

INVESTIGATING CREATIVE FLOW AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AN ARTS-BASED AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

by

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(Under the Direction of Victoria Hasko)

ABSTRACT

In order to investigate the positive influence of implementing arts-based creativity in a foreign language classroom, an afterschool English-as-a-Foreign-Language teaching project was created for 5th-grade students of a Russian public school. More specifically, the study focused on how the incorporation of the picturebook creation component in a foreign language classroom can lead students into the state of flow, lower their affective filter, and influence their willingness to communicate in the L2, which is one of the most important aspects of L2 learning. The study was based on the Case Study methodology and included elements of Arts-Based Research. Multiple data sources, such as videotapes, teacher journal, visual teacher journal, interviews, artifacts, and questionnaires, were used to collect study data, which were analyzed with the help of Content Analysis and Mixed-Methods Analysis. The study findings demonstrate that the incorporation of arts-based creative activities, such as picturebook creation and discussion, can lead elementary school students into the state of flow, effectively lower their L2 anxiety and fear of making mistakes, and ultimately raise their willingness to communicate in L2.

INDEX WORDS: Foreign Language Education, Creativity, Theory of Flow, Willingness to Communicate, Picturebook Creation, Foreign Language Anxiety, After-School Language Program, Arts-Based Research.

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DEDICATION

For my wife Elena and daughter Sofiya, who have accompanied and supported me throughout my Ph.D. journey; for my parents, Valery and Valentina, who have never stopped believing in me; and for all my mentors, students, colleagues, and friends in the U.S.A. and Russia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When I started my dissertation, little did I know what an adventure it would be for my students and me and what a close-knit creative community we would eventually become. At the final class meeting of the study I detail in this dissertation, one of my research participants, an 11-year-old Russian boy, says “English is the most interesting subject for me now - and just think of it – last year I simply hated it”. I need to clarify that he said that phrase in Russian, his native language. It would still be too much of a stretch to expect him and his classmates to produce such complex sentences in English, since he is only enrolled in a low proficiency English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) class in Russia. “English and Arts”, another boy immediately adds in English. He says it IN ENGLISH, not in Russian - I triumphantly register the fact in my mind, even though nobody specifically asked him to do so. Then he continues speaking, beginning his utterance in Russian and then switching to English: “Oh, I know what to call our class - ART ENGLISH!” “YES, ART ENGLISH!” he repeats almost ecstatically, reveling in the sound of his own English, the language that was so alien to him a year ago. Other students in class nod in agreement and smile. I look at them, my seven 5th-grade participants, as they excitedly share their creations with each other – little picturebooks, complete with pictures, book covers, and more or less calligraphic captions in English. Today, they will proudly take them home to share with their parents and siblings. They will be showing the pictures, reading the captions in English out loud, and accommodatingly translating them into Russian for their parents and grandparents... and they will feel like English language experts. I hope this feeling

of authorship, of having accomplished something which did not come easy to them, will help them overcome many obstacles in the future, in terms of both academic challenges and everyday life issues.

I remember my students over six months ago, at our first lesson, when I had just started the experimental part of my dissertation research. I greeted them and said a few words about myself and about picturebooks (all in English) and I remember how they all were lost and confused as they did not know what I was talking about (even though they had “officially” studied English for 3 years by that time). Now, miraculously enough, they can understand most of what I am saying to them in English and they are willing to respond in English, even though they do not always have the necessary vocabulary. This causes them to fill the gaps in their English utterances with Russian words which they pronounce in an English accent. They feel quite confident trying to speak in English now, albeit with many grammar mistakes and the above-mentioned Russian substitutes. The purpose of this dissertation is to share how we achieved such promising results. I will begin by sharing my personal background.

Personal background

Let me share two personal memories that will shed some light on how it all began. In the first one, I am a 22-year-old art school graduate and I am already working as an art teacher during the day. However, every night after work, I am staying up late with books of poems and short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and a huge English-Russian dictionary. The former provides the necessary inspiration to learn English and without the latter it is impossible for me to understand the stories. Why do I need to learn English being an art teacher and a painter? Well, I have loved the idea of being able to speak a foreign language since childhood, but with just two school lessons of English per week, boring textbook exercises, and almost 40 noisy classmates beside

me, I have not accomplished much. The explanation for my sudden “craving for English” lies in the fact that I have recently fallen in love with English and American poetry. I am fascinated with poems by Keats and Yeats, Blake and Browning, but, especially, by Poe, and I desperately want to read *Annabel Lee*, *Ulalume*, *The Bells*, and, of course, *The Raven* in their original language. But even after I have read each of them many times and found out what each word means, I feel I do not know English well enough to be able to fully appreciate them – the way a fluent English speaker would. The fact is, I am dissatisfied with the quality of Russian translations of Poe’s poems and I want to create my own poetic translations of those. It is my deep conviction that a good poetic translation should cause its readers to feel exactly what native speakers feel when reading the original, which means that the translator must, first and foremost, be able to access all the meanings contained in the poem the way native readers do. So, I decide to immerse myself in the English language, and since I cannot physically immerse myself in the milieu of native speakers of English (thanks to the “Iron Curtain”), I surround myself with more English-language poems, short stories, and novels. Hours, days, and months of living within those works of art, written by Conrad, London, Twain, Joyce, and Fitzgerald, and accompanied by my constant leafing through various dictionaries and grammar reference books, fly by as if in a daze. Many years later I will discover the “scholarly” name for this state of complete engagement in the activity, when time, surroundings, and daily cares cease to exist. It is called “flow”, and it is in the state of flow, according to Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997, 2007) that the best learning occurs. At a delightful moment, I finally realize that I am reading in English without constantly translating the text into Russian. I also discover that now I can think, write, and speak in English, although the latter is a more difficult task for me due the lack of conversational practice. This amazing discovery of creating an additional, English-speaking,

identity for myself and the search for English speaking training later leads me to university, where I earn my first MA in teaching EFL. None of this would have happened, if it had not been for my fascination with Poe's poetry and the feeling of "flow" I experienced while reading books in English. Art-induced flow became a vehicle for my L2 learning.

The second memory is based on my English teaching experience. It goes back to the time when I first realized that combining my English teaching skills with my skills as an art teacher was highly beneficial for my students. I was teaching English at a private school in Russia upon my graduation from California State University with an MA in Teaching International Languages. My older students, those from grades 9 to 11, appreciated my being a first-hand source of information on the USA. These students did not experience any lack of motivation in learning English under my guidance, however my younger students, especially 5th- and 6th- graders, were a bit of a problem. Some could only concentrate on the class activities for no longer than 10 minutes, while others would evince a total lack of motivation to study English, declaring that learning English was not necessary for them since "they live in Russia and everybody speaks Russian here". I struggled with teaching them until I noticed how elated they became when I would occasionally draw something on the board. It could be a picture of an animal that I would quickly draw in order to avoid translating it from English into Russian, or it could be an interior of a house that I would sketch to introduce the words denoting various pieces of furniture, and so on. My students would enthusiastically copy my drawings in their copybooks and volunteer to draw more images of the same ilk. I noticed that my students would internalize language material better if their learning was associated with the use of art. For example, they would retain new vocabulary better if it was combined with drawing accompanying images. I also realized that my students' motivation to study the language would dramatically increase

after such drawing sessions. Upon discovering that EFL learning could be so enhanced by such “infusions” of creativity, I included arts-based activities more and more often in my lessons and saw that it was conducive to increasing my students’ motivation for learning English.

I have shared these two memories in order to show the very important role arts and creativity have played in my own second language (L2)¹ learning and teaching. I understand that other people can successfully master additional languages and be excellent language teachers without ever resorting to arts and creativity. However, since it was so salient a feature in my case, it prompted me to wonder whether arts-based creativity can facilitate L2 learning and teaching. It is my hope that other language teachers and learners can benefit from arts-based approaches to L2 learning too, especially in situations of a total lack of opportunity to practice a L2 with native speakers, as was my case.

Having discussed my own background as a L2 learner and teacher, I want to shed light on the current state of L2 secondary school education in Russia, which is where my study is situated.

L2 education in Russia: standards, demands, and problems

The Russian Educational Standard proclaims “the development of communicative competence in a foreign language” (Federal State Educational Standard for Secondary General Education, 2012) to be the main goal of secondary school L2 education. Among the communicative competences, speaking is emphasized as the most important one. However, the real situation in L2 teaching in Russian public schools often does not provide enough support for the development of students’ speaking skills. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is mostly implemented in specialized private schools. Large metropolitan Russian cities, such as

¹ In this dissertation, I will use the term “second language” to an additional language acquired in various instructional settings, including as a foreign language, in the U.S. or internationally.

Moscow and St. Petersburg, have the resources to provide excellent L2 education in elite schools with advanced foreign language programs. However, in the majority of Russia's provincial public schools the learning of English often takes the form of rote memorization of grammar rules and tedious translation of texts from English into Russian and vice versa. As a result, the majority of Russian people cannot speak English. According to the study conducted by the Russian job search website, *Superjob*, only five percent of job applicants claimed fluency in English in 2014 (Sokolova & Shelepova, 2014). Fifteen percent of applicants indicated the knowledge of conversational English, 57 percent admitted only a basic knowledge of English, while 23 percent of respondents reported having no English skills whatsoever. According to *English Proficiency Index 2014* research report, which conducted online English testing in order to check the level of English proficiency in non-English-speaking countries, Russia ranked 36th among the 63 participant countries, showing an overall low level of English (Sokolova & Shelepova, 2014).

At the same time, the majority of Russian citizens realize that the ability to speak a foreign language, especially English, which has become a global *lingua franca*, is a must in today's globalized world. According to the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, which conducted a poll about studying foreign languages in 2014, 92 percent of respondents are certain that Russian children should study foreign languages at school, while 74 percent are convinced that the new generation will benefit from knowing a foreign language. According to the same poll, 92 percent of respondents believe that English is "the most useful foreign language" (Sokolova & Shelepova, 2014). This opinion was echoed by Russian employers. According to *Superjob*, English was specified in 96 percent of job vacancies that require knowledge of a foreign language.

The economic need for professionals with a good knowledge of English is reflected in the Standard of Education of the Russian Ministry of Science and Education. Since 2011, foreign languages have become a mandatory school subject from Grade 2 to Grade 11. In 2020, a third mandatory State Matriculation Exam will be created for Foreign Languages, along with Russian and Math, which all Russian students will need to take in order to graduate secondary school. This task can be quite challenging for many students considering the high demands the Russian Federal State Educational Standard (2012) poses for all aspects of L2 proficiency, including speaking.

One of the main requirements for the learning outcomes of the basic level of L2 education in Russian secondary schools is that students should “develop communicative competence in a foreign language required for successful socialization and self-actualization, as an instrument of cross-cultural communication in the modern poly-cultural world” (Russian Federal State Educational Standard for Secondary General Education, 2012, p. 11). Another requirement is that students need to “achieve a threshold level of competence in a foreign language that enable students to communicate in speaking and writing with both native speakers and non-native speakers that use the studied foreign language as a means of communication” (ibid.) As we can see, the Standard emphasizes the development of students’ communicative skills – whereas, as it was pointed out above, only 5 percent of Russian residents claim the actual ability to communicate in English fluently (Sokolova & Shelepova, 2014).

In terms of L2 speaking, the Russian Educational Standard divides speaking skills into the dialogic and monologic domains. As far as the dialogic part is concerned, students should be able to “initiate, maintain, and finish a conversation; express congratulations and wishes and be able to respond to such; express gratitude; politely request for clarifications, agree, and refuse”

(The Federal State Standard for Foreign Language Education, 2012, p. 2). Another form of dialogue the Standard demands from students is the exchange of information, when interlocutors ask each other questions, respond to them, interview each other, and seek specific information. Still another type of dialogue discussed in the Standard is “communication calling for action” (p. 2), in which an interlocutor asks another for a favor, offers advice or assistance, invites cooperation, or makes an offer. This type also presupposes learning how to accept or reject assistance, advice, or an offer, as well as how to explain one’s refusal. In terms of monologic speech, Russian school children should be able to “briefly express one’s ideas on facts, phenomena, and events” (p. 3), as well as explain a text and express their attitude towards the text’s content.

Even a cursory glance at what Russian students are supposed to be able to do in terms of L2 speaking, according to the Standard, and what Russian residents actually can do, according to the *Superjob* survey, shows that there is a huge gap between what is desired and what exists in reality. What are the major reasons for this gap?

From my own experience of learning and teaching English in Russian provincial public schools, I have noticed that the main problems of L2 education there are the lack of student motivation to study the L2 and low willingness to attempt to speak in the L2. Low student motivation to learn English in Russian provincial areas is often caused by the lack of opportunities for students to ever use their L2 in real life conversations with native speakers of the language, whereas low willingness to communicate in the L2 (L2 WTC) is often caused by students’ high affective filter (Krashen, 1982) – mostly by their fear to make a mistake and be ridiculed by their teachers and classmates. I recall many occasions when my students would remain silent in the class, and when asked to try and say something in English, would state the

following: “Why should we speak English? We live in Russia and everybody speaks Russian here. Nobody speaks English here!” This study was undertaken to look for a way to change such attitudes.

Thinking up an after-school L2 program

It has been noted that L2 learners can only learn to speak in L2 if their L2 WTC is high (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). Indeed, how can you learn to speak a L2, if you do not have the desire to do so or are subject to communication apprehension (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996)? However, I also noticed in my teaching experience that when I sometimes incorporated Arts-based creative activities in my English lessons, such as drawing or sculpting, my students would “forget” their usual apprehension of speaking in English and become much more willing to communicate in the L2. Their fear of making a mistake would often disappear when I asked them to draw their favorite book or computer game character and say a few things about them in English. I saw that during such creative activities students were transformed – they were entirely focused on the activity – and this absorption in the activity made them “forget” their L2 anxiety, as they would raise their hands in order to answer my questions and try to describe their creations in English. Later, I found out that this state of absorption in the activity is called “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1989, 1990) and this state is characterized by a total lack of boredom and anxiety. I realized that by combining L2 learning with engaging and challenging arts-based creative activities, such as poetry writing, drawing, painting, dancing, or staging a dramatic performance, L2 educators could help language learners enter an intrinsically motivating mode of learning, which is the state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

I started looking for the theoretical underpinnings for such Arts-based creative infusions in my L2 lessons and found them at the intersection of Vygotsky’s (1997) concepts of “mundane

creativity” and “creative catharsis” and Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) theory of flow. For Vygotsky (2004), who emphasized the essential role of everyday creativity in the existence of humanity, creativity is not just the realm of a few unique individuals, called geniuses. On the contrary, every person is endowed with the ability to create and this ability is especially powerful in childhood, when our imagination is still free from the post-puberty inhibitions imposed by reason and the sense of objectivity (Vygotsky, 2004). Since children are born story-tellers and artists, I felt that visual storytelling, specifically in the form of creating picturebooks in the L2, could become a valuable learning activity in elementary L2 classrooms.

Even though I could sense the potential of Arts-based infusion in L2 education, and saw the beneficial influence of my “impromptu” flow-conducive Arts-based sessions on my students’ motivation to study L2 and their L2 WTC, I could not “squeeze” such sessions into my lessons on a regular basis as that would leave me less time to teach such important L2 domains as grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, and others. According to the Standard (The Federal State Standard for Foreign Language Education, 2012), the majority of public schools in Russia offer 3 hours of formal L2 education per week and only select schools with advanced L2-track curricula offer more time. As a result, students at Russian public schools may learn the grammar rules and vocabulary of a FL but they often do not have an opportunity to practice speaking in the FL. The main goal of FL learning is the development of communicative competence but, without practicing using the FL for meaningful communication, this goal cannot be attained.

In an attempt to find a possible solution to this problem I decided to create an extracurricular, after-school English project, where I could introduce a group of Russian elementary school children to actually speaking in English with the help of Arts-based activities. Specifically, I wanted to create a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which

children would be given an opportunity to use the English skills and knowledge they had already acquired for meaningful communication, centered around the process of picturebook creation. This after-school project was to become the basis for my study, in which I attempted to investigate if the incorporation of Arts-based in a FL after-school classroom would (1) lead my students into the state of flow and (2) raise their willingness to communicate in English. The decision to focus my research on flow and L2 WTC was based on the following reasons: (1) flow was identified as the “zone of optimal learning” (Schoenoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) and as a state, opposite to anxiety and boredom; and (2) conversational interaction is an essential part of L2 learning (Mackey, 1999) and L2 WTC is the most immediate determinant of L2 use (Clément et al., 2003) – so L2 WTC is a highly important “prerequisite” of L2 learning.

Since the project I intended to design and implement was an after-school one, I knew I would be unimpeded by curricular obligations and would be given the freedom to experiment. This way, the basic L2 learning objectives could be reached in the students’ regular L2 class (where they were taught by their regular teacher), whereas I could dedicate all my class time to the fusion of Arts and speaking English.

Picturebook creation in an afterschool L2 program

Inspired by my discovery of the educational potential of picturebooks (thanks to the brilliant course on picturebooks I attended at the University of Georgia at Athens), I envisioned and developed an afterschool arts-based L2 program for beginning learners of English, centered around the process of creating picturebooks by upper elementary school students under my guidance. I chose picturebook creation for my project over other Arts-based activities because, in picturebooks, “the meaning emerges through the interplay of word and image” (Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p.7), and the creation of a picturebook involves three kinds of creative processes –

(1) creating the plot of the story, (2) creating the visual images, and (3) creating the textual captions. I realized that just drawing or painting would only tap into students' visual intelligence. Composing stories in L2 would only engage the verbal realm of creativity and would require a higher level of L2 proficiency. Meanwhile, the creation of a picturebook encompasses multiple facets of creativity, as well as multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993), and a variety of L2 activities. Besides drawing visual images and writing verbal captions, it involves the reading of the published picturebooks, discussing students' picturebook ideas, binding the finished picturebooks, and presenting them before an audience of peers and adults. I hoped that the process of picturebook creation could transform an L2 classroom into a creative workshop, permeated with the spirit of collective discovery and flow, and at the same time into a special L2 environment, where students would feel safe and excited about speaking in L2.

I volunteered to teach an after-school English 5th-grade class at a public secondary school of a large, provincial, industrial Russian city. The lessons I prepared for and conducted in this class were based on creation of picturebooks by 5th-grade volunteers. The process of picturebook creation was combined with discussions of famous picturebooks in the English language and conversations in L2 between the teacher and students. The project became the basis for my dissertation study and was conducted during one school semester, from January, 2016, through the end of May, 2016. The main goal of this study was to investigate if my Arts-based approach, centered around picturebook creation, would lead students into flow and influence their L2 WTC.

Gaps in previous research

My search for academic sources of information on the use of arts-based creativity and flow in FL/L2 education, which I undertook seeking useful teaching methodology, has yielded

rather scant results (Anderson & Chang, 2013; Baker, 2013; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005; Shernoff et al., 2003). Most of the existing research on the use of creativity concerned L1 education (Lorimer, 2011), whereas the research on creativity in FL/L2 classrooms mostly focused on ESL classes in the USA and UK context (Craig & Paraiso, 2009). The few existing studies on creativity and flow in FL education focused on university FL instruction and higher linguistic competence level (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013). On the other hand, I found a few studies on flow in primary and elementary schools, but they did not specifically focus on L2 instructional settings (Andersen, 2005). Also, they studied flow in a few selected developed countries, whereas no research about flow in elementary and middle schools has been revealed in developing countries, such as Russia. Arts-based creativity and flow in low proficiency L2/FL classrooms, particularly the use of visual arts and student created picturebooks in L2 learning, still remains an under-researched area.

The relationship between creativity and flow in L2 classrooms, including the potential of creative activities to induce flow, has not yet been explored either. The construct of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has also been explored more extensively in the higher L2 competence contexts (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Xie, 2011), whereas no studies have addressed L2 WTC in elementary and middle school L2 classrooms. It has not been investigated if students' L2 WTC can improve due to arts-based creative activities and flow in a L2 classroom. This dissertation is an attempt to fill some of these gaps.

Study goals

This dissertation study focuses on whether or not flow and L2 WTC of upper elementary school Russian English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) students can be fostered with the help of a creative, Arts-based approach to L2 teaching, namely through integrating picturebook creation

and discussion activities in an after-school EFL program. As a practicing EFL teacher, it was important for me to find out if such an Arts-based approach would be beneficial for all learners or just those with a higher artistic potential. I also wanted to investigate the dynamics of flow and L2 WTC in such a program and determine what factors these dynamics depend upon, in order to provide other creative L2 teachers with recommendations on how to foster flow in an arts-based L2 program.

Research Questions

Taking into consideration the targets of this research and the existing research gaps, the research questions guiding my study were the following:

1. How can the activity of picturebook creation foster flow in an L2 classroom, particularly in the EFL setting?

1a. Can flow occur during the activity of picturebook creation?

1b. If yes, what are the dynamics of flow in such a context?

1c. Which factors do the dynamics of flow depend on?

2. In which ways does the creation of picturebooks in L2 influence early L2 learners' L2 WTC?

2a. What are the dynamics of L2 WTC changes in an L2 classroom where L2 learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation?

2b. How can we explain the dynamics of change in L2 WTC for individual students in such a context?

Significance of the study

This study is significant for many reasons. First, it focuses on students in high-needs Russian public secondary schools, where English learning outcomes are below the expectations

(Sokolova & Shelepova, 2014). Starting from the year 2020, The State Matriculation Exam in L2 will be mandatory for all Russian secondary school graduates and their future career will depend, to a large extent, on their performance on this exam (Sokolova & Shelepova, 2014). However, ineffective English teaching in the majority of Russian provincial schools, along with the rarity of encounters between Russian people and their Western counterparts, contributes to Russian youths' negative attitude towards the learning of English in general. This study is an attempt to integrate arts in L2 learning in order to turn L2 learning into flow experience and create a "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where EFL learners can practice their communicative skills.

Second, this study is an attempt to fill the gap in the existing research on the use of arts-based approaches in FL teaching and provide other creative and artistically minded FL teachers worldwide with an account of how teachers can use their own creative potential and that of their students to try and boost FL learning outcomes even in situations of economic crisis, limited governmental support of the public school system, low access to modern technology, and rare opportunities of authentic communication with native speakers of the studied language. Finally, this study explores the opportunities and benefits of interdisciplinary integration, namely of L2 and Arts education.

Dissertation Outline

The dissertation is divided into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 has introduced the background of the study, stated the existing problems, and posed the research questions.
- Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to the study's theoretical framework: Vygotsky's views on creativity in education and the recent research on the

benefits of arts-based creativity in L2 education; Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow and the potential of using flow in arts-based L2 teaching and learning; the key role of L2 WTC in successful L2 learning and the existing empirical research on L2 WTC in L2 education.

