceptions toward L2 learning during the period covering the intervention. For example, toward the end of the intervention, one student commented, "Can we play games? All we do is work in this class." Positive comments and engagement were far more prevalent than comments pointing to negative feelings or boredom. It was noted that as students were able to choose their name, address, and house, and meet their neighbor, they were very engaged and on-task. When students chose their new class names, they were excited, and it was the primary topic of discussion with other language students that day. When participants were introduced to the simulation and the city of Guanajuato, one excitedly remarked, "Can we go there?" Upon "meeting their neighbor" through a video recording, students wanted to know many more details about her and if she would respond to their answers and questions in Spanish. Nonetheless, when participants were shown their new school during Unit 3, students seemed interested in seeing what a school looked like in Mexico, although not as invested as when they could have a choice in their new identity.

Similarities were found between student in-class comments and responses during the post-intervention interview. During the semi-structured interview, four of the eight questions targeted student attitudes toward L2 learning in response to the simulation. The questions were: 1) What did you think of acting as someone from a Spanish-speaking country? 2) What parts of the simulation did you like and what parts did you not like? 3) Did you enjoy

having more choices for parts of your identity (choosing name, house, address, interior) in comparison to our normal class activities? And 4) Did you find the activities enjoyable, such as when you found your house or met your neighbor?

While there were responses on both ends of the engagement spectrum, data from student comments revealed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward L2 learning during the simulation, indicating that they found the activities "fun" and "enjoyable" in most cases. Several students cited specific cultural tasks that they enjoyed as their "favorite," including "making videos to send," "creating an ID," "exploring the city on Google Maps," and "choosing a house." While many participants agreed with these statements, there were a few remarks of disagreement. One participant stated that the least favorite portion of the intervention was "going to school in Mexico," while another commented that the least favorite activity was "having to write." One student further said that the simulation "didn't feel that real." Amongst all participants, a common agreement was that they favored having more "choice" in each task, such as picking their own name, house, address, or house interior.

The qualitative data showed that the majority perception was that the cultural simulation was fun, enjoyable, and participants appreciated the amount of "choice" they had within the tasks. While students also found games, incentives, and prizes enjoyable, these activities generally do not provide a cultural component.

Discussion

Results from this study suggest that it is possible to include task-based cultural simulation as part of a FLES curriculum. While statistical analysis suggests that implementation neither harms nor impacts student L2 motivation (which may have been the result of a smaller sample size), qualitative findings combined with raw descriptive data provide a convincing argument that it may add value to the L2 learning experience for upper elementary students by aiding to increase integrative orientation and attitude toward L2 learning. As Gardner's socio-educational framework of L2 learning includes both components, this is promising for L2 educators seeking to increase L2 motivation.

Empirical evidence has shown that FLES programs have potential to impact a student's desire and motivation to continue studying a second language (Kennedy et al., 2000). As discussed by Cortés (2002), elementary students may exhibit increased or decreased motivation depending on attitude toward the L2 learning environment, which underscores the need for engaging activities that promote positive attitude toward L2 learning. Noting the multifaceted complexity of L2 learning, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) reported that three of ten macro-strategies to influence L2 learner attitude are: make class interesting, promote learner autonomy, and familiarize students with the target language culture; these strategies are readily found in task-based cultural simulation.

While participants largely found games and incentives to be the most engaging activities pre-intervention, these activities generally lack a cultural focus and do not promote

integrativeness. Over the course of the cultural simulation, students experienced enjoyment in making choices that interest them, having autonomy in their new persona, and learning about the target language culture, as evidenced by the qualitative findings. Findings were in tandem with previous simulation studies which have found student enjoyment in increased autonomy, choice, interest, and motivation as a result of the intervention (Sharifi et al., 2017).

Previous studies found simulation to promote positive attitudes toward L2 learning; nevertheless, empirical evidence was lacking in connecting simulation to integrativeness, especially at the elementary level. Referenced previously as a macro-strategy connected to L2 learner attitude, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) and Yu (2018) also reaffirmed the importance of culture and suggested including authentic language contexts and cultural interactions as a vehicle for increasing *integrativeness*.