- Chapter 3 describes the study's research methodology, the methods of data collection and data analysis, research design, and study participants.
- Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the study data pertaining to research sub-questions 1a and 1b. It presents the analysis of flow in each participant's case and the dynamics of flow in the experimental arts-based EFL classroom.
- Chapter 5 analyzes the data pertaining to research sub-question 1c seeking to identify the major factors that contributed to student flow in the experimental classroom.
- Chapter 6 presents the analysis of the dynamics of the participants' L2 WTC over the semester of study.
- Chapter 7 focuses on four selected participant's individual characteristics, including their personality traits and participation in the classroom activities, and seeks to identify the major factors contributing to the development of their L2 WTC in such a context.
- Chapter 8 summarizes the study findings, presents the study's implications for L2 acquisition theory and pedagogy, critically reflects on the strengths and limitations of the utilized arts-based approach, provides recommendations for creative L2 teachers, and suggests avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2

CREATIVITY, FLOW, AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN L2

EDUCATION: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a literature review of the three domains pertinent to my research questions: (1) arts-based creativity in L2 education, (2) flow in L2 learning, and (3) willingness to communicate in L2 (L2 WTC) in L2 research and education. In order to lay the theoretical foundation for my investigation of the first research question, “How can the creative activity of picturebook creation foster Flow in an L2 classroom, particularly in the EFL setting?” I explore the domains of arts-based creativity and flow and their respective roles in L2 education. The first part of my literature review is dedicated to creativity in general and arts-based creativity in particular. I explore (1) creativity in L2 learning through the lens of Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory; (2) cathartic properties of creativity; and (3) arts-based creativity in L2 education. I will begin by defining creativity.

What is creativity?

Although the concept of creativity has been known in Judaic, Greco-Roman, and Christian traditions, it has been enjoying a “global renaissance of interest” (Tanggaard, 2011, p. 219) since the 1990’s as a response to the economic demands and the unforeseen challenges of the rapidly changing world (Shaheen, 2010; Cropley, 2004; Craft, 2003). Shaheen (2010) emphasizes the economic reasons of redefining the role of creativity in the modern education as the “wealth of nations depends on how well creativity is fostered in children during their school years” (p. 166). Since the role of creativity started to be seen as crucial in economy, it also began

to be fostered in education and attempts have been made throughout the world, and particularly in the U.S.A., to “bring creativity from the fringes of education to its core and even proclaim creativity a fundamental life skill” (Craft, 1999). According to O’Donnell and Micklethwaite (1999), who reviewed the curricula of 16 developed countries, including the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., France, China, Germany, Japan, and Singapore, creativity was included in all of them at various educational levels. At the same time, in the majority of developing countries creativity in education remains mostly neglected (Oral, 2006).

Although the role of creativity has begun to be regarded as “central to language learning and language teaching” (Kilianska-Przybylo, 2012, p. 72), researchers do not agree on a clear and consistent definition of creativity (Pope, 2005; Tanggaard, 2011). In most general terms, creativity is defined as a process leading to novel outcomes or actions (Sternberg, 2006) or as the ability to produce something novel and useful (Kilianska-Przybylo, 2012), while to create means to act in a new and significant way (Mason, 2003). Creativity is associated with “imagination, originality, discovery, innovation and invention” (Kilianska-Przybylo, 2012, p. 71).

In his book *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood* (2004, originally published in 1930), Vygotsky defined a creative act as “any human act that gives rise to something new, regardless of whether what is created is a physical object or some mental or emotional construct that lives within the person who created it and is known only to him” (p.7). This definition of creativity was particularly useful for this dissertation study as the picturebook creation process includes both physical objects (the picturebooks themselves) and mental constructions (their plots and characters evolving in the imagination of their creators). In the next sub-section, I review the two main dimensions of creativity as they appear in research literature.

Two dimensions of creativity

To date, creativity has been mostly viewed in two dimensions. On the one hand, it includes the characteristics of a genius (i.e. a person with exceptional talents), and on the other hand, creativity is “commonly associated with divergent thinking” (Kilianska-Przybylo, 2012, p. 72). In the same vein, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) distinguishes between “Big C” creativity - referring to the creativity of outstanding achievements - and “little c” creativity, or the “popular” creativity of the general public dealing with everyday problems in novel ways. A useful framework for thinking about creativity was outlined by Glăveanu (2010), who suggested a tri-fold paradigm of creativity: “He-creativity” as the creative activity of a genius; “I-creativity”, in which each individual is considered to have creative potential; and “We-creativity”, which is creativity at a community level, or collaborative creativity. Vygotsky (1997, 2004) placed a special emphasis on the two latter kinds of creativity, namely the everyday creativity of every individual, which he called “mundane creativity”, and creativity at a community level. These two aspects of creativity laid the cornerstone of this study as it was based on the creative effort of each study participant and their collective effort as a group, united by the common goal of creating picturebooks.

In the next segment of this chapter I dwell more on the “mundane creativity”, as it was the creativity of ordinary people, namely ordinary elementary school students, that was relevant for my study.

Mundane creativity

Vygotsky’s concept of “mundane creativity”, which means “earthly”, everyday creativity, became the theoretical basis of my study, because I intended to conduct my research among Russian school children with no particular background in visual arts and they were not expected

to create picturebooks of outstanding artistic merit. It was not the high artistic quality of their picturebooks that I hoped to achieve – my goal was to see if the very process of picturebook creation would lead my students into the state of flow and influence their L2 WTC. Therefore, I was looking for a theoretical foundation for my arts-based approach to L2 teaching, and specifically for proof that creativity was accessible to everyone.

I found such proof in Vygotsky (2004), who points out that understanding of creativity as “the realm of a few selected individuals, geniuses, talented people, who produce great works of art” (p. 10) is both simplistic and incorrect. Vygotsky argues that the majority of inventions have been produced throughout the history of mankind by unknown individuals and describes creativity as a continuum, available to a varying degree to all people. Moreover, he considers “mundane creativity” as an essential condition of human existence that comprises everything “that goes beyond the rut of routine and involves innovation, albeit only a tiny amount” (p. 11). Vygotsky’s concept of mundane creativity, which postulates that each person is endowed with the ability to create, can serve as a theoretical ground for my arts-based L2 teaching approach and similar approaches, where both teachers and students can participate in arts-based creative activities without necessarily possessing unique artistic talents.

Vygotsky (2004) underscores the importance of creativity and imagination in human life and maintains that all human beings have access to the creative ability called imagination. He argues that imagination permeates all aspects of cultural life, without which no artistic, scientific, or technical achievement would be possible.

Vygotsky also distinguishes between reproductive and creative activities maintaining that reproduction can only orient a human being towards the past, whereas creation orients people toward the future - alters the present and creates the future. This view underscores the

importance of reducing reproduction and fostering creativity in education, as the main goal of education is to prepare students for the future and help them envision something that might not have precedents in the past or present.

Creativity in children

It appears that childhood is the period when creativity is especially salient in human beings. Vygotsky (2004) postulated that all people are born creative but, as children become adults, the majority of them gradually lose their creative abilities. According to Vygotsky, imagination undergoes significant changes involving adaptation to rational requirements around the age of puberty. Before this age, all children eagerly draw, no matter their artistic ability. Their reason willingly accepts what their imagination produces and they are completely satisfied with their creative endeavors.

The period of adolescence, however, shatters the equilibrium between imagination and reason. According to Vygotsky (2004), adolescents begin to perceive their artistic ability more objectively and the majority of them lose their previous interest in drawing. At this point, the leading creative activity becomes literary creation but, due to the same reason, creative writing soon gets discarded by many as well.

Taking into account the puberty-related issues of creativity, Vygotsky emphasizes the particular importance of cultivating creativity in school children as he believes “the entire future of humanity will be attained through the creative imagination” (p. 88). This information on age-related issues of creativity was particularly significant for my study, as it prompted me to focus in my research on elementary school children, as at this developmental stage children are still most fit for creative efforts.

Describing creativity in children, Vygotsky (2004) underscores its syncretistic nature, which means that children do not perceive different arts as separate entities. Thus, children do not draw a distinct line between poetry and prose or narrative and drama. The child can draw and tell stories at the same time. This insight was very important in terms of my study as picturebooks are a syncretistic genre lying at the intersection of visual arts and story-telling and the creation of a picturebook includes a wide range of creative activities from thinking up its plot to drawing visual images and writing captions for them (Salisbury & Styles, 2012).

It is noteworthy that Vygotsky's understanding of creativity includes any modifications and innovations to what already is in existence and not necessarily something entirely novel. In terms of my research, where the L2 learners were expected to imitate to a considerable extent their teacher's and/or peers' creative efforts, it is noteworthy what Vygotsky wrote about the role of imitation in learning. Imitation, in Vygotsky's (1987) view, is not simply "mimicking, repeating, or parroting" - rather, it is a "creative, transformative activity that only humans are genuinely capable of" (Lantolf, 2005, p. 337). In other words, imitation is not an antithesis to creativity – on the contrary, it is a vital part of creativity. Imitation should not be understood as simply a mechanical activity in which anyone can imitate anything. On the contrary, imitation means "stepping from something one knows into something new" (p. 187), which can be accomplished with someone else's assistance. Vygotsky's view on imitation was important for my study as I realized that, if I was to introduce arts-based activities in a foreign language classroom, I would need to model some simple drawing techniques for my students. At least at the beginning of the arts-based L2 program, my students would have to rely on imitation, before they could proceed to their own creative efforts.

In terms of my study, another notion by Vygotsky, namely that of creative “catharsis”, has a special significance because it underlines the relationship between creativity and emotions. Since emotions are inherently related to flow and WTC, the two foci of this study, I explore Vygotsky’s notion of “catharsis” in more detail in the following section.

Cathartic properties of creativity

Vygotsky (2004) argues that, while emotion influences imagination, imagination also influences emotion. He calls this phenomenon “the law of the emotional reality of imagination” (p. 19). Vygotsky points out that every construct of our imagination affects our feelings, and, even though such constructs do not necessarily correspond to reality, the feelings they evoke “are real feelings, feelings a person truly experiences” (p. 20). Thus, readers of books and theatre audiences are affected by the plights and exploits of imaginary characters, “their joys and sorrows move, disturb, and excite us, despite the fact that we know these are not real events, but rather the products of fantasy” (p. 20). Such close relationship between imagination and emotions seems to be particularly important as applied to L2 classrooms, where emotions have been known to affect learners’ WTC (Kang, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007). Creative tasks can activate L2 learners’ imagination, become a source of positive emotions, and ultimately boost their WTC. Therefore, this relationship between creativity and WTC was important in terms of my Research Question 2: **“In which ways does the creation of picturebooks in L2 influence early L2 learners’ L2 WTC?”**

Underlining the role of emotions in children’s imagination and creativity, Vygotsky proposed the idea of creative “catharsis”, stating that “people are liberated through an explosion of emotions, which makes the imagination flourish as it interprets these emotions” (Lindqvist, 2003, p. 247). Vygotsky identified “catharsis” as the transformative potential of creative process.

Catharsis occurs when the creative juxtaposition of conflicting emotions implodes to produce something novel that has not existed before. In the cathartic moment, individuals and groups overcome the past, transforming perceptions of themselves, others, and the world. In this manner, the creative process touches the future (Marjanovic-Shane et al., 2010, p. 228).

Imagination helps children liberate their emotions. Thus, they create their own interpretation of what they have experienced, similar to artists creating their works of art. This view supports the idea that creativity should become an important constituent of children's learning. It is quite telling that such important aspects of art as absurdities, inversions, and nonsense are very typical to children's play (Lindqvist, 2003). Using these affordances of play and creativity, the child gets liberated from insecurities and fears. This underlines the value of creativity in school education as a motivational and therapeutic tool.

Mulholland (2004), for example, shared his own experiences of creating comics as an art therapy tool. Drawing comics and expressing himself through his characters helped him in his childhood and youth to overcome his fears and insecurities. He holds that autobiographical comics can be used as a therapeutic device by both children and adults - but children can relate to this medium better since they are more familiar with comic books. Children and adolescents suffering from insecurities and low self-esteem can benefit from the "cathartic" properties of creative activities. In the same way, the process of picturebook creation could help my students release negative emotions by describing the adventures of their characters.

Thus far, I have reviewed Vygotsky's views on creativity in general and on its role in children's development, including its cathartic properties, in particular. The notion of "catharsis" pointed at the link between creativity and WTC. Also, according to Vygotsky, all children are

open to creativity, especially before they have reached puberty. This suggested to me that an arts-based approach can be best applied in an elementary or early middle school classroom. In the next section, I will focus on the role of creativity in L2 education and on two related understandings of creativity – problem-solving and arts-based creativity.

Creativity in L2 education: problem-solving and arts-based creativity

Learning to use a language is an inherently creative process (Kramsch, 2009). Each time we use a language, we make a creative effort as we create a new utterance. It becomes especially salient when we are learning and using a foreign language. According to Clarke (2012), creativity is a favorable condition for L2 learning because “the use of any language is inherently creative, as thinking, re-enacting the speech, thought and lexis of another foreign culture inspires creativity in itself” (p. 5). Creativity in L2 education is the opposite of the traditional paradigm in education, “privileging transmission and a conformist, passive reproduction of stereotyped forms” (Clarke, p. 4). Kramsch (2009) compares L2 learning to painting on a blank canvas – “I can use any of the tools I have to create a living work of art” (p. 65).

L2 teachers and learners constantly resort to “cultural drag” (Wooten, 2010), in the sense that they consciously perform their imaginary “native-speaker” identity. Taking into account this performative, creative essence of L2 learning, it is natural to believe that by fostering our creativity we can enhance our learning of world languages (Cahnmann-Taylor & Preston, 2008). Kilianska-Przybylo (2012) is confident that creativity is indispensable in L2 learning because “creativity promotes active noticing” (p. 73). To sum up, creativity must permeate L2 teaching and be tapped upon in L2 classrooms on a daily basis.

Tanggaard (2011) identifies two basic types of creativity as it is applied in language education as problem-solving creativity and arts-based creativity. The problem-solving

understanding of creativity, which can be broadly defined as “finding new solutions to life’s ubiquitous dilemmas” (p. 230), should necessarily permeate L2 learning, due to its improvisational character and the demand to act in novel ways on the part of the learner. Cahnmann-Taylor and Preston (2008) argue that creativity and critical thinking are “practical, necessary life skills for all students, especially for those developing proficiency in English as a second or additional language, who navigate within and across social and linguistic communities” (p. 241).

Arts-based creativity is an essential part of problem-solving creativity, as it provides opportunities to find novel solutions to existing problems through the use of various art forms (Tangaard, 2011). Chappell & Cahnmann-Taylor (2013) underline the importance of student engagement in art processes as the crucial means of their general development:

When students engage in arts processes, they develop distinct and complementary social practices: developing craft, engaging and persisting, envisioning, expressing, observing, reflecting, stretching and exploring, and understanding art worlds (p. 247).

Unfortunately, arts-based creativity often gets rejected by educators as something too “nebulous” for pedagogical needs (Cross, 2012). Referring to Vygotsky (1986), who emphasized the importance of creativity, imagination, and emotion for human cognition and development, Cross (2012) argues for the inclusion of arts-based creativity into various domains of school curricula. Cahnmann-Taylor and Zhang (2017) advocate for the inclusion of arts in L2 education and in the professional preparation of TESOL teachers. The researchers argue that “teaching English through artistic forms of expression provides students with an aesthetic product of their own creation to care about: a poem, a painting, a story, a play – these can all serve as catalysts for meaningful English language use about art making processes and products” (Cahnmann-

Taylor & Zhang, 2017, p. 4). Since my study was conceived within the framework of Arts-Based L2 instruction, I was searching for academic sources describing the fusion of the arts and L2 teaching. I found that various attempts have been made to date to incorporate arts-based instruction into the school curricula.

Arts-based approaches in L2 education

Arts-infused learning was observed by Lorimer (2011) in four U.S. middle schools. The researcher provides convincing evidence that infusing visual and performing arts into language arts, math, science, and social studies as a pedagogical approach fosters a meaningful, integrative, and exploratory curriculum. Lorimer points out that infusing arts on a regular basis in all curricular areas not only provides rich and relevant learning experiences but also has the potential to engage disenfranchised students. The researcher observes that students were working on the arts-based projects with focused effort, interest, and high engagement. Although Lorimer's study does not specifically address L2 learning, it sheds light on how arts can be incorporated in the core curriculum subjects.

In another study of art integration, Baker (2013) explored the practice of teaching core content subjects, such as reading, language, science, and social studies, with the help of arts-based hands-on projects, in which such media as drama, dance, music, and visual arts were utilized. In Baker's study, the arts were integrated with content subjects through the use of thematic units, in which various activities included drawing illustrations, poetry writing, costume design, dance, musicals, plays, and multimedia production. The important finding of this study was that instruction of any subject can be "interwoven with the arts to yield rich and complex forms of learning for children that promote conceptual and intellectual development" (p. 13).

In another study, Anderson and Chung (2013) focused on implementing arts in community language teaching, namely, in the teaching of such languages as Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi, and Tamil, in English public schools. Advocating for the inclusion of the arts in community language learning, the researchers point out that “it is through the arts in all their forms that young people experiment with and try to articulate their deepest feelings” (p. 4). In particular, the teachers commented on how the creation of dual language comic books “developed students’ translation and reference skills as well as their awareness of language” (p. 13). Among the benefits of the approach, the researchers named the stimulating context for developing language skills and meaningful tasks which give learners a voice.

The studies described above informed my research in terms of demonstrating that arts could be successfully integrated into any curriculum subjects. In the next sub-section, I review the studies specifically focusing on the use of various arts in L2 classrooms.

Arts-based creativity in L2 classrooms includes the use of various art forms: drama, dance, poetry, visual arts, digital design, and creating comic books. All these artistic genres have been recently used in various contexts of L2 teaching in order to foster different aspects of L2 learners’ language development. The benefits of poetry writing in learning ESOL are the focus of Cahnmann-Taylor and Preston’s (2008) study, in which the authors refute the notorious misconception that poetry is “an elite craft reserved for those who have both talent and Standard English proficiency” (p. 235). Arguing that creativity is a necessary life skill for all students developing L2 proficiency, the authors maintain that poetry can be a powerful tool for “developing students’ love of language, especially students in the early stages of Standard English language acquisition” (p. 235).

Hanauer's (2012) approach to teaching college EFL through poetry, which he calls "meaningful literacy instruction", is informed by the sense of richness of every L2 learner's internal world. He shares the schematic outline of his teaching L2 poetry writing, which starts with introductory reading of other people's poetry, goes on to the exploration of a specific poetry genre, and finishes with production of students' own poetry and sharing it with an audience of significant people, including peers and relatives. I adopted a similar succession of work stages for my dissertation study, in which the participants were first to be introduced to the world of picturebooks, then produced their own picturebooks under the teacher's guidance, and finally shared them with their parents, teachers, and friends.

In a study on EFL teaching and learning in Turkish universities, Sađlamel & Kayaođlu (2013) found evidence that creative drama activities in L2 classrooms alleviate foreign language anxiety, lower affective filter, and raise learners' intrinsic motivation to studying foreign languages. After MacIntyre & Gardner's (1994) work on L2 anxiety, it has become common knowledge that high anxiety in L2 learning leads to inhibition and interferes with L2 language development. Sađlamel & Kayaođlu argue that, since language anxiety is identity-based, using arts-based activities pushes learners to "an imaginary realm which might cover their identities and reduce the threat to the self" (p. 379). One of the activities of that study included improvisations, in which learners were to assume novel roles and be engaged in spontaneous speaking. As a result, students' apprehension of making mistakes in L2 speaking was alleviated, since, in their perception, it was their selected characters and not themselves, who were making mistakes.

The concept of language anxiety is very closely related to L2 WTC (which will be discussed later in this chapter). That is why this study was informative in terms of my Research

Question 2 focusing on fostering L2 WTC with the help of the picturebook creation project. In a similar vein, I envisioned that creative activities would allow my students to step out of their school identities and immerse themselves in the world of their imagination, thus fostering their L2 WTC. The Turkish researchers reported a significant decrease in the levels of foreign language anxiety in those students who participated in the creative drama program.

Dicks and Le Blanc (2009) conducted a study on the use of drama activities in a Canadian high school French-as-a-L2 classroom and found that learners' motivation to studying French increased through the acquired sense of ownership over their drama productions. This gave me a reason to expect my study participants' motivation to increase as a result of their ownership of the picturebook production and their new sense of agency. So far, I have reviewed the implementations of creative activities based on poetry and drama, which seem to have been incorporated more extensively in L2 classrooms than visual arts. In the next section, I focus on the implementation of visual arts in L2 education, a much less researched area.

Incorporating visual arts in L2 education

Craig and Paraiso (2008) maintain that visual art can serve as a facilitating tool for L2 learners. Their study showed that visual art can become “a perfect bridge from the past world” to the “present circumstances” (p. 23) for immigrant children just beginning to learn English. The high affective filter and the low expectations on the part of the school authorities make it difficult for beginning ESL learners to speak English in class. The researchers argue that engaging adolescent ESL students in free self-expression through drawing, painting, and creating illustrations lowers the affective filter and creates a non-threatening environment conducive to successful learning of their new language.

The participants of the study were given opportunities to create individual artwork in the classroom, which was followed by sharing their creations. The researchers provided the art supplies and encouraged the students to freely choose any themes for their art. The artwork was displayed around the classroom and the participants took particular pride describing their creations. As a result, “the use of vocabulary increased as they shared with each other” (p. 18) and students gained L2 confidence - “the natural flow of language used when describing their art carried over to content area subject instruction and language learning” (p. 18). The researchers also noted that along with the growing confidence of students in using various art techniques, their confidence in using English also increased – “often the students would collaborate with each other, communicating in Spanish at first, but increasingly in English” (p. 22). The major finding of this study is that incorporation of visual art into L2 classes lowers L2 learners’ affective filter and contributes to their L2 communicative confidence. Taking into account that affective filter and L2 communicative confidence are important factors influencing WTC (see the Pyramid Model, p. 58), these findings were highly relevant for my proposed research, – as one of its goals was to find out whether or not the process of picturebook creation in an afterschool L2 classroom would foster students’ L2 WTC.

Pictorial narratives, such as comic books, picturebooks, and graphic novels have been used in L2 classrooms mostly as “read-alouds” (Ranker, 2007; Hsiu-Chih, 2008), during which the teachers perceived their role as that of a mediator, whose job was not to transmit knowledge to students but to encourage their active participation. In Hsiu-Chih’s (2008) study, EFL teachers perceived three main educational values of picturebooks in the following hierarchy: (1) linguistic value, (2) the value of the story, and (3) the value of the picture.

My search for studies analyzing the actual creation of picturebooks by students yielded rather scant results. One of them was a qualitative study by Zapata (2013) on picturebook making and the development of young Latino students' bilingual composing processes. The study findings suggest that picturebook study and picturebook making can become useful creative and intellectual acts for elementary school students. Zapata (2013) found that picturebook making not only afforded various literary and artistic composition resources, but also provided opportunities for bilingual students to “embrace their in and out of school resources and identities as composers of many texts, in many languages, and in many modalities” (p. 248).

In another study, Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat (2002) focused on the use of student-created comic-books in helping middle school students develop their writing, comprehension, and research skills. Besides discussing the advantages of using comic-book design in a language classroom, the authors share some valuable tips on the construction of a comic book, which I found useful for my project. For example, they recommend drawing “each panel as realistically as possible”, keeping drawings simple and avoiding too much detail (p. 762). The authors also share important advice on using different “camera angles” (close-ups, medium shots, high angles, low angles) in pictures to avoid sameness on the page.

The most important insight I drew from Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat (2002) was the stance that such creative projects do not aim at creating fine pieces of art - however, “if the teacher reminds students of a few simple guidelines, their end products will be more visually pleasing” (p. 762). This suggested to me that, even though I should not aim for high artistic quality in my students’ creations, I could help them to stay excited about the project by giving them the necessary directions that would lead them to more pleasing results.

I also found out that, besides the benefits of the actual process of creation, the resulting student-created artifacts can be used as elicitation devices. According to Clarke (2012), the work with visual images in a L2 classroom facilitates communication with children in the L2 as images can be used as elicitation devices. Visual images created by children can also be used as artifacts for analysis and serve as mechanisms for empowering children in conversations with adults (Clarke, 2012). This finding supported my assumption that the process of picturebook creation and my conversations with students about their creations, could endow my students with the feelings of agency, authorship, and control, which could foster flow in my experimental classroom.

Another benefit of the inclusion of arts in L2 instruction is that artistic processes “involve abundant opportunities to teach failure and revision” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Zhang, 2017). Cahnmann-Taylor and Zhang (2017) argue that the process of artistic creation teaches students that “to fail is a necessary part of success”, and that through arts production L2 learners come to realize “the need to take risks, to explore and make mistakes, to start over again and learn from the process” (p. 4).

With regards to my research questions, the main findings of my literature review so far have been the following: (1) all children are born creative and have creative potential (Vygotsky, 2004); (2) arts-based creative activity brings about the implosion of emotions which leads to “catharsis” – the state in which the creator releases his or her fears and insecurities and is filled with positive emotions; (3) arts-based creativity can boost students’ academic achievement by motivating them to study and empowering them; and (4) the research on the implementation of arts-based creativity in L2 classrooms has been scant, particularly on the use of picturebooks and other pictorial narrative forms.

Another important finding my review yielded was the close relationship between creativity and flow. Among the certain necessary conditions that need to be present in order for the creative process to take place, Clarke (2012) names the following: (1) a meaningful subject, as lack of meaning entails lack of interest; (2) experimentation resulting from exploration that leads to a discovery; (3) fearlessness, as the willingness to try and to go against the current; (4) innovation, as the ability to come up with new ways of thinking and doing things; and (5) abandonment and enjoyment, as the ability to immerse oneself totally in the experience (p. 3). Many of these “ingredients” of creativity are also present in the state of flow as it is described by its main theorist, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997).

In the second part of this chapter I continue to lay the theoretical foundations for my Research Question 1 and its sub-questions focusing on flow and review the existing research on (1) the theory of flow; (2) the educational potential of flow as the “zone” of optimal learning; and (3) the implementations of flow in L2 education.

Theory of Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1989, 1990, 1996, 1997) defines flow as an experiential state characterized by intense focus and complete involvement which leads to improved performance on a given task. One of the important characteristics of flow is that people, while in this state, are “so involved in an activity nothing else seems to matter; experience itself so memorable, they seek it out even at great cost, for sheer enjoyment” (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 135). By interviewing people from various backgrounds about their flow experiences, Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) identified the phenomenological characteristics of flow as follows:

From rock climbers to chess players to accomplished scientists and artists, optimal experiences in diverse activities were often described in similar terms: intense

concentration and absorption in an activity with no psychic energy left over for distractions, a merging of awareness with action, a feeling of control, loss of self-consciousness, and a contraction of the normal sense of time (p. 137).

Flow, therefore, is defined as a psychological state in which one's awareness merges with the action, when one's concentration, interest, and enjoyment are at the highest, the experience itself is rewarding, or "autotelic", and is, therefore, intrinsically motivating. Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) describe flow as the "subjective buoyancy of experience when skillful and successful actions seem effortless, even when a great deal of physical or mental energy is exerted" (p. 137). This is what flow means. What are the conditions under which it occurs?

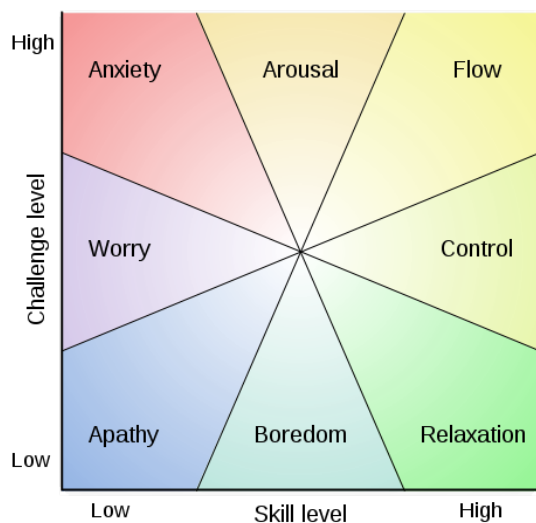


Figure 2.1. Whalen's model of flow (adopted from

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Challenge_vs_skill.svg).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), certain psychological states are determined by different combinations of high and low challenges and skills. As opposed to apathy (resulting from *low challenge* and *low skill*), relaxation (coming into play under the conditions of *high skill* but *low challenge*), and anxiety (born from *low skill* and *high challenge*), flow is the result of the

combined *high skill* and *high challenge*, as can be seen in the Model of Flow (Figure 2.1), proposed by Whalen (1997).

The chart above represents the necessary conditions for flow and other psychological states, with flow occurring at the intersection of *high challenge* and *high skill* and neighboring arousal and control. Apathy is the direct opposite of flow, whereas worry, anxiety, boredom, and relaxation are also incompatible with flow.

Flow potential for human learning

Flow can be present, in fact, in any human activities requiring a certain level of mastery and posing a certain level of challenge. According to Egbert (2003), flow has been investigated in various activities, such as dancing, surgery, reading, rock climbing, doing math, creating art, playing chess or video-games, and the list can go on. Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) note that the theory of flow is inherently related to learning, whether it is learning how to play chess, or learning math or foreign languages. As applied to education, learners experience flow when the task's challenge is high but not much beyond their current skill level. The ultimate goal of an effective teacher is, therefore, to have a good grasp of the skill level of their students and continuously provide them with learning tasks at a challenge level matching their skill level. If the task's challenge is too low, learning becomes boring. If the challenge is too high, learning can be stalled by students' anxiety. The balance between high challenge and high skill leads to success at a given task, which "motivates the person to repeat the task at a more challenging level and to use the skills gained previously to accomplish the more difficult task" (Egbert, p. 502). The more skillful people become, the more challenge they need to stay in the flow. Hektner and Csikszentmihalyi (1996) note that "in order to maintain the enjoyment of flow, people must continually engage in new challenges to match their increasing skills, and they must perfect

their skills to meet the challenges” (p. 4). This “addictiveness” of flow make it a perfect vehicle of learning. In a creative L2 classroom, the main responsibility of “flow-minded” educators would be monitoring the growing skill level of their students and raising the difficulty of learning tasks in order to sustain students’ flow.

Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) specify that it is challenging assignments that *slightly* stretch one's skills that lead to flow. This cognitive area that is “slightly beyond” the current skill level is similar to Vygotsky’s concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) also note that “much like Vygotsky’s *zone of proximal development*, the level in which most learning occurs is just one step beyond the skills one has already mastered” (p. 132). When children learn a new skill (for example, drawing a horse) the challenge level can far exceed their beginning skill level and they can be overwhelmed even by this task. To reach flow, they need to increase the skill level (e.g., learn how to draw a horse following the teacher’s instructions) until it matches the challenge. On the other end of the continuum, if the challenge is lower than their initial skill level (e.g., students are to draw a ball), students will neither learn anything, nor will they experience flow (as they will be in the state of boredom). According to Vygotsky (1997), when a task is easy and learners can do it on their own without any help, it is within their "comfort zone". If all the work a learner does is in the comfort zone, no learning will take place and the learner will eventually lose interest. When the activity is too hard, the learner becomes frustrated and in the "frustration zone" learners are likely to give up. The area between these two zones is the zone of proximal development and that is where all learning occurs. Just as Vygotsky’s “comfort zone” and “frustration zone” delineate the borders of ZPD, flow in Csikszentmihalyi’s theory borders on the states of relaxation and anxiety. Vygotsky emphasized the collective nature of ZPD by defining it as one step further from the

level of skill or knowledge previously attained by the learner which he or she achieves “under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The role of the teacher in facilitating flow among students should include providing increasingly challenging learning material to them but it is not limited by it. Teachers can also serve as role models for their students and help them increase their skill level, thus sustaining the state of flow in their classroom.

It must also be noted that not only high challenge and high skills can cause flow. Schmidt and Savage (1992), who conducted a study of flow in an EFL context in Thailand, found that leisure activities that neither presented high challenge nor required high skill also led students into flow. It has been concluded that flow can occur even when the challenge and skills are low (even though it had been previously thought to result in apathy), as long as the skill level is in balance with the challenge. Another model of flow was, therefore, proposed, which shows that flow is available at any developmental level and is not only a domain of highly skilled “experts”, but of “novices” as well (Figure 2.2).

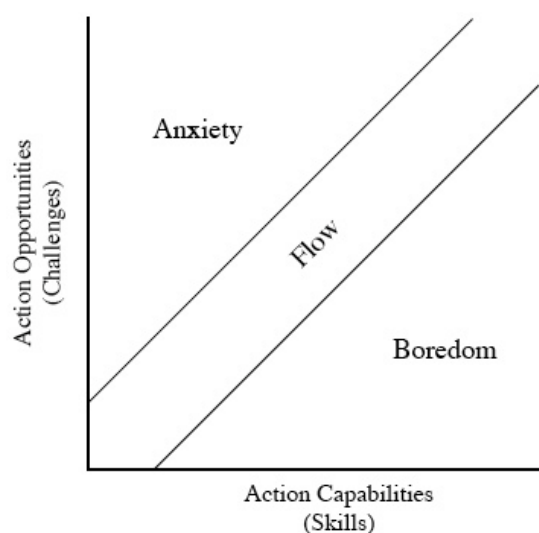


Figure 2.2. Csikszentmihalyi's Model of Flow (adopted from <https://comm160sc.wordpress.com/2011/05/04/facebook-stalking-and-flow/>).

The discovery of the fact that flow can exist in the conditions of low skill and challenge was very important for my study, as I could not expect my elementary school participants to have high level skills in either visual arts or English. Schmidt and Savage (1992) hypothesize that other variables might have come into play in their study, such as the feeling of control and interest, which allowed for flow to occur even when the task was not challenging. Indeed, flow involves the complex interplay of a number of variables, which are discussed in the next subsection.

Flow conditions and components

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 2007), the following conditions must be present for flow to occur:

- (1) *Clear task goals.* Flow is possible when learners know exactly what they are doing and what their aim is. Conflicting requirements breed confusion and are not conducive to flow.
- (2) *Balance between challenges and skills.* Flow occurs when the task's challenge is at the peak of or slightly beyond the students' skills. Too difficult task will lead to frustration, whereas too easy tasks result in boredom.
- (3) *Immediate feedback.* To maintain the state of flow one needs to know how well one is doing by getting feedback from their peers or mentors.
- (4) *Concentration, interest, and enjoyment.* These three components should occur simultaneously in order for flow to be present. Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) noted that school students can be forced to exert high levels of concentration but, if their heart is not in the activity, flow does not occur.

(5) Taking into account Schmidt and Savage's (1992) report, *control* over the activity should be added to the list of necessary conditions of flow. The possibility for learners to exercise at least some degree of control over the learning tasks is very important as it makes learning more meaningful for them and gives them agency.

Another question is how flow manifests itself – what signs can show us that the person is in the state of flow? Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) identified several components of flow, in which the “optimal experience” manifests itself and which help identify flow and “measure” its intensity:

- (1) *Merging of action and awareness*. While performing an activity which does not involve flow, people tend to get distracted and think about unrelated things. In the state of flow, people give their undivided attention to the task at hand.
- (2) *Complete absorption in the activity*. Concentration on the present moment leaves no room for distractions, anxieties, and insecurities.
- (3) *Loss of reflective self-consciousness*. People tend to lose much of their mental energy on what others think about them. In the state of flow you are so deeply engaged in the activity, the burdensome considerations of what image you produce to others cease to exist. This allows you to both boost your performance and set your anxiety aside.
- (4) *Activity becomes “autotelic”*. Flow-conducive activities are intrinsically rewarding and people tend to replicate and seek for such experiences due to the enjoyment they provide.
- (5) *The subjective perception of time is altered*. Time usually “flies” when you are absorbed in an intrinsically rewarding activity.

It has also been suggested (Chen et al., 1999) that the dimensions of flow can be categorized into three stages: *antecedents of flow* (matching levels of skills and challenge; clear

set of goals; timely feedback); *flow experiences* (merging of action and awareness; sense of control over the activity; concentration); and *flow effects* (loss of self-consciousness; time distortion; the feeling that the activity becomes autotelic). Flow experiences and flow effects can be used to identify flow, including in the classroom environment.

At the same time, the components of flow make this state an extremely valuable tool for L2 learning. The disappearance of self-consciousness and anxiety in the state of flow is the factor that can lower L2 anxiety and raise L2 students' L2 WTC. People who have experienced flow describe it as being "in the zone" or "in the groove" (Egbert, p. 499), in which all concerns, anxieties, and fears cease to exist, albeit temporarily. This benefit of flow is related to Vygotsky's idea of creative catharsis (see above, p. 23). Due to its positive, energizing effect on human emotions, flow, which is characterized by the feeling of spontaneous joy, even rapture, has been used in Occupational Therapy and is the cornerstone of Positive Psychology. As a state of complete absorption in an activity, flow represents the ultimate experience in harnessing human emotions in the process of performing and learning. These characteristics of flow allow researchers (Egbert, 2003) to call it the "optimal experience". As such, Flow can be extremely beneficial in education because, being an intrinsically rewarding experience, it can draw students' intrinsic motivation to learning.

Flow in L2 learning

According to Csikszentmihalyi (2007), flow in a L2 classroom increases L2 learners' intrinsic motivation for L2 studies. The researcher maintains that when it comes to L2 learning at public schools, intrinsic motivation is much more important than extrinsic motivation. The latter involves a clear understanding by learners of the extrinsic advantages and rewards they can achieve as a result of learning, such as obtaining a better job in the future. Prospects of a better

employment and other future benefits can motivate high school students and adult L2 learners but not elementary school children, for whom landing a more lucrative job is a rather remote concern. The most effective way to enhance motivation in younger L2 learners is to “make children aware of how much fun learning can be” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007, p. 3). Undoubtedly, intrinsic motivation is accessible to learners of all ages but it is especially important for younger ones, who are still “in touch” with the flow experienced in childhood games. Csikszentmihalyi (2007) argues that enhancing student intrinsic motivation by making learning engaging and enjoyable through flow is very useful, especially in high needs public schools:

In the first place, it is something teachers can do something about. Second, it should be easier to implement - it does not require expensive technology, although it does require sensitivity and intelligence, which might be harder to come by than the fruits of technology. Third, it is a more efficient and permanent way to empower children with the tools of knowledge. And finally, this strategy is preferable because it adds immensely to the enjoyment learners will take in the use of their abilities, and hence it improves the quality of their lives (p. 3).

However, it is not only motivation that can improve as a result of flow in learning. Since flow “encourages people to perform the activity repeatedly and engage in exploratory behaviors, people push themselves to higher levels of performance” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007, p. 74). This propensity of learners to replicate flow activities multiple times “because they are so enjoyable” (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 132) makes flow particularly attractive in the domain of L2 learning, where the ancient Latin principle “*repetitio est mater studiorum*” (“repetition is mother of learning”) reigns supreme in L2 classrooms around the globe. On the other hand, in order to maintain the flow, the learners will seek to acquire new skills that will match the

increasing level of challenge. On this ground, it can be claimed that flow, as the state of “optimal performance and optimal learning” (Egbert, 2003, p. 499), contributes to successful internalization of external L2 input by learners.

Figure 2.3 (below) illustrates how flow can be created in an appropriate L2 learning approach, which reciprocally benefits language learning through heightened focus, engagement, motivation, loss of self-consciousness, risk-taking, and exploratory behavior.

Model of the Relationship Between Flow and Language Acquisition

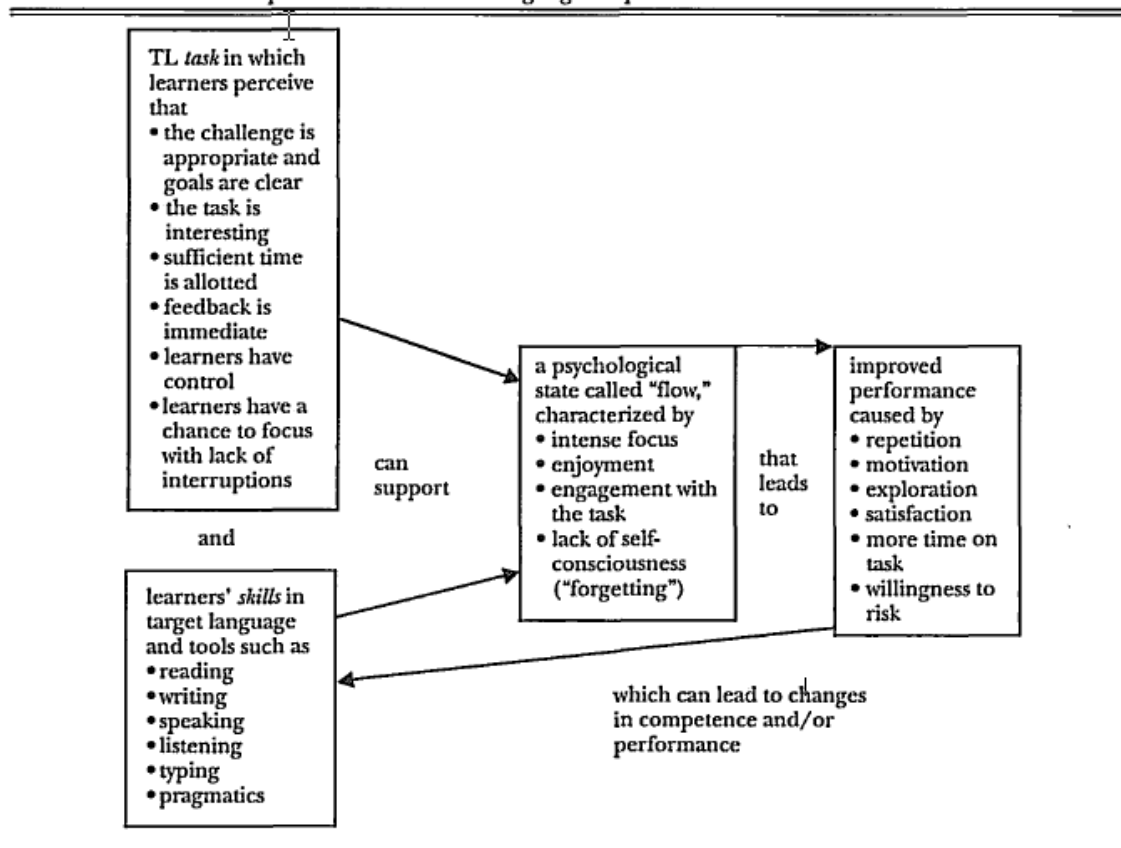


Figure 2.3. Model of flow in L2 learning (adopted from Egbert, 2003, p. 502).

To sum up, flow can play a highly beneficial role in education due to its positive influence on student intrinsic motivation and engagement with the subject. In terms of L2 learning, it adds three more positive factors: (1) students tend to replicate experiences leading to flow, which helps to practice and regurgitate language material and, eventually, internalize it; (2)

in order to stay in flow, students will seek to raise the level of challenge and this will result in the acquisition of new language skills; and (3) by immersing themselves in the activity and receiving positive emotions, students lose self-consciousness and lower their affective filter, which leads to higher communicative confidence and higher WTC in L2. The advisability of fostering flow among L2 learners in public schools can hardly be overestimated. However, the reality is such that the theory of flow has been rarely used in public education to date and there is little research on flow in L2 education. In the following section, I review what scarce research on flow in L2 education there is.

How can flow be fostered in L2 education?

Notwithstanding its benefits, flow seems to be a concept that is gaining popularity rather slowly in L2 education. More than a decade ago, Egbert (2003) wrote that although scholars have conducted theoretical and empirical research concerning the existence of flow in such educational activities as reading and using the computer, “flow has not yet been a focus of much research involving language acquisition” (p. 500). Egbert’s research confirmed the existence of flow in L2 classrooms. She also found that Flow Theory offers a useful framework for conceptualizing and evaluating language learning activities. Based on her findings, Egbert concluded that “teachers can theoretically facilitate the flow experience for students by developing tasks that might lead to flow” (p. 512). In order for teachers to prepare blueprints of their lessons that would facilitate flow among students, they need to have a good understanding of the factors that can bring about flow. In the following sub-section I review the factors that can facilitate flow in a L2 classroom.

Describing the findings of her research on flow in L2 classrooms, Egbert stated that flow experiences in this setting were facilitated by interactions between learners and native speakers,

since the latter provided the sense of authenticity and made the use of L2 by students more meaningful. In my study, this “authenticity” was to be provided both by the teacher (as the participants were aware that their teacher had spent several years in the USA and regarded him as a native speaker) and by the original American and British picturebooks we were reading and discussing during the introductory phase of each lesson.

Egbert found that the introduction of new tools and activities in a L2 classroom contributed to flow experiences, whereas “routine” activities may inhibit the flow experience (p. 514). Following Egbert’s suggestion, I kept introducing new tools to my students (in the form of drawing materials and binding tools) and diverse creative activities, including drawing black-and-white images, using colored pencils, making picturebook covers, and binding picturebooks, as the semester progressed.

Another important insight I gleaned from flow studies is the so called “paradox of control” (Di Bianca, 2000). Quite contrary to the assumption that teacher flow is conducive to student flow, Di Bianca’s study of flow in mathematics classrooms revealed that students were often not in flow when teachers were, and vice versa. This, according to the researcher, could be related to the issue of control - when the teachers are in control, they tend to enjoy instruction, whereas their students, who are lacking control, do not enjoy the learning process. On the other hand, students tend to enjoy situations when they are more in control. Therefore, in order to lead students into flow, teachers should be able to delegate the control over some learning activities to students.

At the same time, other researchers (Basom & Frase, 2004; Bakker, 2005), found high frequency of flow “crossover” between teachers and students, as teachers often indicated that their students’ high engagement caused their flow to occur, whereas students frequently reported

that their flow was caused by their teachers' enthusiasm. In other words, flow is "contagious". This information suggested to me that, in order to create flow in my classroom, I needed to be in flow myself and, at the same time, I was to empower my students by delegating the control of some learning tasks to my students.