Qualitative feedback suggests that change in student integrative orientation can be attributed to the intervention. Students reported wanting to learn more Spanish and more about Hispanic culture, as well as an increased desire to visit a Spanish-speaking country and interact with a native Spanish speaker. These findings were comparable to Pyun (2013), who found a positive correlation between task-based language learning and student integrative motivation. This provides support for incorporating tasks in the L2 classroom per Pyun's study, or cultural simulation for those wishing to provide a more connected and authentic cultural experience for students.

Global simulation models have the benefit of a well-established set of criteria and examples, but these are suggested for intermediate to advanced learners (Levine, 2004). While reviewing previous simulation and role play interventions, many are lacking in frameworks that could be easily replicated in a novice-level class; other novice level educators may have previously found simulation to be inaccessible for similar reasons. This study may help to bridge this gap for educators seeking to incorporate a simulation framework for the novice or FLES classroom.

In addition, relevant research has focused on role play, simulation, or global simulation in reference to L2 confidence and proficiency gains, and has found correlating benefits in this area (Sharifi et al., 2017; Mills & Perón, 2008; Yilmaz & Dollar, 2017). Although this was not evaluated in this study, anecdotal evidence from participant debriefs revealed a high degree of confidence and feelings of success after using the target language during tasks. Indeed, higher integrative orientation has been found to correlate with higher proficiency level and desire to continue studying a language (Hernandez, 2008). Additionally, while excitement is hard to quantify, the students' enthusiasm about wanting to interact with native speakers and visit a Spanish-speaking country was promising that this intervention could make a positive impact in this regard.

On a larger scale, this study aids to provide a base in the less studied concept of task-based simulation as an agent of change in both attitude toward L2 learning and integrative motivation. Due to the small sample size, the premise of correlation between task-based

simulation and integrative motivation would benefit from more or larger studies of a similar nature to garner a stronger set of quantitative findings. In a small study, a limitation is that outliers have the potential to impact the study to a higher degree, which is a significant limitation in the reliability of the results from this study. It would also be beneficial to see results of the study implemented with different demographics of students, i.e. students outside of a private, international school or with populations that are not already bilingual.

Conclusion

One final limitation presented as the need to choose one motivational framework due to age and developmental level of students and taking into consideration the available resources for pre-validated motivational surveys. In a wider study, it would be beneficial to assess multiple types of motivation, such as in Al Khalil's study (2011). Many surveys targeting the L2 Motivational Self System present constructs better suited for older participants, e.g., *I can imagine myself writing Spanish e-mails easily*. With students being at the elementary age, 15 items relating to Gardner's socio-educational framework that seemed applicable to the developmental level of the participants were chosen. In addition to further testing to validate results with the present survey, educators may find benefit to more extensive surveys with items targeting constructs from multiple motivational frameworks, as has been done in previous studies with more mature participants.
In conclusion, this action research project has provided the opportunity to understand the importance of motivation more deeply in L2 learning. Previous research has asserted that motivation along with language aptitude are the two major factors in determining L2 proficiency, with motivation being the more malleable factor (Dörnyei, 2005). While historically the field of motivation has been less frequented in SLA studies, motivation strategies should be considered by educators for the benefit of all stakeholders in the language learning process. While there are many sound strategies that educators can employ for proficiency gains, motivation is at the root of L2 learning by promoting engagement and stamina throughout the learning process, which is a years-long endeavor. Taking an unbiased look at L2 learner motivation in each program may be the starting point to foster engaged second language students with long-term commitment, beginning even in our youngest learners.