Empirical studies of flow in L2 education

In the following sub-section I review the empirical studies that analyzed how flow and high student engagement were achieved in public and private schools in the U.S.A. and some other countries.

Researchers (Grabe & Stoller, 1997) suggest that flow in language classrooms can be achieved with the help of carefully planned, content-based activities. Shernoff et al. (2003) found that student engagement and likelihood of flow in educational settings were highest when instruction was perceived as challenging and relevant. This finding suggests that students are more engaged and more likely to be in flow when they perceive themselves active, competent, and in control. Also, student engagement was higher in the classrooms with above average levels of challenge and skill. Students were found to be more engaged in the activities where they had an opportunity to demonstrate their skills as opposed to settings where they were passive listeners of lectures. They also reported greater flow in small group cooperative learning tasks than during large group instruction.

Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) clarify that student engagement is based on two separate processes. On the one hand, challenge and relevance have strong influence on student concentration and interest. They refer to these aspects as "academic intensity" (p. 136). On the other hand, experiencing high skill and control increases positive affect, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation. The researchers refer to this process as "positive emotional response", which is less

cognitive in nature than academic intensity but is no less important as it facilitates and reinforces cognition. Also, the researchers found that academic intensity “appears to be more related to short-term performance” (p. 136), whereas the emotional aspect of engagement is a predictor of long-term performance and motivation. Their research findings allowed Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi to conclude that “optimal learning environments include activities that are challenging and relevant, and yet also allow students to feel confident and in control” (p. 137).

Optimally engaging teachers also need to provide emotionally supportive feedback and encouragement. Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) underline that teachers can provide emotional support to students by modelling “enthusiasm, humor, and risk-taking” (p. 138). Their research failed to reveal much flow or engagement in the U.S. public schools, but there were exceptions from this trend. A few exceptional learning contexts have been found where flow and high student engagement are the norm. Such cases of successful implementation of the Flow Theory were informative in terms of my study as they shed light on how teachers and school administrators can facilitate flow in learning. These exceptional educational contexts included alternative schools and nontraditional public school programs in the U.S.A. and selected schools in Japan and a few Scandinavian countries.

The philosophy of one such nontraditional school (located in Seattle, Washington) included promoting egalitarian relationships between students and staff, supporting student autonomy in choosing from an unusual variety of courses, promoting a community climate among teachers and students, and using academic credits instead of letter grades. It was found that students of that school spent much more time in student-centered activities as compared to teacher-centered ones and reported greater student engagement. The fact that the school consistently showed very high SAT scores shows that flow is conducive to effective learning.

In the study of flow in Montessori middle schools (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005), where teaching philosophy is based on integrating student freedom and high demands in order to foster intrinsic motivation and flow, students showed more positive perceptions of their teachers and schools as compared to students from public middle schools. They also demonstrated a higher likelihood of perceiving their classmates as friends – which was underlined by the researchers as a significant factor since adolescents tend to have “extremely low intrinsic motivation when with classmates, but extremely high intrinsic motivation when with friends” (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 139).

The Key School in Indianapolis, Indiana, based their teaching philosophy on the Flow theory and Gardner’s (1993) theory of multiple intelligences and created a special “flow room”, which students attended several times per week in order to participate in structured activities of their choice. The main idea of the flow room was to expose students to enjoyable and engaging learning activities based on multiple intelligences in order to help them realize that all of their educational experiences can be rewarding.

In selected Danish primary schools, students showed above average levels of flow during class time and higher engagement as compared to students from other countries (Andersen, 2005). These results were attributed to the emphasis on student autonomy, initiative, independence, intrinsic motivation, and alternative forms of evaluation rather than regular grading.

The implementation of a variety of innovative instructional methods, including computer use, collective discussions, and individual reflections, was observed in selected elementary schools in Japan (Andersen, 2005). Students showed both high competence in the subject and

higher flow frequency as compared to the majority of teacher-centered instructional contexts in other countries.

The study of student engagement in selected Finnish primary schools (Andersen, 2005) revealed high academic competence combined with high interest and enjoyment among students, which was attributed to the integration of high educational demands with playful, student-initiated, creative, and cooperative activities. Each lesson at the Finnish schools in question was followed by a 15-minute break filled with sports and games.

The review has shown that flow has been studied in the educational contexts of a few developed countries, such as the U.S.A., Japan, Denmark, and Finland. No applications of flow theory in education have been found in developing countries, including Russia. In the next subsection, I briefly review the methods utilized to date in the studies of flow in education.

How can flow be identified and measured?

In a study of flow, a crucial question would be “how do we identify and measure flow?” Using the phenomenological characteristics and components of flow outlined by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and matching our psychological states to them at a specific moment, we can subjectively establish whether or not we are in flow during a particular activity. We have all had flow experiences, be they connected with a game of chess, painting, horse-riding, or reading an exciting novel. As educators, we have experienced flow in our teaching and have seen the signs of flow in our students - attentive postures, eager raising of hands, curiosity and inspiration in their wide-open eyes. However, for the purpose of a scholarly study, are there any more “objective” ways to identify flow? While reviewing the studies of flow in education, I also focused on the methods of measuring flow utilized by the researchers and in the following subsection I describe how flow has been conceptualized and measured so far.

Egbert (2003) warns that, as with other theories of motivation, “there is no objective way to measure flow precisely” (p. 508). Participant recall alone, according to Egbert, does not provide “sufficient evidence to capture flow experiences” (p. 508). Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 2007) also warns against the use of pure quantitative measurements, such as surveys or scales. However, it is exactly quantitative methods that have been predominantly used so far in the studies of flow, specifically participant-recall surveys and Experience Sampling Method (ESM). Recall surveys ask participants about their experience once they have finished the task. In ESM, which has been used more extensively, respondents have to complete a 35-item questionnaire at random moments throughout the day, when signaled by a paging device. Shernoff et al. (2003) conceptualized flow in education as the simultaneous occurrence of high concentration, interest, and enjoyment in learning activities. Therefore, the questions of the questionnaire centered around respondents’ concentration, interest, and enjoyment: “How well were you concentrating?” “Was the activity interesting?” “Did you enjoy the activity?” Also, the respondent’s skill and the task’s challenge were rated. The initial ESM research in the U.S. public schools showed the rarity of flow experiences. The concentration was higher in classrooms than outside of them but the levels of interest, and especially enjoyment, were much lower in classrooms.

Egbert (2003) further argues that the use of both recall method and ESM is problematic. Recall provides only self-report data and may not reflect participants’ true experiences, whereas ESM samples, due to their randomness, may not be reflective of language learning activities. Moreover, it would be highly impractical to use ESM in a case study similar to mine, where participants are elementary school children and it would take up a significant portion of the class time for them to complete a 35-item questionnaire. Filling out such forms would be an

experience in itself exactly opposite to flow. Also, in order to complete the questionnaire and self-report flow, participants must be aware of their focus, attention, enjoyment, and interest and must be able to differentiate among these factors. Children very often cannot adequately describe their psychological states and tend to have a more syncretistic perception of an activity – they either enjoy it or not.

Instead of using quantitative measurements, Andersen (2005) used qualitative research methods when studying flow in Japanese and Scandinavian schools. He employed the “flow observation form”, in which the researcher conducted classroom observations and rated flow based on observable flow components, such as absorption, concentration, and interest, which was followed up with unstructured student interviews.

Summing up, this part of my literature review provided the theoretical groundwork for my research pertinent to Research Question 1. I reviewed the definition of flow and identified its conditions, such as *balance of skills and challenge*, *clear goals*, and *immediate feedback*. I also reviewed the components of flow, such as *concentration*, *interest*, *enjoyment*, *merging of awareness and action*, *distorted temporal perceptions*, *autotelic experience*, and *loss of self-consciousness*, which have been employed by researchers (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007; Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) to operationalize flow. The review of the recent studies of flow in L2 education helped me to select my own research methods, which will be described in Chapter 3.

The conducted review of the existing empirical studies of flow in education suggested the following implications for my study.

(1) Student meaningful engagement is composed of two main factors – academic intensity and positive emotional response, which implied that my learning tasks should be

challenging both in terms of artistic and L2 demands, while my feedback was to be immediate and supportive.

(2) Students appear to be in flow when learning activities are “structured more like non-academic classes” (Shernoff et al., 2003) and promote student autonomy, initiative, and cooperation with peers and adult supervisors. This prompted me to emulate the atmosphere of a creative workshop in the design of my arts-based L2 classroom in order to promote student autonomy and egalitarian cooperation between teacher and students.

(3) Tapping into students’ multiple intelligences, such as music, dancing, or drawing, in an experimental “flow classroom” has the potential for their high engagement in the flow classroom to transfer into their regular classes. I expected my students to develop such an emotional attachment to the English language as a result of my intervention, that their commitment to studying English would crossover to their regular EFL class.

(4) Providing opportunities for physical activity during the class time can be conducive to higher student engagement. This insight prompted me to organize the learning activities in my experimental project in such a way, that the students would often switch from reading to listening, from drawing to speaking and writing – further, I realized that they should be allowed to stand up from their seats and move freely around the classroom during our learning sessions – in order to share their creations with each other, discuss their ideas, get help from the teacher in binding their picturebooks, or looking for necessary colored pencils.

(5) Finally, it is crucial to remember that flow is “contagious” and can transfer from teacher to students but the teacher should not abuse his or her power and exercise too much control over the classroom, rather he or she should delegate control over some activities to students.

Willingness to Communicate in L2 and its role in L2 learning

The last part of this chapter is dedicated to the construct of Willingness to Communicate in a L2 (L2 WTC). I review the following aspects of studying Willingness to Communicate (WTC): (1) what is WTC in L1 and L2? (2) What are the components of WTC? (3) Why is WTC important in L2 learning and in L2 teaching methodology research? (4) How has WTC been identified and measured in L2 educational research? Reviewing the existing literature on these issues allowed me to prepare the theoretical ground for answering Research Question 2, namely, “In which ways does the creation of picturebooks in L2 influence elementary school L2 learners’ L2 WTC?”

Over the past decades, the importance of WTC as a crucial component of L2 instruction has been emphasized by such SLA researchers as MacIntyre (2007), Clément (1986), Dörnyei (2005), Kang (2005). WTC has been described as “the most immediate determinant of L2 use” (Clément et al., 2003, p. 191). It has been found that linguistic competence alone may not result in actual L2 communication inside or outside the classroom (Dörnyei, 2005), whereas L2 learners even with incomplete mastery of an L2 but a high level of WTC are “more likely to use L2 in authentic communication” (Kang, 2005, p. 278).

According to the tenets of communicative L2 pedagogy, language is learned through interactive meaningful communication (Swain & Lapkin, 2002) and language use mediates language learning (Swain, 2005). Since the ultimate goal of L2 instruction should be to produce learners who are willing to use the language for authentic communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998), generating high levels of L2 WTC becomes the primary goal of L2 education. Low levels of L2 WTC, on the contrary, lead to poor results in L2 learning (Kim, 2004).

L2 WTC has been extensively studied in the Western educational context, especially among Anglophone Canadian students studying French as an L2 (e.g., Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrad, 2001; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003). Some research on WTC has also been conducted recently in the context of foreign language education: in Japan (Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002), China (Wen & Clément, 2003, Peng, 2007; Xie, 2011), Korea (Kim, 2004), Iran (Baghaei et al., 2012; Alemi, Tajeddin, & Mesbah, 2013); and in Turkey (Cetinkaya, 2009; Öz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz, 2015). No attempts have been made to date to study L2 WTC in the context of Russian FL education.

On the other hand, the research on L2 WTC, both in the West and in Asia, almost inclusively focused on university students. L2 WTC in public school classrooms has not yet been explored. Also, no studies have been found on the relationships between L2 learners' flow and WTC. The present study is an attempt to fill in some of these gaps. In the next subsection I will review the definition of WTC and the place of this construct in the L2 acquisition research.

What is WTC? Definitions of WTC

Research into L2 communication (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Dörnyei, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007) has shown that some L2 learners with high L2 competence remain silent when they have an opportunity to speak in the L2, whereas some learners with low L2 competence may speak the L2 willingly. Why do some L2 learners, even after many years of learning an L2, experience difficulties becoming L2 speakers? The reasons to avoid using an L2 are multiple and complicated (MacIntyre, 2007) but it is a well-established fact that high linguistic competence does not guarantee L2 learners' performance (Dörnyei, 2005). Our decisions to speak or avoid speaking in an L2 are prompted by various individual, social, linguistic, cultural, and situational

factors, which constitute the construct of L2 WTC. MacIntyre (2007) defines L2 WTC as the psychological readiness of an L2 learner to become an L2 speaker when the opportunity arises.

About two decades ago, L2 WTC moved into the limelight of L2 educational research due to the emphasis on communicative language teaching, when it was established that conversational interaction is an essential part of L2 learning (Mackey, 1999) and when the traditional focus of L2 education on linguistic competence shifted to developing the ability to use a L2 for communicative purposes. Second Language Acquisition research borrowed the term from the field of psychology, where Willingness to Communicate was regarded in terms of L1 use and was initially defined by McCroskey and Baer (1985) as the readiness of an individual to initiate or engage in communication when free to do so. L1 WTC is viewed as a personality-based, trait-like predisposition which manifests itself relatively consistently across a variety of communicative situations (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Among the antecedents leading to differences in L1 WTC, McCroskey and Richmond (1990) identified such personality traits as introversion, shyness, reticence, self-esteem, communication apprehension, and cultural diversity.

As it became evident that it was not only L2 linguistic competence that accounted for success or failure in L2 communication but also other variables, including personality traits, the construct of WTC was borrowed into SLA research. However, L2 researchers (MacIntyre et al., 1998) soon found that, in the L2 context, WTC worked differently because the level of learners' L2 proficiency, and in particular, their communicative competence, was an additional powerful variable. The researchers stated that it was "highly unlikely that WTC in the second language (L2) is a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 546). So, when the construct of WTC crossed over to L2 research, it turned into a multi-faceted construct

encompassing multiple variables. Besides personality traits, it includes linguistic, affective, communicative, and situational components.

More recently, L2 WTC has been viewed by L2 researchers (Kang, 2005; Cao, 2009; Xie, 2011) as a function of situational contextual factors, such as interlocutor(s), group size, topic of the conversation, conversational context, and cultural background. According to Kang (2005), an individual's L2 WTC does not remain stable and can change from time to time in dynamic situations – it is a “volitional inclination toward actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation” (p.291). As follows from the definitions above, L2 WTC may be regarded as a dichotomous phenomenon, which includes both trait-like and situational components. This dichotomy is discussed in the next subsection.

Personality-trait and situational levels of WTC

As opposed to L1 WTC, which has been conceptualized solely as a context-independent personality characteristic (McCroskey & Baer, 1985), L2 WTC is treated on two levels: personality-trait level and situational, or state, level. MacIntyre et al. (1998) emphasize the complementary relationship between the trait-like and situation-specific variables of L2 WTC, which they describe as “enduring and transient influences” (p. 546) respectively. The enduring influences, such as learner personality traits, represent stable, long-term properties of an L2 speaker that would be present in any situation. The transient influences (e.g., familiarity with a topic, the disposition to speak to a specific person, etc.) are dependent on the specific context in which an L2 learner functions at any given time and can fluctuate. Investigating these dual characteristics of L2 WTC in a large sample of Canadian tertiary L2 learners, MacIntyre et al. (1998) came to the conclusion that trait-level and state-level factors contributing to L2 WTC were complementary and could be integrated.

Based on a study of Korean learners of EFL, Kang (2005) found that L2 WTC could fluctuate depending on the impact of situational variables, such as interlocutors, topic, and conversational context. Interacting with the psychological conditions of security, excitement, and responsibility, the situational variables determined the degree of WTC. These findings led Kang (2005) to propose a multilayered construct of L2 WTC, in which it is treated as a dynamic situational phenomenon.

The multilayered nature of L2 WTC was originally pointed out by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998), who proposed “The pyramid heuristic model of L2 WTC” (Figure 2.4). The pyramid model incorporates a range of linguistic, communicative, and psychological variables to explain the interrelations of variables influencing L2 WTC.

By placing WTC in Layer II the researchers identified it as the final step before actual L2 use by a specific person in a specific situation. WTC is preceded by four other layers, three bottom ones of which represent enduring influences, such as personality traits, intergroup climate, L2 communicative competence, interpersonal motivation, and L2 confidence. These enduring variables underlie and influence the situational layer, which consists of desire to communicate with specific interlocutor(s) and state-specific confidence.

As we can see in the pyramid model, motivational propensities underlie situational variables, which means that even high motivation to study L2 might not necessarily result in high L2 WTC. An L2 learner still needs to have high situational antecedents (the desire to talk with a specific person and situational confidence) in order to be willing to communicate in the L2 at any specific moment. In the same vein, a high L2 communicative competence (Layer V) does not necessarily result in a high L2 WTC. Along the same lines, Wen and Clément’s (2003) suggested that having the desire to communicate in the L2 does not always imply a willingness to

communicate. However, motivational propensities, as well as the other lower level psychological variables need to be present in order to create the conditions for the situational variables to come into play and lead to L2 WTC. The Pyramid Model implies that L2 WTC is influenced by such variables as personality and L2 competence, albeit indirectly, as they are at the bottom of the pyramid, whereas motivation and confidence affect it directly, being the final steps before the activation of WTC.

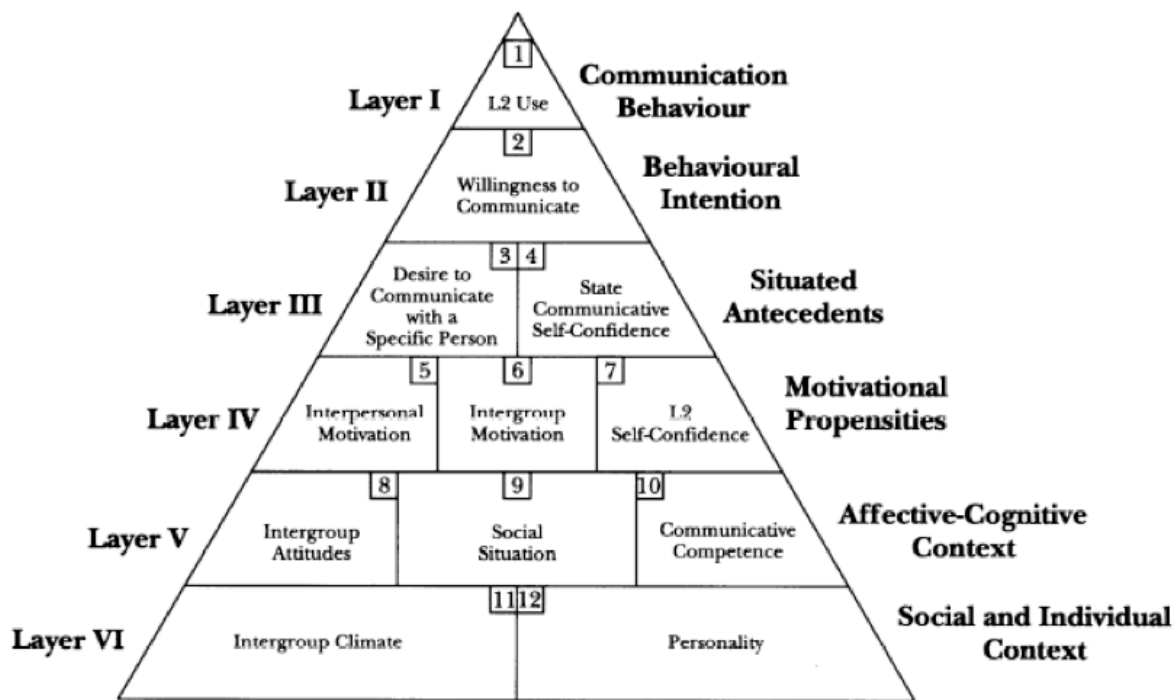


Figure 2.4. Pyramid Model of Variables Influencing L2 WTC (adopted from MacIntyre et al., 1998, p.547).

Summing up this part of the review of the L2 WTC research, the following findings were especially important as a theoretical ground for my intended study: (1) being a multi-faceted construct, WTC includes affective, socio-cultural, psychological, linguistic, and communicative variables, which predict a L2 learner’s communicative behavior. (2) There is a distinction between the personality-trait level and the situational level of L2 WTC. The personality trait

WTC refers to the learner's stable individual traits, such as extraversion or introversion, shyness or talkativeness, which do not fluctuate across contexts. The situational WTC depends on a specific situational context and can fluctuate across various settings - e.g., an L2 learner can be chatty in his L2 classroom but shy to speak in front of L2 native speakers or more proficient L2 speakers. (3) The trait-level and situational level WTC are complementary in prompting a L2 learner's decision to speak (MacIntyre et al., 1998), the former preparing the "foundation" for such a decision, and the latter facilitating the initiation of communication in a specific situation.

In terms of my Research Question 2 (cited above), I was interested in finding out with the help of my study if the students' L2 WTC would increase as a result of their participation in the picturebook creation project. It was of particular interest to determine whether my participants' L2 WTC would depend more on their personality traits (e.g., extroversion or introversion) or situational factors, such as the "desire to speak with a specific person" and "state communicative self-confidence" (Pyramid Model, Figure 2.4). It was my hope and expectation that the process of picturebook creation, due to the "cathartic", inspirational influence of creativity and flow, would endow students with higher L2 communicative self-confidence, which would cause their L2 WTC to grow. I expected their desire to communicate in L2 with me and each other to grow due to the high interest and loss of self-consciousness, characteristic to people in the state of flow. I also expected their state L2 communicative confidence to be positively influenced by the sense of control, generated by their absorption in the creative activities.

The pyramid model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) is still regarded as the most comprehensive conceptualization of L2 WTC. Many empirical studies have been conducted since then (e.g. Baker & MacIntyre, 2003; Cetinkaya, 2005; Kim, 2004; Kang, 2005, Peng, 2007, Xie, 2011), which have tested various aspects of L2 WTC. In the following subsection, I analyze

various factors contributing to L2 WTC in more detail. These factors helped me to conceptualize L2 WTC and determine how I could investigate it in my proposed study.

Factors contributing to L2 WTC

Among the many direct and indirect factors influencing a learner's L2 WTC, researchers have emphasized learner personality (Cetinkaya, 2005); self-confidence (Clément, 1986); self-perceived communicative competence (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990); communication apprehension, or language anxiety (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996); motivation and attitudes to L2 learning (Gardner, 1985); and attitudes towards L2 learning situations (Dörnyei, 2005).

Learner personality traits were measured with the help of the "Big-Five" scale which assesses five global personality traits: extroversion/introversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect (Cetinkaya, 2005; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). These factors have been found to affect L2 learners' motivation and WTC, as extroverted and more agreeable, emotionally stable, and intelligent learners tended to have higher L2 WTC than their introverted and less emotionally stable and intelligent counterparts. Higher levels of extroversion were found to be linked to lower levels of L2 anxiety and higher L2 WTC.

L2 Self-confidence has been identified by many researchers (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002) as the most immediate antecedent of L2 WTC. According to Clément (1986), L2 self-confidence included two relatively enduring personal characteristics: perceived competence and lack of anxiety. In contrast to Clément's view of self-confidence as an enduring trait-like feature, MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggested that state-like, or situational, self-confidence (Layer III of the Pyramid model) was a momentary feeling of confidence which can be transient within a given situation. It is different from a deeper (Layer IV) personality-trait self-confidence in that state self-confidence can be achieved at any

given moment under favorable circumstances, whereas the self-confidence of the personality level is a stable and almost immutable feature. In terms of my research, these findings suggested that I should take into consideration both types of L2 self-confidence. Even though I could not expect my participants' personality to change in the course of the study, it was possible to enhance their situational L2 confidence with the help of flow-rich creative activities.

Self-perceived L2 communicative competence is considered to have a great influence on a language learner's WTC. McCroskey & Richmond (1990) maintain that it is even more important than their actual ability to use a L2, because it is perceived competence that impacts an individual's behavioral choices. Self-perceived communicative competence is, therefore, closely connected with self-confidence (Clément, 1986). Low self-perceived communicative competence results in lack of L2 confidence and communication apprehension.

Communication apprehension (L2 anxiety), in its broader sense, refers to a person's feelings of anxiety or fear associated with communication with other people. In its more narrow sense, as applied to L2 learning and use, it is called *foreign language anxiety* and refers to situations when people with higher levels of fear or anxiety regarding L2 communication often prefer to avoid or withdraw from communication in L2 (Dörnyei, 2005; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). MacIntyre (2007) underscores the importance of motivation and L2 anxiety level to the success of L2 learning, stating that the increase in motivation and decrease of L2 anxiety invariably lead to improvements in L2 performance. L2 anxiety represents itself in L2 classrooms in the fear of making mistakes, fear of being ridiculed by the teacher and/or peers, and in being nervous when speaking in the L2. For example, Tsui's (1996) study of students' reticence and anxiety in L2 learning revealed that the students' fear of mistakes was reflected in their unwillingness to speak up in a L2 classroom. I gleaned from my review of the relevant

literature that flow can eliminate L2 anxiety (through the loss of self-consciousness, characteristic to flow) and this could lead to higher L2 WTC among my prospective students.

Integrative motivation (Gardner, 1985), is another factor contributing to L2 WTC. It is generally defined as a learner's "desire to learn a second language to meet and communicate with members of the target language community" (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996, p. 4). Taking into consideration the remoteness of the Russian city where my study was to be conducted, with a rather slim chance for learners to actually communicate with an English native speaker, the integrative motivation of my study participants could be generally low, thus predicting their low initial level of L2 WTC.

Issues of motivation, in general, are closely related to the concept of L2 WTC. MacIntyre (2007) underline the importance of high *intrinsic motivation* for L2 WTC. This insight was important for my study as it suggested that, even if my students lacked integrative motivation, raising their intrinsic motivation by means of creative activities and flow could be instrumental in fostering their L2 WTC.

Another variable related to L2 WTC is *learner attitudes towards learning situations* (Dörnyei, 2005), which refers to learners' evaluations of their L2 teacher, curriculum, and learning activities. It has been observed (Hashimoto, 2002), that attitudes towards learning a language can strongly influence learners' WTC and their communicative competence. This variable is particularly important in the context of an arts-based approach to L2 teaching, since, by serving as a role model both in terms of the L2 use and creative performance, an L2 teacher can "infect" students with his or her flow and make students "fall in love" with the L2 as well.

Security, excitement, and responsibility as major antecedents of L2 WTC

Ely (1986) noted that simply encouraging L2 students to take more risks and speak more in L2 in class might not be effective. According to Kang (2005), students should be made to feel psychologically comfortable and safe in their learning environment before they are expected to take linguistic risks. In her qualitative study of L2 WTC in Korea, Kang (2005) identified such factors contributing to learners' L2 WTC as *security*, *excitement*, and *responsibility*.

Kang (2005) defines *security* as “feeling safe from the fears that nonnative speakers tend to have in L2 communication” (p. 282). The feeling of security can be affected by learners' familiarity or unfamiliarity with interlocutors (teachers and classmates, in a L2 classroom environment), fear of “losing face” by making mistakes, the topic of conversation, and conversational context.

Excitement in the given context refers to “a feeling of elation about the act of talking ... [which] can emerge and fluctuate during a conversation situation” (p. 284). *Responsibility* refers to a “feeling of obligation or duty to deliver and understand a message, or to make it clear” (Kang, p. 284). Excitement and responsibility can also be influenced by the conversational context, attitude to interlocutors, and topic of conversation.

Two of the variables above can be directly linked to the state of flow: flow provides participants the feeling of *security* (through the merging of awareness and action and loss of self-consciousness); and flow is the state of ultimate *excitement* about the activity at hand – when “nothing else seems to matter” (Csikszentlyhalyi, 2007). Therefore, flow in an L2 classroom has the potential to enhance learners' L2 WTC through the feelings of security and excitement.

To sum up, such variables as learner *personality*, *L2 self-confidence*, *self-perceived communicative competence*, *low communication apprehension (L2 anxiety)*, *motivation to L2*

learning, attitude towards L2 learning environment, and feelings of security and excitement have been found to contribute to learners' L2 WTC and can be used in qualitative studies of L2 WTC. These factors helped me to prepare the theoretical framework for investigating Research Sub-Question 2b: "What individual factors influence students' L2 WTC in such arts-based L2 program?" which was aimed at discovering differences in how a picturebook creation project could influence L2 learners' WTC, depending on their personality-level and state-level variables.

In order to choose my research methodology (which will be discussed in the following chapter), I reviewed the research methods utilized in the existing empirical studies of L2 WTC. The next subsection is dedicated to methods of measuring L2 WTC used to date.

Methods of studying WTC in L2 acquisition research

Overall, L2 WTC has been measured with the help of both quantitative and qualitative methods but quantitative methods were used more extensively (e.g., MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrad, 2001; Baker & MacIntyre, 2003; Cetinkaya, 2005; Öz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz, 2015). In quantitative studies, the researchers have mostly used SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) and self-report questionnaires. For example, studying L2 WTC of Canadian tertiary students, MacIntyre et al. (2002) employed a questionnaire focusing on perceived competence, communication anxiety, self-esteem, extroversion, and emotional stability to measure the trait-level WTC, whereas students' self-rating of willingness, competency, and anxiety about performing two speaking tasks and two writing tasks were used to examine their state-level WTC.

However, MacIntyre et al. (2002) pointed out that methods based on self-reported data tapped more into personality-level than state-level L2 WTC. Therefore, it was suggested that observational studies could be more suitable for examining situational L2 WTC. MacIntyre

(2007) suggested researchers should use qualitative methodologies more extensively in order to capture the dynamic nature of WTC. Dörnyei (2005) also called for a more extensive use of qualitative methodology in studies of situational L2 WTC, as it can help identify more factors contributing to it and offer fresh insights into its nature.

Along the same lines, Kang (2005) argued that a quantitative method of using questionnaires was not insightful enough to explore the situational characteristics of WTC in a dynamic classroom situation. Therefore, Kang (2005) chose to examine situational WTC variables with the help of qualitative methodology. She collected her study data by videotaping classroom conversations and interviewing four Korean students at an American university during a period of eight months Kang analyzed her data with the help of *inductive content analysis*. The employed qualitative methodology allowed Kang to identify three new variables contributing to L2 WTC, namely feelings of security, excitement, and responsibility.

Dörnyei (2007) pointed out that the general exploratory capacity of quantitative research was rather limited. Qualitative research, on the contrary, is traditionally seen as an effective way of exploring new, uncharted areas (Dörnyei, 2007), and describing L2 acquisition in its natural context (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Since in my study I planned to investigate the hitherto unexplored area of L2 WTC among Russian elementary school children, the conducted literature review suggested I should use qualitative methodology, focusing on a small sample of participants.

Because the specific conditions and insights characteristic of qualitative research may not sound convincing to everyone (Dörnyei, 2007), mixed methods, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, have also been used recently in the studies of L2 WTC (Xie, 2011). Mixed methods were used by Cao and Philp (2006), who employed triangulation

and compared the participants' self-reported L2 WTC to their actual L2 WTC behavior, captured with the help of observations. The study identified a number of factors influencing L2 WTC behavior in class: group size, self-confidence, familiarity with interlocutors, familiarity with topics under discussion, medium of communication, and cultural background. The researchers found that self-reports did not necessarily reflect students' actual L2 WTC behavior, which provided support for the claim that classroom observation can be a valid and effective tool in examining situational L2 WTC.

In another recent study Cao (2009) employed triangulation and examined the dynamic and situated nature of the L2 WTC of a class of 18 EFL learners in New Zealand. The sources of data included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, stimulated-recall interviews, and reflective journals. The study findings suggested that the classroom L2 WTC was influenced more by dynamic situational factors than by personality-level factors. Learners' individual characteristics, classroom environmental conditions, and linguistic factors have been found to have the most decisive effect on L2 WTC in class. Cao's (2009) study further confirmed the usefulness of such qualitative measures as observations and interviews in examining situational WTC.

Self-report methods have been considered an unreliable tool for examining situational WTC, because "thinking about communicating in the L2 is different from actually doing it" (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p.377). Along the same lines, Johnson and Christensen (2008) maintain that the advantage of observations over self-reports in L2 WTC research is that observations allow researchers to analyze actual behavior of participants in the classroom rather than their reports of intended behavior. Observations offer an investigator the opportunity to collect "live" data from naturally occurring classroom situations (Xie, 2011). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison

(2007) also suggest that classroom observations should be used in L2 WTC studies as they focus on events as they actually happen in an L2 classroom. For example, observations can provide data on how often students raise their hands in class volunteering an answer in the L2, which can serve a manifestation of L2 WTC. The definition of L2 WTC as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547) entails that an individual’s WTC can be high even when he or she does not get a chance to actually speak. Thus, if a teacher asks a question and many students raise their hands, even though only one of them gets a chance to answer, they all can be considered to have expressed L2 WTC.

A few recent studies (Kang, 2005; Cao, 2009) supported the use of classroom observations as a viable method of measuring situational L2 WTC. Peng and Woodrow (2010) also suggested that classroom observations could provide a contextualized account of students’ WTC, and be revealing in examining student WTC through their participation in classroom discourse. Based on the previous studies of L2 WTC (Ely, 1986; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Oxford, 1997), Cao (2009) developed a checklist of selected variables relevant to L2 WTC behavior. She recorded students in a whole classroom setting, and in pairs and groups and analyzed their WTC according to 10 categories: (1) volunteering an answer/comment to the teacher’s question addressed to the whole class (including raising of hands); (2) giving an answer to the teacher’s question addressed to another student or group of students (private response); (3) asking the teacher a question; (4) guessing the meaning of an unknown word; (5) trying out a difficult language form/structure in the L2; (6) talking to one’s neighbor in L2 as part of the lesson or in informal socializing; (7) talking to another group member in L2; (8) talking to a member of another group; (9) presenting one’s own opinion to the whole class and responding to such; (10)

volunteering to participate in class activities. The same observation scheme was utilized by Xie (2011), except for the two categories referring to interpersonal communication among group members as her observed classroom was not divided into groups.

In some recent studies of L2 WTC (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Xie, 2011) observations have been accompanied by interviews with individual students. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), the advantage of using interviews as a data collection tool lies in that it allows researchers to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable, such as learners' perceptions or attitudes. In her study of L2 WTC in a Chinese college, Xie (2011) conducted semi-structured interviews with four selected students using the interview protocol that included questions covering the following topics: (1) reasons for studying L2; (2) motivation to study L2; (3) interest in foreign affairs; (4) personality (talkative, extroverted, quiet, etc.); (5) self-assessed proficiency in the L2; (6) self-perceived communicative competence in L2; (7) feelings towards the learning environment; (8) language anxiety in class (afraid or not afraid of making mistakes; nervous or not when speaking L2; afraid of being laughed at when making a mistake or not; wanting or not wanting to be corrected by the teacher, etc.); and (9) favorite class organization for communication (small groups; in pairs; whole class). In order to increase the validity of the interviews, the researcher conducted them in the participants' L1 (Mandarin Chinese), whereas the participants could freely choose whether to answer in L1 or L2.

The conducted review of the research methods utilized to date in the domain of L2 WTC helped me to choose the appropriate research methods to investigate Research Question 2 of this dissertation study.

Communication in L2 teaching and CLT

Finally, because WTC is one of the foci of this study, I need to delineate what is meant by communication in the context of L2 instruction and how the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) informed my arts-based approach designed for this study.

Summarizing the major principles of contemporary L2 teaching, Ellis (2005) postulates that L2 instruction “needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning” (p. 211). Ellis clarifies the difference between semantic and pragmatic meanings, of which the former refers to the meanings of specific lexical items and grammatical structures, whereas the latter refers to the contextualized meanings transmitted between interlocutors in the act of communication. Acknowledging the importance of providing opportunities to L2 learners to focus on both types, Ellis points out that it is the pragmatic meaning that is crucial for L2 learning.

The primary focus on pragmatic meaning in L2 education is explained by the following reasons: (1) when learners are engaged in decoding and encoding messages in the context of actual acts of communication, the conditions are created for L2 acquisition to take place (Long, 1996); (2) in order to develop L2 fluency, learners must have opportunities to create pragmatic meaning (DeKeyser, 1998); (3) “engaging learners in activities where they are focused on creating pragmatic meaning is intrinsically motivating” (Ellis, p. 212).

The semantic and pragmatic types of meaning described by Ellis (2005) presuppose “entirely different orientations to teaching and learning” (p. 212). In the case of semantic meaning, “the teacher and the students can treat language as an object and function as pedagogues and learners (Ellis, p. 212). This is the basis for the grammar-translation, audio-lingual, and direct approaches to L2 instruction. However, in the case of pragmatic meaning,

teachers and learners “need to view the L2 as a tool for communicating and function as communicators” (ibid.). This understanding of L2 teaching is at the core of CLT, as it is “based on the view of language as communication” (Savignon, 2005, p. 639).

It is important to define what is meant by ‘communication’ in L2 teaching. Savignon (2005) defines communication as “a negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, author and reader” (p. 236). In other words, by communication is meant an exchange of information with the help of language either in oral or written form. In accordance with the major tenets of sociocultural theory of learning, language is seen in CLT as a social tool that speakers and writers use to make meaning – “we communicate something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing” (Savignon, p. 639).

Savignon defines the essence of CLT as “the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence” (p. 635). The term communicative competence describes “the ability of classroom language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning” (p. 636). In CLT, a L2 learner’s communicative competence is understood “in relative, not absolute, terms of correctness” (Savignon, p. 639). Therefore, L2 communication occurs at any level of communicative competence, including the elementary level, as long as the intended L2 messages are successfully transmitted between the interlocutors.

This view of L2 communication suggests that, even though communication with native speakers of the studied language can be one of the main goals of L2 learning, it is not limited to this goal and includes communication with anyone speaking (or learning) the language. Such inclusive view of L2 communication was important for my study as it suggested that my elementary English learners could use this language for classroom communication and I could treat English in my experimental arts-based classroom primarily as a tool for communication and

not as an object of study. Moreover, it suggested that my role in the classroom should be more of a ‘more proficient’ communicator than a teacher ‘per se’.

The major tenets of CLT approach provided support for my idea of implementing an arts-based project in an EFL classroom: (1) no single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed in CLT (Savignon, p. 640); (2) language use serves “the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual functions and is related to the development of learners’ competence in each” (p. 640); (3) L2 learners should be engaged in “doing things with language, that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes, in all phases of learning” (ibid.).

However, the proponents of CLT (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1997) do not dismiss grammar instruction as “communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar” (Savignon, 2005, p. 640). Rather, “the replacement of language laboratory structure drills with meaning-focused self-expression was found to be a more effective way to develop communicative ability” (Savignon, 2005, p. 640).

Maintaining that the primary focus of L2 instruction should be on pragmatic meaning, Ellis (2005) acknowledges that certain attention to form can also be beneficial. Ellis differentiates between the L2 instruction that provides an intensive focus on specific linguistic forms and the instruction that offers “incidental and extensive attention to form through corrective feedback in task-based lessons” (p. 213). Due to the communicative orientation of my project and the limited amount of class time I had at my disposal (one 45-minute lesson per week), I chose the latter approach to grammar instruction – providing extensive attention to form and incidental corrective feedback to my students.

Another important principle of L2 teaching (Ellis, 2005) maintains that it is implicit knowledge of the L2 (as opposed to explicit knowledge, such as grammar rules, for example)

that underlies the ability to communicate in an L2 and this type of knowledge should be the ultimate goal of any instructional program. According to the emergentist perspective (Krashen, 1981), implicit knowledge of an L2 develops naturally from meaning-focused communication and there is a consensus among SLA theorists that L2 learners should be provided with opportunities to participate in communication to develop implicit knowledge. Krashen (1981) even proposed a zero grammar approach, in which no attempt is made to predetermine the linguistic content of a lesson.

Emphasizing the role of extensive input in L2 learning (Krashen, 1981), researchers also underline the importance of the opportunities for L2 output (Swain, 1995; Skehan, 1998). L2 output provides the following contributions: (1) it forces syntactic processing and obliges learners to pay attention to grammar; (2) it helps to automatize the existing knowledge; (3) it helps learners “to develop a ‘personal voice’ by steering conversation on to topics they are interested in contributing to” (Ellis, p. 218). In my study I focused on encouraging students to produce L2 output and practice the L2 knowledge they had received in their regular EFL class. Thus, the afterschool class designed for this study became for my students a ‘community of practice’, where they had opportunities to freely communicate in L2 with each other and their teacher and foster their L2 speaking skills.

The concept of ‘community of practice’ was introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) to describe the process of learning through sharing experience and knowledge by group members united by the common interest or passion to a particular field of knowledge. In the perspective of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), students learn most effectively in a learning environment that provides an authentic learning context. My arts-based project was created to provide such authentic learning context, in which students were united by their common interest

to reading and creating picturebooks in English and in which they could foster both their drawing and L2 speaking skills by sharing with and learning from their teacher and each other.

Providing L2 learners the opportunity to interact is emphasized by Ellis (2005) as central to developing L2 proficiency. Sociocultural theory of L2 acquisition views social interaction as “the matrix in which acquisition occurs” (Ellis, p. 219). According to the sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000), interaction serves as a mediating tool, enabling learners to construct new forms and perform new functions collaboratively.

Johnson (1995) suggests that providing opportunities for learners to use the L2 for their self-expression creates an ‘acquisition-rich’ L2 classroom. He also suggests that classroom interaction in the L2 is facilitated when the academic and social participation structures in the classroom are less rigid. Along the same lines, Ellis (1999) suggests that giving control of the discourse topic to the students makes interaction beneficial for acquisition.

The review of the relevant literature pertaining to the field of L2 acquisition helped me to outline the nature of my L2 teaching approach utilized in this dissertation study. It was based on the view of language as communication and L2 teaching as providing opportunities for learners to interact and express their personal meanings. It was also based on providing opportunities for learners to receive L2 input and produce L2 output through the reading and discussion of picturebooks and thus fostering their implicit knowledge of English. It was decided to bring the explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction in my class to a minimum since that type of instruction was provided to the students in their regular EFL class. The afterschool arts-based EFL project created by me for this study was meant to become a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which L2 learners could use English as a tool for interpersonal

communication, self-expression, and collaboration as they were moving towards the overarching goal of creating their own English picturebook.

Summary

In this literature review I have addressed three main areas of research relevant to my study: (1) Creativity in L2 learning; (2) Flow and its educational potential; (3) L2 WTC and its importance in L2 learning.

For the first area, I explored the role of creativity in L2 education in the light of Vygotsky's views on creativity. Vygotsky's concepts of creative "catharsis" and "mundane creativity" provide a solid theoretical basis for integrating arts-based creativity in L2 teaching. His concept of "mundane" creativity, according to which all human beings are inherently creative, suggests that the use of creativity in L2 learning can be beneficial for all L2 learners. The creative "catharsis", which occurs when emotions are released in arts-based creative activities, can benefit L2 learners in that it can liberate them from L2 anxiety, boost their self-confidence and, consequently, raise their L2 WTC. However, most of the existing research on the implementation of creativity in language education has focused on L1 education (Lorimer, 2011), whereas the scant research on creativity in L2 classrooms mostly focused on ESL classes in the U.S. and U.K. contexts (Craig & Paraiso, 2009). No research has been found on the use of creativity in foreign language education of developing countries, such as Russia.

For the second area, relevant literature suggests that flow, as "optimal experience" and a "zone of optimal learning", has an outstanding potential to reverse the situation of "boredom of schooling" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007) into the situation of high engagement, interest, and enjoyment of learning. The main potential benefits of flow in L2 learning have been found to be the following: (1) it raises students' intrinsic motivation for learning; (2) it helps to develop

learners' skills through the propensity of flow to cause learners repeat the "flow-rich" activities and the need to raise the challenge of the task to stay in flow; (3) it eliminates anxiety and self-consciousness, which can positively influence learners' L2 WTC.

There is a growing body of research on flow and its applications in education. However, no research has been found on the positive influence of flow on learners' L2 WTC. Although flow has been investigated in schools and colleges in the U.S. and a few other countries, the studies of flow in L2 education have focused primarily on high proficiency FL learners of the university level (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013). No specific research has been conducted on flow in the context of a low proficiency L2 classroom. This dissertation is an attempt to fill this research gap.

Finally, the third area explored in the chapter was the construct of L2 WTC, which has recently become a prominent aspect of L2 learning. My review of the body of research pertaining to L2 WTC has revealed two complementary levels of L2 WTC, namely personality-level WTC and situational WTC, as well as a number of psychological, linguistic, and situational variables influencing L2 learners' WTC. It has been revealed that the construct of L2 WTC has been explored more extensively in the higher L2 competence contexts (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Xie, 2011), whereas no studies have addressed L2 WTC of early L2 learners.

The conducted literature review suggests that arts-based creativity is closely connected with flow and WTC. Due to their "cathartic" properties, creativity and flow have the potential to positively affect L2 learners' WTC. However, the relationships among creativity, flow, and WTC have not been examined in L2 educational research. Arts-based creativity and flow in a low proficiency L2 classroom, particularly the use of visual arts and student created picturebooks in L2 learning, still remains an under-researched area. My study described in this dissertation is

an attempt to fill in some of these research gaps. The research methodologies I used in my empirical study and the methods of data collection and analysis I utilized to find answers to the proposed research questions are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is dedicated to the research methodology that informed my study and the methods I used to collect and analyze data. I also explain my positioning in the study as a teacher/researcher.

Research questions revisited

This dissertation study examines the effects of Arts-Based creativity, namely picturebook creation, on student flow and L2 WTC in an afterschool L2 program. The dearth of existing research on the use of visual arts creativity in L2 classrooms and particularly on the application of student created picturebooks as a means of fostering flow and enhancing L2 WTC suggests that I needed be creative myself in selecting the optimal research design for my study.