About the Authors

Lisa Peskar has over eight years of experience teaching Spanish at the elementary, middle, and high school level. She most recently taught elementary Spanish at Korea International School in South Korea. She believes that language learning is best achieved through thematic, interactive, and culturally driven units grounded in second language motivation strategies. Lisa holds a BS in Foreign Language Education from the University of Dayton and a Master's degree in Spanish Language Teaching from Southern Oregon University. Email: lapeskar@gmail.com

Jeremy W. Bachelor, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Spanish at Heartland Community College (Normal, IL). He earned an MA in Spanish from Illinois State University and a joint PhD in Spanish Applied Linguistics/Education from UNINI–Mexico and the University of Granada–Spain. Additionally, Jeremy teaches for Southern Oregon University's Spanish Language Teaching master's program in Guanajuato, Mexico during the summer months. His research publications are the result of action research projects from his own classroom and center around interlanguage pragmatics and online/hybrid learning. E-mail: bachelorj@sou.edu

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Appendix A: Likert-style Motivational Survey (Pre-, Mid-, Post-intervention)

Student L2 Motivation Survey

Mark the "face" that agrees with your feelings about each statement.

The "faces" mean:

Absolutely true	Mostly true	Somewhat true	Partly untrue	Not really	Not true at all
					

1. Studying Spanish is important because it will allow me to make good friends among speakers of Spanish.
2. In some ways, I want to become more similar to speakers of Spanish.
3. Studying Spanish is important because it will allow me to participate in cultural activities of another group.
4. Studying Spanish is important because it will allow me to talk with more types of people.
5. Studying Spanish is important because it will help me appreciate Hispanic life and cultures.

Attitude toward learning the L2

6. Learning Spanish is really great.
7. I always look forward to my Spanish class.
8. I plan to learn as much Spanish as possible.
9. I find learning Spanish really interesting.
10. Learning Spanish is one of the most important things for me as I grow as a person.
11. I like the atmosphere of my Spanish class. (atmosphere- think of the teacher, activities, students, how you interact, how you feel)
12. I really enjoy learning Spanish.
13. How much do you like Spanish?
14. Would you like to have more Spanish lessons?
15. Do you think time passes quickly while you are practicing Spanish?

Appendix B: Language Background and Perceptions Questionnaire

Language Background

Please answer the questions about languages that you know or use:

1. Do you know any other languages than English? _____ yes _____ no

2. If yes, how many languages do you know well, besides English? _____

(think of any languages that you know as well as English, almost as well, or even better than English!)

3. If you speak more than one language well, list the languages that you know best to languages you know the least:

Best #1	Second best #2	#3	#4	#5

4. What language(s) do you speak at home, or with your parents?

5. What language(s) do you speak with friends?

Spanish Background

Please answer the questions about your experience with Spanish:

1. For how many years have you studied Spanish at KIS? _____

2. Have you studied Spanish at another school (not KIS)? (check "yes" or "no")

_____ yes _____no

- If you answered "yes", please describe what that was like in the space below:

3. Have you ever travelled to a Spanish-speaking country?

_____ yes _____no

- If you answered "yes", please describe where/what that was like:

4. Have you ever lived in a Spanish-speaking country?

_____ yes _____no

If you answered "yes", please describe where/how many years/what that was like:

5. Do you have family members that speak Spanish as a native/main language?

_____ yes _____no

If you answered “yes”, please describe who and how often you see them. Do you speak Spanish with them? Do you listen to them speak Spanish?

Language Learning Experience Perceptions

1. What are your favorite activities to do in Spanish class? Why?

2. What are your least favorite activities to do in Spanish class? Why?

3. Fill in the blank:

   - I like it when my Spanish teacher

_____

4. Fill in the blank:

   - I wish my Spanish teacher

_____

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. What did you think of acting as someone from a Spanish-speaking country?
2. What parts of the simulation did you like and what parts did you not like?
3. Did you enjoy having more choices for parts of your identity (choosing name, house, address, interior) in comparison to our normal class activities?
4. Did you find the activities enjoyable, such as when you found your house or met your neighbor?
5. After participating in the simulation, do you feel you know more about Mexican culture? Do you want to learn more?
6. After participating in the simulation, do you want to speak more with people in Spanish?
7. After participating in the simulation, do you want to learn Spanish more?
8. After participating, do you have more interest in visiting Mexico or another Spanish-speaking country?