In order to answer my research questions, I envisioned a study based on a specially designed afterschool arts-based L2 program in an ordinary public school in Russia. In this program, students were to read and discussing famous English and American picturebooks under the teacher/researcher's guidance and create their own picturebooks in L2 (English), using it as the language of interpersonal classroom communication. This picturebook-creation program was expected to generate data, both in terms of students' flow and L2 WTC, that would be collected and analyzed. In order to answer the first research question, **“How can the activity of picturebook creation foster flow in an L2 classroom, particularly in the EFL setting?”** and, especially, the first sub-question, **“Can flow occur during the activity of picturebook creation?”** I needed to collect such empirical data in my experimental classroom that would

provide evidence that the study participants were (or were not) in flow during the learning activities. Such methods of data collection as journaling, video-taping of class meetings, and interviews with participants seemed the most obvious fit, as they would allow for detecting students' concentration, interest, merging of action and awareness, control, and other components flow (as discussed in the previous chapter). Each student's level of flow in the experimental classroom was analyzed qualitatively. Following Eisner's (2008) suggestion to use the medium of art in studies of the effects of arts, I also utilized elements of visual journaling in order to enhance the authenticity of findings (Galman, 2009).

The second sub-question, **“What are the dynamics of flow in such a context?”** suggested that the intensity of students' flow in the experimental arts-based project needed to be examined and rated at various points in the semester, as the ratings would show the positive or negative dynamics of flow over the course of the study. Two kinds of ratings were designed for this purpose – the teacher/researcher's ratings and students' self-reported ratings, both administered at three points of the study: beginning, middle, and end. The teacher-researcher created qualitative composite profiles of each student's flow and quantitatively rated the intensity of their flow on the basis of the key qualitative profile characteristics, ranking them on a scale from 0 – 100. The participants' self-ratings were gathered with the help of a questionnaire. The combination of the teacher ratings and students' self-ratings added validity to the findings.

The second research question, **“In which ways does the creation of picturebooks in L2 influence elementary school learners' L2 WTC?”** motivated the use of mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). In order to answer sub-question 2a, **“Does L2 WTC of elementary school L2 learners increase in an Arts-Based L2 program centered around picturebook creation?”** the use of quantitative

measurements seemed most suitable, as the increase in the number of student-produced L2 utterances in their classroom interactions, especially if the students voluntarily chose to speak in L2, would suggest the growth of their L2 WTC. The decrease or stagnation of their oral L2 output in the classroom would suggest that the inclusion of arts-based activities did not produce a positive effect on the learners' L2 WTC.

However, sub-question 2b, **“What individual characteristics influence students’ L2 WTC in an arts-based L2 program?”** could be best answered with the help of the data types typically used in qualitative research, such as observations, interviews, student-created artifacts, and qualitative methods of data analysis, such as Content Analysis. The following table presents the research questions, chosen methods of data collection and analysis, and units of analysis. Each of the data sources is described in section “Data collection” (pp. 90 - 97); each of the analytical categories is defined in section “Data analysis” (pp. 97 - 105).

Research Sub-Questions	Data Collection – Data Sources	Data Analysis: Analytical Categories	Units of analysis
1a. Can flow occur during the activity of picturebook creation in an English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) classroom?	Video-recordings of lessons; Teacher journal; Student and teacher interviews (see Appendix A); Student-created artifacts.	Deductive Content Analysis. Categories: Balance between skills and challenge; Concentration; Interest; Feeling of control; Merging of action and awareness; Distorted perception of time.	Each individual student-participant’s behavior in the study classroom.
1b. What are the dynamics of flow in such a context?	Video-recordings; Teacher journal; Student and teacher interviews; Questionnaire (see Appendix C).	Quantitative ratings of student flow based on qualitative composite profiles of flow; Comparing the ratings of students’ flow at three points of the semester (beginning, middle, and end) .	Each student-participant’s flow level at three points of the project
1c. Which factors do the dynamics of flow depend on?	Teacher journal entries; Visual journal sketches; Video-recordings; Student interviews; Lesson plans	Inductive Content Analysis. Major themes/categories are identified during the analysis of data. Major “turning points” of student flow are juxtaposed against the activities of the project	Activities and artistic tools introduced in the project
2a. What are the dynamics of L2 WTC changes in an L2 classroom where L2 learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation?	Video-recordings of lessons (transcripts) Teacher journal Visual teacher journal	Quantitative – Counting the number of 1) Single-word L2 utterances; 2) Multiple-word L2 utterances (teacher prompted); and 3) Unsolicited L2 utterances (not prompted by teacher) Qualitative categories – excitement; security, and responsibility	L2 output of the whole group of participants; participants’ L2 behavior

2b. How can we explain the dynamics of change in L2 WTC for individual students in such a context?	Interviews with participants and school teachers (Appendix A); Video-recordings; Teacher Journal; Artifacts (pages of student-created picturebooks).	Deductive Content Analysis. Categories: Personality (intro-/extroversion); Self-confidence; L2 Motivation; L2 Situational self-confidence; Feelings towards L2 Learning Environment; Feelings of security and excitement; Artistic skills and imagination	Each individual participant's L2 output, his individual characteristics and artistic skills
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Table 3.1. Research questions and methods of data collection and analysis.

The chosen methods of data collection and analysis, as well as their relevance for this study, are described in more detail in the second half of this chapter. In the following sub-section I review the Case Study method and Arts-Based Research methodology, which became the methodological basis for my dissertation study.

Methodology

Since it has become a widely accepted practice to use multiple research methodologies in a single study as they can complement each other and provide “further insights into neglected dimensions of the underlying phenomenon” (Yin, 2004, p. 21), I looked for complementary methodologies that could inform and shape my study. For the reasons discussed below, Case Study and Arts-Based Research seemed to be the most relevant methodologies for my study design.

I chose the Case Study method, not only because it is the most revered and widely used qualitative methodology (Patton, 2002), but because it has been used for holistic, in-depth, highly contextualized, longitudinal investigations of complex phenomena, events, programs, or groups in a specific context, in which the issue under analysis contains multiple variables (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). I chose the Arts-Based Research (ABR) following McNiff’s (1998) suggestion that there is no better way to study the effects of the arts than through the arts themselves. Since my study was centered around the

implementation of arts-based creativity in L2 teaching, ABR appeared to be a fitting research methodology, which could help me to increase the authenticity of my study representation by depicting my study participants and their behavior with the help of visual images, in addition to verbal descriptions. I explore Case Study and ABR in more detail in the following sub-sections.

Case Study

Case study methodology, according to Stake (2006) and Patton (2002), has been central to qualitative studies for many years and it has been regarded as a valid method of research in the fields of psychology, social studies, and education. To date, case studies have been widely used in the field of L2 acquisition of children (Fillmore, 1976; MacWhinney, 2000; Sato, 1990). Case studies in L2 acquisition research focus on a specific L2 learning context, change in language development over time, and specific L2 learners or their groups (van Lier, 2005). My decision to utilize case study methodology was prompted by the attention of case studies to change over time and “the ability to track and document change (such as language development) over time” (van Lier, 2005, p. 195). These features of the case study methodology were particularly advantageous in terms of my study as the case study design provided an opportunity to track the changes in my participants’ involvement in the creative activities of the afterschool program and monitor the changing dynamics of their L2 WTC over the course of an academic semester.

In terms of epistemological underpinnings, the three most prominent researchers of case studies, namely Stake (1995, 2006), Merriam (1998, 2009), and Yin (2004, 2014), position case studies in a social constructivist paradigm. Constructivism is built on the premise of social construction of reality and claims that truth is relative and dependent on one’s perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, another advantage of case studies, according to Baxter & Jack (2008), is the close collaboration between the researcher and participants. This close

collaboration allows the participants to describe their views on the studied phenomena, which enables the researcher to better understand the participants' behavior (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The constructivist paradigm, underlying the case study approach, allowed me to rely on my participants' descriptions of their views on and reactions to the arts-based activities of the proposed L2 program and use them in my analysis.

Yin (2014) differentiates between explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive case studies. Exploratory studies, according to Yin (2014), investigate such situations in which the intervention under scrutiny has no clear, single set of outcomes. My case study can be categorized as exploratory as my search has yielded very few studies focusing on the implementation of Arts, specifically visual arts, in L2 education (Craig & Paraiso, 2008). The paucity of previous research in this field and the total lack of any research on the use of student created picturebooks in L2 learning left me with no model to rely on and with no clear set of learning outcomes I could expect to achieve as a result of my innovative L2 program. At the same time, my study findings may contribute to an understanding of multiple under-unexplored topics, such as Flow in L2 learning, L2 WTC among early adolescent learners, and integration of Arts and L2 learning in afterschool programs.

Case studies are also categorized as single (holistic) or multiple case studies (Yin, 2014). My study can be defined as a single case study as I focus on a single bounded case – the afterschool arts-based L2 program I specifically designed for this study; each of the participant's growth and experiences is analyzed individually and in terms of group dynamics within this study.

Finally, Stake (1995, 2006) categorizes case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. He describes an intrinsic study as one in which the researcher is profoundly interested

in the case itself, in all its particularity and ordinariness, without trying to generalize the findings, build a theory, or explain other cases. This definition fits my case study as I created a unique L2 program, with no previous models to rely on, and the results of my study may or may not be generalizable or replicable.

Therefore, my case study was single, exploratory, and intrinsic. Van Lier (2005) and Stake (2006) underline the general propensity of case studies to explore uncharted areas and prepare the ground for further investigation of the issue. My exploratory case study can prepare the ground for a more extensive multiple case study - e.g., comparative investigation of a number of similar arts-based L2 programs – perhaps, with the help of a more thorough and precise quantitative design.

The second research methodology that informed my study was Arts-Based Research (ABR), which I chose due to my own artistic background, the arts-based nature of my proposed creative L2 teaching method, and the potential of ABR to overlap with and adapt to almost any qualitative research methodology, including a case study (Smithbell, 2010).

Arts-Based Research methodology

One of the founders of ABR methodology, Eisner (2002) points out that “meaning is not limited to what words can express” (p. 230). Since empirical research deals with the experiential data, “its claims are based on the evidence of observations, both those of the inquirer and the reports of people studied, that rely on the senses” (Schwandt, 1997, p. 36). It has been maintained by qualitative researchers that what is sensed, felt, and experienced should be treated as legitimate data as tactile, aural, and visual data expand and deepen the understanding of the described phenomena (Knowles and Cole, 2008). The application of various art forms helps to analyze and represent such sensorial data.

Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2008) extend the representational and analytical applications of arts to their use as a creative tool to generate data:

...arts-based researchers do more than help us see an external reality that heretofore has gone unnoticed by *reading* images. They actively form a new visual reality by *creating* images. The visual is not just a tool for recording, analyzing or interpreting data; it has become a tool for creating data. The visual has reached a new dimension. It has become *generative* (p. 99).

Knowles and Cole (2008) define ABR as “a systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience” (p. 29). ABR has been treated as an independent method of inquiry (Barone, 2008), which, besides evaluating “truthfulness” or “verisimilitude” of data, also involves the dimension of aesthetics, or “beauty” (Smithbell, 2010). An example of a pictorial narrative used in educational research is a short graphic novel by Manrique (2012) representing a qualitative study of a small group of participants. The author used visual images to represent the participants and the discussions among them.

According to Eisner (2008), “through art, we come to feel, very often, what we cannot see directly” (p. 8). In the same vein, the use of visual sketches of my study participants allowed me to more vividly represent the phenomena that could be hard to define verbally. For example, some components of flow, such as interest, concentration, merging of awareness and action, can arguably be represented more convincingly in visual images than in verbal descriptions.

Following Weber and Mitchell (1996), who maintain that certain phenomena can be more adequately explored by combinations of words and visuals, I chose to describe certain features of flow and L2 WTC observed in my study with the help of both words and visual illustrations.

Addressing the long-standing representational issues in educational qualitative research, particularly the question of how to best represent research participants and their experiences, Galman (2009) suggested that qualitative researchers must be both “artists” and “messengers”. She maintains that “single-dimensioned clarity of traditional prose-only text may be inadequate for certain research tasks” (p. 200). A similar concern that prose-only text may not provide a sufficiently convincing support for my study findings, especially regarding such “subjective” concepts as flow, led me to the idea of implementing a Visual Teacher Journal, in which I made pen-and-paper sketches of the study participants involved in creative activities in my classroom, thus creating a chronological account of how flow and L2 WTC progressed in my experimental class over the course of the project.

To summarize, for my investigation I used the case study design, in which I also utilized elements of Arts-Based Research methodology. I used my own art and the artifacts created by the participants in order to add authenticity and the aesthetic dimension to my study.

In the following sub-section I describe the actual research design of my study, starting with the description of the research site, which was the context of my study.

Research site

I conducted my study at a medium-sized public secondary school in a large industrial city in the Urals region of Russia. This city is characterized by its remoteness from the main cultural centers of Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg) and by a very low number of native English speakers visiting this city. There are very few jobs in this city that require good knowledge of foreign languages and the chances to use a L2 in real life are very rare. As a result, not many children in this city are genuinely interested in learning foreign languages.

I chose this particular school to be the site of my study because I had taught English for two years there before embarking on my Ph.D. journey and I knew that, with just three lessons of EFL per week taught at that school, the majority of the school students had rather basic knowledge of English. I also knew that, as in the majority of Russian schools with no foreign language track classes, the general focus of EFL instruction in that school was on rote learning of grammar and vocabulary, supplemented with reading and translation of texts and doing grammar exercises, with little attention to the development of students' L2 speaking skills. I also chose this particular school because I knew from my firsthand experience that the students there were average Russian children with no particular background in either English or Arts. The school does not provide any advanced or after-school courses in these disciplines and very few graduates of this school have chosen to study foreign languages as their college major.

The school serves over 350 students, classes 1 through 11, with the average class size of about 15 – 20 students. Due to the predominantly monolingual and mono-cultural population of the region, all the students of the school speak Russian as their first and only language. The fact that the school curriculum does not provide advanced EFL courses (and the reasons discussed in Chapter 1) explains the rather mediocre student learning achievement in this area, especially in terms of L2 speaking. On the other hand, the school offers a variety of after-school programs, including target shooting, martial arts, handicraft, basketball, table tennis, and chess.

In order to conduct my study, I thoroughly explained its purpose and procedures to the principal of the above-mentioned school and obtained his agreement for my teaching an experimental afterschool EFL class in one of the two 5th grade classrooms, as well as the parental agreement. After receiving the local consent, I also obtained the approval of my project from the

IRB of the University of Georgia, Athens. I volunteered to teach the afterschool class without receiving any financial compensation from the school.

Participants

In my study I decided to focus on 11-year-old 5th-graders because at this age children are still interested in drawing (as was discussed in Chapter 2) and they are not yet as self-conscious as older adolescents are. Fifth graders are transitioning from primary grades to middle school (as in Russia primary school comprises grades 1 through 4) and this transition period is very important in terms of how “smoothly” they will advance into the more psychologically and cognitively challenging period of puberty (Vygotsky, 1997).

Ten students from the same 5th-grade class (out of 15 students total), including 8 boys and two girls, signed up to participate. After the initial lessons, 7 students, all boys, remained in the class. They all started out with the Novice level of proficiency. All of them were interested in sports, computer games, and movies and these topics were utilized in my arts-based lessons. None of the participants had ever attended an art school or an English learning center (although two of them would enroll in an art school and two more in an English center as a result of my class).

No randomized selection of participants took place as my study had nothing to do with “true experiments” requiring randomized participant selection and a control group. I did not select participants according to their level of English skills or artistic talent either. I made it a point to enroll those participants who had free time and a desire to go an “extra mile” in terms of learning English and Arts. I realize that this can be considered a weakness of my study as the students who decided to participate in my study could originally be more hard-working and enthusiastic about learning than those who were not interested in participating. Therefore, I

decided not to compare their L2 WTC with that of their classmates who did not attend my afterschool classroom, but rather carefully trace and analyze the changes in my participants' performance as the study was unfolding during the semester.

Instructional context and pedagogy

The 5th-graders in my research site school attend three 45-minute-long lessons of English per week with their regular EFL teacher and use the standard-based textbooks and student books. According to my research plan, I was to deliver one afterschool lesson per week in one of the 5th grade classes, at which I would implement my experimental L2 teaching design based on creation of picturebooks in L2. This afterschool class was scheduled for the end of the school day.

The experimental afterschool class met every Tuesday, during the 6th period (1:30PM – 2:15PM), for 45 minutes, starting on January 11th through May 31st, 2016. All in all, the class included 20 lessons in 21 weeks (with the last meeting entirely dedicated to student interviews). Table 3.2 provides a brief outline of the lesson plans, including the titles of picturebooks and topics that were used for the discussion part of lessons, drawing assignments for their creative part, English grammar structures and vocabulary items that were implicitly taught at each lesson, and materials and tools that were used in the process of picturebook creation.

Lesson #	Picturebook and/or discussion topic	L2 Speaking practice – grammar structures	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
1	Greetings and Introductions What do you like to do?	<i>I like to...</i> <i>My favorite sport is...</i> <i>I can play...</i> Copula “is” and modal “can”	<i>Favorite, head, tail, legs, body, pencil, draw</i>	Drawing a lion after the teacher’s example	Paper, graphite pencils
2	<i>Willy and Hugh</i> Does he have friends?	<i>He is lonely</i> <i>He doesn’t have friends</i> <i>Willy meets Hugh</i> Present Simple	<i>spider, gorilla, lonely, friends, zoo, unicorn, fairy-tale, picturebook</i>	Drawing a fairy-tale creature (ogre and/or unicorn) with the teacher	Paper, graphite pencils
3	<i>Willy and Hugh</i> What movies do	<i>Willy reads...</i> <i>He is afraid of...</i> <i>Can I help you?</i>	<i>lonely, angry, afraid of, run, walk, laugh, friendship, library,</i>	Drawing a movie character after the teacher – dinosaur	Paper, graphite pencils

	you like?	<i>My favorite movie</i> Present Simple	<i>spider</i>	and/or pirate or princess	
4	<i>Hook</i> Do you like animals? What computer games do you like?	<i>My favorite animal</i> <i>This is a chicken</i> <i>This is an eagle</i> <i>I like Kill Zone...</i> Present Simple	<i>egg, mountain, chicken, fly, boy, tree, eagle, penguin, bird, ostrich</i>	Drawing animals – birds: eagle; ostrich, penguin with a baby penguin	Paper, graphite pencils, colored pencils
5	<i>Willy the Wizard</i> What sports do you like? Do you watch sports on TV?	<i>I like football...</i> <i>He likes hockey</i> <i>He likes to play...</i> <i>He doesn't have boots</i> Present Simple	<i>Boots, ice-hockey, skating, skiing, goalkeeper, player, stranger</i>	Drawing people – athletes. Students draw a soccer player, a hockey player or a figure-skater after the teacher	Paper, graphite pencils, colored pencils
6	<i>Willy the Wizard</i> Do you have boots? What do you have?	<i>I have boots</i> <i>I don't have boots</i> <i>I have a hockey stick</i> <i>Speak English!</i> Present Simple	<i>Shoot, pass, dribble, stick, ball, match, boots, score, opponent, team, win</i>	Students begin drawing their picturebook characters and share the plot ideas	Sketch-books, graphite pencils
7	<i>Willy the Wizard</i> What sport does he play? What does he do?	<i>He shoots</i> <i>He passes</i> <i>He scores</i> <i>He runs</i> Present Simple, 3 rd person Singular	<i>Score, win, lose, game, computer game, need for speed, shooting game</i>	Students continue to draw visual images for their picturebooks and write the first captions	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens
8	<i>Willy the Wizard</i> His boots are magic! Or is he magic?	<i>They don't pass...</i> <i>He doesn't have boots</i> <i>He has no boots</i> Present Simple, negation	<i>Magic, magician, wizard, champion, fans, good game</i>	Students continue drawing their picturebooks, introducing new characters.	Sketch-books, graphite pencils
9	<i>Willy the Wizard</i> What is Willy doing?	<i>Willy is dribbling</i> <i>Willy is shooting</i> <i>He is passing</i> Present Progressive	<i>Dribbling, passing, running, shooting, waking up, washing, walking, sleeping</i>	Students draw visuals and write captions. Students share what their books are about.	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens
10	<i>Willy the Dreamer</i> What is that? Describing pictures	<i>This is a banana-ship</i> <i>That is a banana-monkey</i> Compound nouns	<i>Banana-plane, banana-boots, banana-king, banana-fish</i>	Student continue drawing their picturebooks and share how many pages they have done	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens
11	<i>The Man Who Walked between the Towers</i> What did he do? Describing the pictures	<i>He walked between the towers</i> <i>He juggled balls</i> <i>He rode a unicycle</i> Past Simple	<i>Twin towers, unicycle, wire, torch, dream, Paris, New York City, rope, walk, juggle, ride, want</i>	Students continue drawing their picturebooks and write captions for the pictures.	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens
12	<i>The Man Who Walked between the Towers</i> What could he do?	<i>He could walk...</i> <i>He could juggle...</i> <i>He could ride a unicycle</i> Past Simple of <i>can</i>	<i>Unicycle, wire, torch, rope, walk, juggle, ride, want, police, arrow, bird, perform</i>	Students draw a soccer goalkeeper and/or a hockey one after the teacher	Paper, pencils
13	<i>Willy the Champ</i> Describing pictures	<i>I am sorry...</i> <i>Excuse me...</i> <i>Can you help me?</i> Polite formulaic	<i>Champion, punch, enemy, friends, scared, crying, kind, polite</i>	Students continue working on their picturebooks – drawing and writing	Sketch-books, graphite pencils,

		expressions		captions	pens
14	<i>Willy the Champ</i> What does he like to do?	<i>He likes to read and listen to music.</i> <i>I like to read sometimes</i> Present Simple	<i>Sofa, music, cinema, laugh, cry, park, walk</i>	Students continue working on picturebooks – start coloring them	Colored pencils
15	<i>Willy the Wimp</i> What do you know about Willy?	<i>He is a monkey</i> <i>He lives in a house</i> <i>He plays football</i> Present Simple	<i>Wimp, weak, strong, package, diet, stronger, bigger, afraid</i>	Students finish drawing their visuals and color them	Colored pencils
16	<i>Willy the Wimp</i> Is Willy weak or strong?	He says “I’m sorry” They hit Willy Willy is dancing Present Simple and Progressive	<i>Weak, strong, hit, sorry, arm-chair, swimming pool</i>	Students color their visual images and begin making covers	Colored pencils, Paper-cutting machine
17	<i>Willy’s Pictures</i> Describing pictures	<i>I know the word...</i> <i>I can see umbrella in the picture...</i> Descriptions of objects in pictures	<i>Umbrella, pencil, brush, painting, bread, soap, shower</i>	Students finish coloring pictures and make covers out of cardboard	Paper-cutting machine, Stapler, Cardboard
18	<i>Willy’s Pictures</i> Describing pictures	<i>Please, give me a brown/red/pink/blue/green/orange/purple pencil</i> Polite requests	<i>Leather jacket, boat, hat, teeth, False teeth, fisherman</i>	Students finish picturebooks – they bind them, make covers, and draw pictures and titles on the cover	Paper-cutting machine, Stapler, Cardboard, glue
19	<i>The Tunnel</i> What are your classmates books about?	<i>Kolya’s book is about...</i> <i>His book is about...</i> Descriptions of the main ideas of books	<i>Brick wall, window, smile, mysterious, forest, animals, crocodile</i>	Students bind picturebooks and color the cover pictures.	Paper-cutting machine, Stapler, glue
20	<i>The Tunnel</i> Share your book. What is it about?	<i>They are not friends</i> <i>My book is about...</i> <i>My book is called...</i> Descriptions of the main ideas	<i>Stone, scary, dark, bright, love, hate, hug</i>	Students share their creations with each other and their teachers	Finished picture-books

Table 3.2. Brief outline of the afterschool project’s lesson plans².

It should be noted here that, according to the major tenets of CLT (as discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 52-56), my role in the classroom in terms of EFL instruction was more of a ‘more proficient communicator’ than a ‘teacher per se’. My goal was to create a non-threatening, “communication-rich” learning environment (through implementing creative activities), expose students to ample L2 input (through reading and discussing picturebooks), and encourage their L2 output (discussing picturebooks, sharing creative ideas, and using English for interpersonal

² The more detailed lesson plans can be found in Appendix C.

communication). I did not explicitly teach grammar rules to my students as that was done in their regular EFL class (three lessons per week). In accordance with the tenets of CLT that informed my instructional approach, grammar was taught implicitly (Nunan, 1989; Savignon, 2005) as I modelled English sentences for students using a particular grammar tense while describing images of the discussed picturebooks (e.g. “Willy walks in the park and meets Hugh”) and by modelling sentences for interpersonal classroom communication (e.g., “Sasha, give me the red pencil, please”). I did not insist on my students’ production of complete sentences as I wanted to see when they would naturally become willing to produce multiple word utterances instead of single word responses. Thus, I could trace the progress in their WTC over the semester, as it manifested itself in their L2 output.

English was used as a tool for meaningful communication – to describe the events of a picturebook story, to discuss the possible plot developments of students’ picturebooks, to discuss any topic that is of interest to students, or to negotiate the distribution and sharing of art materials, such as colored pencils, paper, erasers, etc. Any grammar or vocabulary drills were excluded. In this I followed the major recommendations of CLT (Savignon, 2005, Ellis, 2005) and Task-Based Language Teaching (Ellis, 2003), as the primary task to which my students were oriented was the creation of picturebooks in English, and not the learning of specific language structures.

In order to make the group of my participants a “community of practice”, i.e., practice speaking in English and using those English structures and vocabulary they had learned in their regular EFL class, the rule of “speaking in English only” was adopted and adhered to during the experimental course.

Data collection

Typical data sources for qualitative case studies are observations, interviews, and artifacts (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Observations of participants provide important information on their behavior in a specific situation. Interviews with participants, being first-hand accounts of their thinking, provide insights into participants' perceptions and understandings about an activity, whereas artifacts produced by participants provide additional contributions to an understanding of participants' perceptions (Stake, 2006). In my case study, I drew on the following data sources (as listed in Table 3.1 on p. 80), which I will detail in the following subsections.

- Video-recordings of all project lessons;
- Teacher journals – narrative entries and visual sketches;
- Semi-structured interviews with the participants and their teachers (see Appendix A);
- Questionnaire (see Appendix B);
- Lesson plans (see Appendix C);
- Artifacts produced by the participants (picturebooks)

Video-recordings of all lessons

Video-recording became an important data collection tool in my study. Since a teacher-researcher is fully involved in the teaching process during his class, he cannot possibly observe, let alone remember, all the interactions occurring in the classroom among the student-participants. However, these interpersonal interactions in L2 between students, the moments of their private speech in L2, as well as the instances when they address the teacher and each other in L2, were of particular interest to me in terms of the research question pertaining to L2 WTC. Both during my actual teaching in class and while making journal entries, I was acutely aware of

the fact that I could only see a part of the classroom and hear some of the conversations at any given point, while some of the students and their interactions could be out of my observational capacity. Video-recordings helped me to reconstruct the “whole picture” and hear the L2 conversations that eluded my attention in class. With the help of video-recordings, I could analyze how my actions as a teacher prompted my students’ decisions to speak as videotaping allows the researcher to “observe self as well as others, and interaction of self with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 299).

Therefore, each of the 20 lessons was video-recorded with the help of two stationary digital video-cameras Kodak Zi8, which allowed me to garner video-recordings of all the class participants and their interactions from two angles from all the class meetings. The recordings were transcribed and the transcripts were used in data analysis (e.g., for the computation of the number of L2 utterances produced by participants in each lesson). The video-recordings were used as a substitute for classroom observations as the researcher was unable to teach the experimental class and conduct observations at the same time. They provided the researcher an opportunity to “re-visit” each lesson after it was over, and observe students’ behavior and reactions to class activities.

Teacher journal and visual journaling

All through my case study I kept a teacher journal, in which I documented both the detailed factual accounts of my lessons and my reflections on students’ attitudes, participation, engagement, flow moments, and willingness to communicate in L2. Field notes are used in qualitative research as evidence that provides meaning and helps to understand the studied phenomena. However, one of the disadvantages of field notes and journals based on them is that they rely heavily on the researcher’s memory (Canfield, 2011). Therefore, I made a detailed

narrative account of each lesson in my Teacher Journal immediately after the completion of each lesson in order to retain as many relevant details as possible. The factual information collected in my teacher journal included the time and date of the lesson, the lesson plan and the detailed description of the actual lesson procedures. Each journal entry also included my reflections on how certain creative activities were designed to influence student engagement and their L2 WTC and what impact they produced in reality.

It has been noted (Canfield, 2011) that field notes can include drawings, sketches, and diagrams as analyzing a phenomenon with the help of visual expressive means requires the observer to pay more attention to all the details and to not miss anything. Besides, drawings can often describe certain phenomena more vividly and authentically than written words (Eisner, 2008). Therefore, I decided to supplement my teacher journal entries with artistic sketches drawn with the help of video-recordings, in which I tried to capture both the participants' psychological states (high engagement, absorption, loss of self-consciousness, eagerness to speak out) and the significant moments of my case study (e.g., first indications of flow or first instances of students' unsolicited L2 utterances). To avoid the temptation of reworking my sketches of participants multiple times, I decided to forgo using a pencil for these sketches and chose to use a black ball-point pen (Uni-ball Signo, Micro 207) instead. The medium of the pen (the lines of which cannot be erased) helped me to convey my initial impressions, thus adding authenticity to my visual journal entries.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to answer Research Sub-Questions 1a, 1c, and 2b. Following Patton (2002), who wrote that the purpose of interviewing is not only to “enter into the other person's perspective” (p. 341), but also “to capture the complexities of their individual

perceptions and experiences” (p. 348), I decided to use interviews in my study in order to supplement my observations with the perspectives of others – research participants themselves and their school teachers.

Based on the degree of structuring, interviews can be structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In a structured interview, the researcher asks all respondents the same predefined questions in the same order. This is done to minimize the influence of the researcher and their instrument on the study results. However, my participants were 11 year-old children and I did not want to impose a rigorous structure on them in the interviews lest I could inhibit their responses. It is paramount in studies with children to conduct interviews in an unobtrusive, friendly, and supportive manner. Semi-structured interviews are more flexible in that the researcher has more freedom to choose the sequence of the questions being asked depending on how the interview progresses, but the interview guide is still prepared beforehand. In unstructured interviews, neither questions nor answers are predetermined (Minichiello et al., 1990). Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) specify that unstructured interviews are not useful when the researcher already has a basic understanding of a phenomenon under analysis. In my case, I focused on students’ flow and L2 WTC and, therefore, had a well-defined understanding of what I was looking for in my participants’ behavior. Due to these considerations, I chose to use semi-structured interviews both with my student participants and their teachers.

I constructed tentative interview questions to elicit information on predetermined topics while allowing for unique responses from my participants. Therefore, my interviews took the form of guided conversations with the participants, in which I discussed with them their attitude to studying English in general and their perceptions of studying English alongside and by means

of arts-based creative tasks, such as picturebook creation. I also asked questions meant to elicit their attitudes to speaking in the L2 in class and their evaluations of their willingness to try to speak in the L2 in different situations. Finally, in the guided conversations with the participants, I also sought to elicit their perceptions of their interest and engagement related to various L2 learning activities, including the activities implemented in my study, in order to collect data on their state of flow in the classroom. When constructing and asking interview questions, I took care not to influence participants' responses by directing them to specific answers. I also took care to ask questions using language that is easily accessible for 11-year-olds, and the interviews were conducted in Russian, the participants' first and primary language.

Along the same lines, I conducted a semi-structured interview with the participants' regular EFL teacher, the only difference being that more specific pedagogic terms could be used. That interview was also conducted in Russian, the respondent's primary language, to ensure the respondent's full understanding of the questions. The majority of my questions were aimed at such topics as participants' psychological traits (extroversion/introversion), L2 competence, L2 confidence, willingness to participate in the class activities, raising of hands, fear of making a mistake, potential to succeed in L2 learning, motivation to L2 studies, and desire to improve. I also interviewed three other school teachers, a Math teacher, a History teacher, and a PE teacher, who was also my participants' classroom teacher. These interviews primarily focused on the participants' psychological traits, general cognitive abilities, confidence, popularity in the class, relationships with other students, and motivation to study. Both the student and teacher interview guides can be found in Appendix A.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered three times during the semester in order to collect students' self-reported data on flow and to see the dynamics in their perceptions of the project's activities. Its goal was to gather information on how participants themselves perceived their level of flow in the afterschool project. The dimensions of flow, as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990,1997), Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi (2009), and Egbert (2003), such as high interest, concentration, merging of awareness and action, feeling of control, total absorption in the activity, and autotelic desire to repeat the activity, were used in the construction of the Questionnaire items. I have adapted the standard questionnaire used in previous research of flow in L2 learning environment (Egbert, 2003), to suit the specific features of my study.

The participants were instructed to respond to each of the questionnaire items (see Appendix C) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) at three points during the semester – the beginning of the project (Lesson 6); the middle of the project (Lesson 12); and the end of the project (Lesson 19). Questions 3, 4, 10, and 12 were reverse-scored. Each time, participants were asked to complete two questionnaires – (1) they had to evaluate their reactions to the Picturebook Discussion Phase of the lessons (the initial part of each lesson, in which popular picturebooks were discussed) and (2) their reactions to the Creative Phase (the second part of each lesson, when the students were actually creating their picturebooks). For the convenience of the participants, the Questionnaire was translated into Russian.

The participants' written numerical responses to the Questionnaire items (from 1 to 7) were then counted and the scores were applied in the data analysis pertaining to flow (RQ1a and RQ1b). Given that the overall number of Questionnaire items was 14 and 7 being the maximum score for each item, 98 points was the highest possible score study participants could get. After

Egbert (2003), the scores of 5 and higher were considered indicative of flow, whereas the scores lower than 3 signified boredom or anxiety. Thus, the overall score of 70 and higher signified that a student experienced flow in the project, whereas any score lower than 45 indicated the states opposite to flow. To enhance the validity of the questionnaire results, they were used in data analysis in combination with teacher-researcher's ratings of student flow (see p.).

Student Artifacts

The artifacts, namely the picturebooks produced by the participants during the course of the project, were photographed on various stages of their completion for further analysis of the students' artistic potential and imagination, the development of their drawing skills, and their interest towards the creative project. Thus, the images of students' picturebooks were analyzed from the point of view of the overall quality of the produced images, including their composition (how the image is placed on the page), precision of drawings in terms of shapes and outlines, elaboration/complexity of the details, correct proportions, and the variety of colors. This component of data analysis helped me to draw conclusions with regards to RQ1b and RQ2b, namely how individual differences in artistic skills and imagination influenced students' flow intensity and their L2 WTC during the project lessons.

The next subsections present the methods of data analysis utilized in this study.

Data analysis

According to Ezzy (2002), there are four major analytic strategies for summarizing and interpreting data: grounded theory and thematic analysis; content analysis; cultural methodology; and narrative analysis. For the analysis of my study data, I chose to use Deductive Content Analysis (DCA) and Inductive Content Analysis (ICA), combined with elements of Mixed-methods research and Visual research.

Deductive Content Analysis

Content analysis has been widely used in qualitative research in its two forms – inductive content analysis and deductive content analysis (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Krippendorff, 2004). Similar to thematic analysis, inductive content analysis identifies recurring themes in the data, which allows theory to emerge from data during the coding process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In an inductive approach, the themes, or categories, are data-driven (Crabtree & Miller, 1999), whereas in DCA they are theory-driven (Weber, 1990) and are predetermined by previous research. That means that in DCA the previous research in the field is used to formulate categories, which then are applied as codes to group the data. Thus, the researcher carefully reads through the text (in case of my study teacher journal, transcripts of video-recordings, and transcripts of interviews), grouping the data under the formulated codes (Creswell, 2013). Since both flow and L2 WTC have already been analyzed and categorized in previous research, DCA seemed to fit my study as an analytic approach. In my data analysis I used the existing theoretical conceptualizations of flow and L2 WTC (as discussed in Chapter 2), as the theoretic basis for my analytic categories.

Deductive categories to analyze flow

In order to analyze data pertaining to flow (RQ1), I used flow components, or dimensions of flow, previously identified and categorized by flow researchers (Chen et al., 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Egbert, 2003) as codes. The dimensions of flow have been described in the previous chapter and here I am restating them to show how they were applied in the process of coding and data analysis. It should be noted that these flow components have been previously used in various combinations as analytic categories in the research of flow in education (Custodero, 2002; Egbert, 2003; Romeo & Cantoia, 2011; Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009):

- (1) *Balance between challenge and skill;*
- (2) *Concentration (focused attention);*
- (3) *Interest;*
- (4) *Feeling of control (agency over the activity);*
- (5) *Autotelic experience (activity is rewarding in itself);*
- (6) *Merging of awareness and action;*
- (7) *Distorted perception of time.*

The dimensions of flow include flow *antecedents, experiences, and effects* (Chen et al., 1999), so a researcher needs to choose those dimensions that indicate flow in the participants' behavior. *Balance between challenge and skill* is a key antecedent (predictor) of flow and whether or not a participant's skills match the task's challenge can be determined by the analysis of his participation in classroom activities and the artifacts he produces. Another antecedent of flow, namely *feeling of control* over the activity, can also be observed and identified by the researcher and self-reported by participants. However, other flow antecedents, such as clear goals and immediate feedback, cannot be used as categories for assessing student flow, as they are part of the teacher's responsibilities and external to students.

Concentration, interest, enjoyment, and merging of action and awareness are categorized as flow experiences (Chen et al., 1999) and describe how a person acts and feels in flow. They can be determined with the help of observations of student classroom behavior and student interviews and they can also be self-reported. The flow effects, such as *autotelic experience, distorted sense of time, and loss of self-consciousness* can also be traced in students' classroom behavior and interview details. As discussed in Chapter 2, the effect of flow described as *loss of self-consciousness* is a direct consequence of the *merging of awareness and action* – therefore,

these two categories were merged into one code for the purpose of this study. Similarly, the category of *enjoyment* was merged with the category of *autotelic experience*, as enjoyment is part of the latter.

The flow dimensions listed above were used as codes in my data analysis pertaining to student flow. In order to ascertain whether or not each of the participants experienced the state of flow (RQ1a), I compiled qualitative composite profiles detailing each of these components of flow and based on data derived from the teacher journal, video-recordings, student interviews, teacher interview, student questionnaire responses, and student artifacts. The intensity of each of the flow components was quantitatively derived on the basis of the qualitative profile characteristics and ranked on a scale from 0 – 100 (see Table 3.3).

To document the dynamics of flow and answer RQ1b, the intensity of flow in each student’s individual case was ranked for the beginning, middle, and final stages of the project, based on teacher ratings of each flow component and participants’ self-reported assessments of flow (based on questionnaires).

<i>Assessment criteria for a given flow component as manifested by a participant</i>	<i>Relative intensity of the flow component</i>
No data is detected in any of the data sources suggesting the actual presence of the component in the student’s behavior	0 %
Sparse data from one data source suggest the presence of the component	1 - 25%
Sparse data from more than one data source suggest the presence of the component	26 – 50%
Ample data from more than one data source suggest the presence of the component	51 – 75%
Ample data from multiple data sources consistently suggest the presence of the component	76 – 100%

Table 3.3. Teacher ratings of student flow components.

Inductive Content Analysis

ICA was used to identify the major factors contributing to student flow in the arts-based classroom (RQ1c). Thomas (2006) identifies general inductive approach to data analysis as the description of most important themes. According to Charmaz (2006) and Preissle (2008),

analytic induction starts with scanning the data for tentative categories and dividing the data into categories, and continues, “in a kind of recursive thinking from instances to idea” (Preissle, 2008, p. 15), with looking for positive and negative evidence in the data, in order to build abstract constructs.

In accordance with this method, data collected in this study, including teacher journal entries, visual journal sketches, lesson plans, and student interviews, were carefully perused and reviewed in search for common themes representing factors contributing to student flow. These themes were used as tentative analytical categories, under which the relevant data were grouped. Each category was analyzed in reference to the dynamics of student flow, which had been previously identified in the analysis pertaining to RQ1b. Such analytic procedures helped me to establish which particular factors of the implemented arts-based project were conducive to student flow.

Analysis of L2 WTC dynamics

In order to answer the research questions pertaining to L2 WTC, I divided my analysis of the relevant data into two parts (Chapters 5 and 6). In Chapter 5 I analyze the collected data to answer Research Question 2a (What are the dynamics of L2 WTC changes in an L2 classroom where L2 learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation?). In this part of my analysis the language behavior and the L2 utterances of the whole group of participants were the unit of analysis. It was done in order to track the overall progress of the participants as a group in terms of L2 WTC throughout the duration of the project. Following the definition of L2 WTC as “a situated construct reflecting the choice to speak at a specific moment in time with a specific person or group” (MacIntyre, 2007), it can be suggested that its emergence and dynamics in a L2 classroom are best manifested in the learners’ actual L2 production. Therefore, I applied simple

arithmetic computations of the number of L2 utterances produced by study participants at each lesson. Based on the checklist of WTC categories created by Cao (2009) and modified Xie (2011) (see Chapter 2, p. 67), I narrowed the list down to three categories of student-produced L2 utterances: (1) single word utterances - showing the lowest level of WTC as a learner expresses his or her desire to participate in L2 communication but lacks L2 confidence to try a more substantial response; (2) multiple-word utterances - when students have a high enough WTC to try and construct an extended L2 sentence, which may or may not be complete; and (3) unsolicited L2 utterances - when learners use L2 spontaneously, for their own communicative reasons. These represent the highest level of WTC as learners produce them without any prompt on the teacher’s part, when they could safely remain silent. Such unsolicited utterances comprise a number of categories elaborated by Cao (2009) and Xie (2011) – asking the teacher a question; talking to classmates in L2 as part of the lesson or in informal socializing; volunteering a comment; presenting your own opinion. In the context of my study unsolicited utterances also included asking for clarifications and providing such; asking the teacher or classmates for help or advice on creative activities; volunteering help or advice; sharing information, news, and opinions in informal communication; initiating a conversation with the teacher/peers on a topic of their choice.

Teacher’s question or prompt	Student’s utterances	Type of utterance
What can you see in this picture?	(Student 1): Bananas! (Student 2): Microphone!	Single-word utterance Single-word utterance
Boys, what are you drawing now?	(S1): I’m drawing his head! (S2): His eyes...and his nose!	Multiple-word utterance Multiple-word utterance
(The teacher is silent)	(S1): Teacher, did you play game “Petri Dish”? (S2): Sasha, give me a red pencil, please!	Unsolicited utterance Unsolicited utterance

Table 3.4. Examples of three types of student utterances.

To segment learners' L2 speech into utterances, I used the understanding of utterance as a phonological or prosody unit, which contains a complete thought, can consist of a single clause or multiple independent and dependent clauses, and is separated from other utterances by intonation and pauses (Miller & Chapman, 1981, 2004). The examples of the three kinds of utterances used in my study are listed in Table 3.4.

I carefully analyzed the transcripts of video-recordings, coding all L2 utterances produced by the participants into these three categories, and calculating the number of L2 utterances of these three types produced by each study participant at each project lesson in order to track the changes in their L2 production as the semester progressed.

The implementation of simple quantitative measurements in my data analysis in the form of calculating the growing number of students' L2 utterances per lesson, in addition to the qualitative approach predominantly utilized in my study, affiliates it to Mixed-Methods research (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009), which has been widely used recently in L2 educational research (Chou, 2011; Park, 2010; Li & Walsh, 2011; Hashemi, 2012; Xie, 2011). Qualitative and quantitative approaches are used simultaneously in contemporary applied linguistics due to their complementarity and the necessity to apply different methodological approaches to answer different research questions (Riazi & Candlin, 2014).

Analysis of individual differences in L2 WTC dynamics

The second part of WTC analysis is presented in Chapter 6, in which I analyze the study data pertaining to the last research sub-question, "*What individual characteristics influence learners' L2 WTC in an arts-based L2 program?*" In this part of my data analysis, I closely investigate four individual participants' cases through the lens of their personality traits, motivation to learn English, and other variables, in order to explain the different dynamics in

participants' L2 WTC and establish which factors allowed students to benefit the most from the proposed creative approach.

For the analysis of these individual cases, which were collected with the help of observations, interviews, teacher journal entries, students' artifacts (picturebooks), and my visual sketches, I used a system of analytic categories based on the main factors influencing L2 WTC, as established in the previous research in this field (Cao, 2009, Kang, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007; Xie, 2011). These categories are subdivided into two major sets, according to the traditional division of L2 WTC factors: Personality, or Trait-like variables, and Situational, or State-like, variables (as discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 60-63):

1. Personality (trait-like) variables:

Personality (extraverted/introverted, talkative/quiet); self-confidence; motivation to study L2.

2. Situational (state-like) variables:

L2 self-confidence; feelings towards the learning environment (teacher, activities, peers); psychological conditions of security, excitement, and responsibility; L2 anxiety (afraid or not afraid of making mistakes/afraid or not afraid to speak in L2)

I used these categories as codes for grouping data, while carefully reading and analyzing the teacher journal entries, transcripts of interviews and video-recordings, and classroom observations. I also analyzed student-produced picturebooks in order to make inferences about the participants' artistic abilities and imagination. Finally, I compared the dynamics in students' L2 WTC to their levels of flow expressed at various stages of the project in order to provide a tentative assessment of the relationship between flow and WTC.

Following Brown (1973), who posited that Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) is “an excellent simple index of grammatical development because almost every new kind of

knowledge increases length” (p. 53), I resorted to MLU measurements in this part of the analysis in order to examine students’ relative L2 proficiency and track their progress in the course of study. Calculating MLU is fairly straightforward – the number of words (lexical morphemes) contained in a sample of 100 utterances is divided by this number of utterances (Brown, 1973; Miller & Chapman, 2004). In the context of my study, I calculated MLU dividing the total number of lexical morphemes contained in the total number of utterances produced by a selected participant per lesson. For example, Student 1 produced 25 utterances and they cumulatively contained 50 words – that means his MLU at that particular lesson equaled 2. Compound words, such as “banana-fish”, or “it’s” counted as two words as they contain two lexical morphemes each.

Visual Research

Besides Content Analysis, I also utilized elements of Visual Research methodology (Banks, 2001; Mannay, 2016; Rose, 2001) in order to add authenticity to my data analysis and presentation. Since the advent of the new literacies, the constituent elements of a scholarly text have been broadened by the inclusion of visual images, color, sound, and graphic design in addition to the traditional written representations of experiences (Bach, 2007; de Mello, 2007; Mattingly, 2007). Visual research methodology is based on the use of visual artistic media, such as films, photographs, paintings, and drawings, in order to produce and represent knowledge (Mannay, 2016).

After Clandinin and Murphy (2007), who advocate for using visual and textual collages, poetry, word images and photographs in data analysis, I created pen-drawn sketches of my study participants during the process of data collection and data analysis. Visual images of my participants at work in the experimental classroom, created by me either immediately during

lessons or in the process of reviewing video-recordings, allowed me to demonstrate in a laconic and convincing way those elements of students' body language and facial expressions, in which flow and WTC were vividly manifested. Thus, a lowered gaze and a stooped posture could indicate boredom (absence of flow) or avoidance to speak in L2 and communication apprehension; raised hands, upright body postures, and wide-open eyes would indicate flow and high WTC. In order to analyze visual images I looked for specific features representing human feelings and emotions, such as body postures, facial expressions, gazes, gestures, proxemics, and applied them to the same categories that were used to identify flow (concentration, interest, excitement, loss of self-consciousness) and L2 WTC (security, excitement, responsibility, L2 self-confidence, L2 anxiety).

Positioning of the researcher

In this sub-section I address my positioning in the study and how it translated into the strengths and weaknesses thereof. The characteristic feature of my positioning was the fact that I was both an insider and an outsider. As a Russian native, who has spent most of his life in Russia, I was an insider in the classroom of Russian 5th-graders and shared multiple cultural layers with them. However, being bilingual and having spent four years cumulatively in the USA, I also was an outsider, at least to some extent, as my participants even asked me on a few occasions if my first language was Russian or English and whether I had been born in Russia or the USA.

I believe that the position as a “partial” outsider was to my advantage as student-participants regarded me as an authentic L2 speaker and a source of first-hand knowledge on the L2 language and culture – e.g., they asked me multiple questions throughout the study about the USA and its people. This was beneficial in terms of the participants' heightened curiosity in my

lessons and their complete trust in my expertise. On the other hand, I studied my classroom from these two positions – I looked at it through the lens of my experience as a Russian teacher of English and Arts, who knows what usually works and what does not work with Russian students of that age, and, at the same time, through the lens of North American L2 educational research, in which I had been steeped as a researcher.

As a teacher/researcher/artist, I decided to draw the sketches of my participants during project lessons and share my drawings with them in order to create an atmosphere of creative collaboration in the classroom and use my own creativity and flow as an inspiration for my students. I consciously chose the role of a “more proficient artist/L2 speaker” as opposed to the role of a teacher “per se”, participating in creative activities alongside my students and sharing control over the project activities with them (at least partially), in order to transform a conventional “teacher-fronted” classroom organization into an egalitarian community of collaborators/artists/L2 speakers and learners. The making of my sketches of the study participants in the classroom connected me to them on a deeper emotional level and helped me to perceive the dynamics of their flow and L2 WTC in a more subtle way. I myself became a participant of the study and influenced my students’ participation in the project in many ways. However, in order to analyze the study data in a more objective way, I needed to distance myself from the object of my investigation. That is why, I chose to use mostly the third-person narration in the data analysis and refer to myself as the “teacher”, “researcher”, or “teacher/researcher”. This allowed me to reach the necessary level of abstraction, required of a researcher conducting an investigation of his own class.

CHAPTER 4

FLOW IN A CREATIVE L2 CLASSROOM: DATA ANALYSIS

1. How can the activity of picturebook creation foster flow in an L2 classroom, particularly in the EFL setting?

1a. Can flow occur during the activity of picturebook creation?

1b. If yes, what are the dynamics of flow in such a context?

1c. Which factors do the dynamics of flow depend on in such a context?

This chapter addresses the first research question, particularly research questions 1a and 1b. Research question 1c is addressed in Chapter 5. Each of the participant's experiences in the experimental study are presented as a series of individual case studies in which elements of flow are carefully analyzed.

In order to ascertain that flow occurred in the experiences of the study participants in my classroom (RQ1a), I inspected the following data types:

- Teacher journal entries;
- Video-recordings of lessons;
- Student interviews;
- Teachers interviews;
- Student questionnaires;
- Student artifacts.

The analytical categories used for data analysis reflect the major flow components (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) and include the following:

- *Balance between skills and challenge;*
- *Concentration;*
- *Interest;*
- *Control;*
- *Autotelic experience;*
- *Merging of action and awareness;*
- *Distorted perception of time.*

I systematically drew on each of the aforementioned data sources to create qualitative composite profiles detailing the key characteristics of flow for each study participant. The intensity of each of the characteristics of flow is also quantitatively derived on the basis of the qualitative profile characteristics and is ranked on a scale from 0 – 100 by the researcher. To document the dynamics of flow and answer RQ1b, the intensity of flow is detailed and ranked for intensity for the beginning, middle, and final stages of the project, based on teacher ratings of student flow and participants’ self-reported assessments of flow (questionnaire).

I relied on the following data sources to identify the following components of flow:

Flow components	Data sources
Balance between skills and challenge	Teacher journal; student artifacts; teachers interviews; student interview;
Concentration	Teacher journal; video-recordings;
Interest	Teacher journal; student interviews; questionnaire
Feeling of control	Teacher journal; video-recordings; interviews
Autotelic experience	Teacher journal; interviews; video-recordings; questionnaire
Merging of awareness and action	Teacher journal; video-recordings; interviews; questionnaire
Distorted temporal perception	Teacher journal; video-recordings; interviews

Table 4.1. Flow components and data sources.

Individual case studies of flow and its dynamics

The class activities of each lesson included two phases – the introductory stage, during which the teacher-researcher and the participants read and discussed picturebooks, and the creative stage, during which the participants worked on their individual drawings or picturebooks. The case studies document participants’ flow during both Phase I (Discussion stage) and Phase II (Creative stage) of each lesson.

SASHA



Figure 4.1. Sasha working on his picturebook.

1. *Balance between challenge and skills.*

As discussed in Chapter 2, balance between challenge and skills is the key antecedent and predictor of a flow experience, so the data analysis pertaining to this flow component focused on two skill domains – artistic (drawing) skills and English skills. From the very beginning of the project, the teacher notes in his journal that Sasha was “by far the best artist in the group”.

According to the teacher’s notes, Sasha’s “excellent (for his age) drawing skills and his self-perceived potential to succeed in drawing” were strong predictors of his success in the project.

The teacher comments on the “amazing confidence and ease” with which Sasha would draw any

image, be it an animal, a human figure, or a portrait, and adds that Sasha “never asked the teacher for help”.

The review of student artifacts, namely Sasha’s picturebook “Lonely”, confirms his “excellent” drawing and coloring skills, as well as his natural talent of composition and vivid imagination (see Chapter 7). The second picturebook he created at home independently demonstrates that Sasha further improved his drawing skills over the semester, as the human figures he drew there exceed in complexity the simpler images of his first book.

The student interview with Sasha provided an additional conformation of his fascination with drawing and perfect confidence in his artistic potential. Sasha shared that he did enjoy drawing and drew at home almost on a daily basis. He also stated that, “thanks to the project”, he was going to enroll in a specialized art school the following year.

The interview with the regular EFL teacher provided an objective assessment of Sasha’s English skills. The teacher stated that Sasha had made the most considerable progress in his English over the semester among his classmates and was the only student in his class whose final grade for English was 5 (equivalent of A). She added that Sasha “learned new English words and grammar constructions easily” and improved his English, as his grade for the previous semester was 4 (B). She specified that Sasha lacked confidence in English speaking in the beginning of the semester but he also “greatly improved” in this aspect by the end of the semester.

These data allowed the researcher to conclude that Sasha’s artistic and English skills were in perfect balance for the project’s challenges, as he ranked this component the following way, on a scale 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of balance of skills and challenge
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	75	100	100	Excellent balance

2. *Concentration.*

According to the teacher journal, Sasha's concentration underwent noticeable changes as the semester progressed. In the beginning of the project (Lessons 1 through 6) Sasha was easily distracted, especially during Phase I (Discussion Phase). Teacher's entries for Lessons 1, 2, and 3 state that he "appeared absent-minded and distracted", "often looking out the window, while the teacher was asking questions about the picturebook under discussion". As opposed to Phase I, during the Creative phase (Phase II), Sasha was very focused from Lesson 1 to Lesson 20. The teacher journal entries from Lessons 2, 3, and 4 specifically mention Sasha's high concentration during drawing activities. However, the teacher journal entries discussing the middle and final parts of the project (starting from Lesson 7), indicate Sasha's high level of concentration during both phases. This is manifested in such teacher remarks referencing Sasha's participation, both in the discussion of picturebooks and creative activities, as "extremely absorbed", "continues drawing without interruptions", "stays focused for the whole duration of the picturebook discussion activity", and "constantly raises his hand when a question is asked".

Several notations based on the video-recordings pertaining to Sasha's concentration also suggest that the level of his concentration drastically increased over the semester. In the beginning of the project (Lessons 3, 4, 5), Sasha can be seen eagerly engaged in the book discussion (Phase I) for a few initial minutes (raising his hand and answering the teacher's questions), but then his participation abruptly halts, with his gaze traveling around the classroom. During the middle of the project (Lessons 7 - 13) and its final part (Lessons 14 - 20), Sasha never appears to be distracted, unconcerned or talking to other students in the recordings. The video-recordings also consistently show that, while other participants were actively using the freedom to move around the classroom during the creative stage, Sasha was working on his picturebook

without interruptions. Even though Sasha’s classmates requested his help with their drawings, he would remain focused and return to his picturebook as soon as he was finished helping his friends. Similarly, the recordings confirm the lack of requests for bathroom breaks on Sasha’s part.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Sasha’s *concentration* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of concentration
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	50	100	100	High concentration

3. *Interest.*

According to the teacher journal, Sasha’s interest towards the project activities was high from the beginning to the end of the project. His interest manifested itself in a variety of ways. Researcher notes indicate that Sasha was the only participant who regularly asked for permission to take his picturebook home in order to continue working on it outside the classroom. The researcher also notes that Sasha “usually came to the class already knowing what he would be drawing that day, whereas other students would sit for a long time wondering how to develop their plot”. These observations suggest that Sasha continued thinking about his picturebook outside of the experimental classroom. Teacher journal entries from the end of the project also contain information on Sasha’s second picturebook, which he was making entirely on his own, at home. This is another manifestation of his high level of interest towards the creative part of the project

The analysis of student interviews, however, suggests that Sasha’s interest towards the project activities was not constant but a fluctuating variable. Describing his attitude to my project, Sasha repeated the word “interesting” six times, three of which were used with the

modifier “very”, thus underlining his high level of fascination with the project. At the same time, he admitted that, in the beginning of the project, he was certain that the class “*would not be interesting, that it would be another boring class - like other classes we have*”. Sasha specified that he had had that negative impression at the first lesson of the project but afterwards his attitude changed: “*each new lesson was more and more interesting, and then... it became very, very interesting*”.

According to Egbert (2003), closely related to the *interest* component of flow is the component of *authenticity*. The theme of authenticity and meaningfulness of the creative project was prominent in Sasha’s interview. For instance, Sasha shared with the researcher that he often had a feeling, while everyone in the class was working on their picturebooks, that he “*was working in a professional workshop... like the office of a magazine...with other artists - as if we were creating picturebooks for real, as if we were professionals*”. This remark suggests that creating a picturebook felt like an authentic, meaningful activity to him, which contributed to his flow.

On the basis of student questionnaires, we can also conclude that Sasha’s interest was a fluctuating variable, which increased over the semester. In the beginning stage of the project (Lesson 6), Sasha responded to the questionnaire items “This activity excited my curiosity” and “This activity was interesting in itself” with “agree” for Phase II and “not sure” for Phase I. In the middle of the project (Lesson 12), he responded with “strongly agree” to both statements for Phase II and “agree” for Phase I. The final questionnaire (Lesson 19) reveals that he “strongly agreed” with the items for both phases.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Sasha’s *interest* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	50	100	100	High interest

4. *Feeling of control.*

According to the teacher journal entries from the beginning, middle, and final stages of the project, Sasha appeared to be thoroughly in control of his creative process, be it the creation of individual images or the multilayered process of picturebook creation. The teacher notes that Sasha “was on top of all the creative tasks that constitute the complex process of creating a picturebook - from the conception of first tentative ideas, through creating his characters, to the final touches of colored pencils in his picturebook title”.

The video-recordings of lessons consistently show that Sasha drew and colored all his images by himself and never asked the teacher for assistance. Moreover, the records indicate that Sasha was the participant whom other students asked for help at almost every lesson (e.g., Dima repeatedly asked Sasha to help him draw his character; Alesha asked him for advice during Lesson 10 on how to develop his plot). It can be seen in the video-recordings that, when Sasha gave advice on a picturebook to his classmates or helped them to draw their images, he did so in a very confident manner, as an expert.

However, in terms of Phase I, Sasha’s feeling of control during discussion activities was less evident, especially in the beginning of the project. The video-recordings from that period of the project show that he raised his hand to volunteer a response very rarely. He can also be seen raising his hand and then immediately changing his mind and putting it back on the desk, which suggests that he did not feel confident enough to answer the teacher’s questions.

The student interviews helped to identify the reason for the lack of feeling of control in the initial part of the project. According to Sasha,

it was easy to draw animals in the beginning...but it was not up to us to choose what to draw... so we just drew the same pictures after you... but when we began making our picturebooks, we could choose our characters and write about them, so it felt like we were real artists.

The teacher notes in his journal that Sasha was the most confident student in the class in terms of drawing, which explains his feeling of control during the creative activities and the aforementioned requests for assistance from other students. At the same time, Sasha was much less confident about writing captions for his picturebook images in English. The teacher journal entries from Lessons 12 and 13 note that he asked the teacher to translate several phrases for his captions from Russian into English. However, Sasha's confidence in writing captions was also growing over the semester. The teacher journal documents an episode from Lesson 20, when Sasha brought to class his second picturebook, which he created entirely on his own, including the captions. The teacher noted that the captions became "longer and more sophisticated", which suggests that, towards the end of the project, Sasha's confidence in using L2 increased, which also contributed to his overall feeling of control in the classroom.

Based on these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Sasha's *feeling of control* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	50	100	100	High feeling of control

5. *Autotelic experience.*

As discussed in Chapter 2, that a certain activity becomes autotelic (i.e., rewarding in and of itself, or worth doing for its own sake) can be best ascertained by a person's desire to repeat it. The teacher journal entries from the initial part of the project do not contain any observations of Sasha's behavior that would suggest he was eager to repeat the activities of the previous lessons. However, the entries from the middle and final parts of the project present many such indications. For example, the teacher notes (Lesson 7) that "immediately upon entering the classroom, Sasha asked if they would again work on their picturebooks and was very pleased to hear the affirmative answer". The entry for Lesson 15 states that Sasha "was eager to know if I would teach them again next year". This suggests that the activities of the project were so enjoyable for Sasha, that he wanted to participate in the same project again.

The data derived from student interviews fully corroborate teacher journal data. Sasha noted that he had begun to draw regularly at home as a result of his participation in the project. In fact, he became so fascinated with drawing, that he made pencil portraits of a few Russian classic writers for the Literature teacher - "I drew them just because I wanted to, not because it was homework or something". Moreover, Sasha stated in his interview that he began to enjoy drawing so much that he wanted to enroll in an art school for the following school year - "I just want to draw all the time and learn how to draw better". This suggests that drawing became an autotelic experience for Sasha, which he wanted to replicate on a regular basis.

Sasha's questionnaire replies also confirm this conclusion as he "strongly agreed" with both items concerning the component of autotelic experience (*I would do this task again* and *I would do this task even if it was not required*) in the middle and end of the project. However, his initial questionnaire (Lesson 6) features his less confident self-assessment (agree).

On the basis of video-recordings we can suggest that Phase I activities were not intrinsically rewarding for Sasha in the beginning of the project, as he kept silent most of the time and only responded to teacher’s questions when specifically called on. However, starting from Lesson 10, Sasha began using L2 spontaneously (greeting the teacher, asking questions of peers, and making comments in L2), which suggests that speaking in L2 also became an autotelic experience for Sasha in the middle and final parts of the project.

Based on these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Sasha’s *autotelic experience* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	50	100	100	High autotelic experience

6. *Merging of action and awareness.*

The key element of this component of flow is that a person ceases to be aware of his surroundings as his consciousness is entirely focused on the action at hand. Video-recordings of the lessons from the middle and end of the project demonstrate that, when Sasha was participating in the creative process, his actions and awareness merged to the point of him being oblivious to what was happening around him. During Phase II, he only participated in the “classroom chat” (the ongoing exchange of ideas and opinions on various topics the participants were involved in while working on their picturebooks) on rare occasions (e.g., in Lesson 15). In the recordings, Sasha can be seen interrupting his work only when he needed to retrieve his colored pencils, ruler, or eraser, which had been borrowed by his classmates.

The teacher journal entries contain no specific information describing Sasha’s merging of awareness and action in the beginning of the project. However, multiple entries allude to this

component in the middle and end of the semester. For example, the teacher repeatedly notes that Sasha was “the last participant to leave the classroom after the lesson was finished”. Also:

Sasha was so absorbed in his picturebook, that he continued working for about 5 minutes after the bell rang and all his classmates had left the room. Only when the students of another class started flooding the room, he stood up and, still looking at his drawing, began putting his drawing utensils into his backpack. Even at that moment, he was obviously still engrossed in his creation, as he did not pay any attention to the noisy students of an older grade entering the room.

These data suggest Sasha’s complete merging of awareness and action during Phase II.

As discussed in previous chapters, *loss of self-consciousness* is one of the effects of flow, which is closely linked to and caused by *merging of awareness and action*. The video-recordings show that Sasha was extremely self-conscious in the beginning of the project, which was manifested in his reluctance to volunteer responses to the teacher’s questions. However, starting from Lesson 6 and especially after Lesson 10, Sasha’s participation in picturebook discussions and spontaneous classroom conversations in L2 becomes more and more active (see Chapters 7). The recordings of Lessons 10 – 20 demonstrate that Sasha was eagerly involved in Phase I activities, volunteering a response by raising his hand and even shouting his response without being called on. This behavioral pattern strongly suggests Sasha’s loss of self-consciousness in the second half of the semester.

The questionnaire responses show that Sasha strongly agreed (score of 7) with the statement “when involved in this activity, I felt totally absorbed in what I was doing” for both Phase I and II in the middle and final questionnaire samples, whereas his initial scores (4 for Phase I and 5 for Phase II) suggest that he was less certain about his absorption in the activities.

These data allowed the researcher to rank the dynamics of the intensity of Sasha's *merging of awareness and action* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	50	100	100	High level of merging of awareness and action

7. *Distorted perception of time.*

The teacher journal entries do not document any instances in which Sasha directly referred to distorted temporal perceptions, which usually (as was the case with other participants) take the form of remarks on the surprising brevity of lessons (e.g., “Why did the bell ring so early? It is impossible that the lesson is already over?”) However, both teacher journal and video-recordings show that, starting from Lesson 7, Sasha was invariably the last student to leave the classroom after the lessons were over. For example, the teacher journal entry from Lesson 15 states that

Sasha was so deeply engaged in the creative activity up to the final seconds of the lesson that he stayed for five additional minutes of the break in the classroom to finish his drawing and share his creation with me, after which he hurriedly collected his belongings and ran out of the classroom.

The video-recordings show that such behavior became a pattern in Sasha's case, which indirectly suggests that the project lessons were finishing for him “too soon”, when he was still eager to continue working on his picturebook. Additionally, in his interview Sasha maintained that he “liked the lessons so much, they seemed too short – you know, when you enjoy something, like a film or a game, it always finishes too soon and you don't want it to finish?”

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked Sasha's intensity of *distorted perception of time* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	25	75	100	High level of distorted temporal perception

Questionnaire results.

Sasha’s self-reported questionnaire results from the beginning of the project (Lesson 6) showed a medium level of flow at the preparatory stage of the project. His first questionnaire added up to 70 points for the Discussion Phase (DP) and 79 points for the Creative Phase (CP). His responses in the middle of the project (Lesson 12) gave the following results: 86 points for DP and 91 points for CP. The final, third sample (Lesson 19) yielded the highest scores: 93 for DP and 97 for CP. These self-reported data suggest that Sasha’s flow intensified in the course of the project and increased from medium flow in the beginning to high flow in the middle and final parts of the project, thus corroborating the teacher’s rankings. The self-reported data also suggest that Sasha experienced flow both during Phase I and Phase II, with his rankings for flow during the creative phase being slightly higher.

Summary of Sasha’s flow

Major components of flow	Teacher rankings			Overall Assessment
	Start	Middle	End	
1. <i>Balance between skills and challenge</i>	75	100	100	Excellent balance
2. <i>Concentration</i>	50	100	100	High
3. <i>Interest</i>	50	100	100	High
4. <i>Control</i>	50	100	100	High
5. <i>Autotelic experience</i>	50	100	100	High
6. <i>Merging of awareness and action</i>	50	100	100	High
7. <i>Distorted perception of time</i>	25	75	100	High
<i>Self-reported Questionnaire results</i>	74	88	95	High flow

Table 4.2. Sasha’s flow summary.

The case study of Sasha’s participation in the project allowed the researcher to create a composite qualitative profile of the major flow components exhibited in Sasha’s behavior throughout the project. Based on the conducted data analysis, it can be concluded that Sasha

experienced flow both in Phase I and Phase II of lessons in the middle and end of the project, which indicates that Sasha's case study answered RQ1a positively and confirmed that flow can occur in a L2 classroom where learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation. In terms of RQ1b, the analysis of Sasha's case demonstrated that the intensity of flow increased over the course of the semester and stayed consistently high during the middle and final stages of the project.

GRISHA



Figure 4.2. Grisha speaking about his picturebook.

1. *Balance between skills and challenge.*

The teacher journal assesses Grisha's drawing skills as "average for his grade and age" as the teacher notes that Grisha "was not as skillful at drawing as Sasha but his drawing skills were approximately of the same level as those of the rest of the class". However, thanks to his "outstanding self-confidence and vivid imagination", Grisha worked on his picturebook "very fast and with a lot of enthusiasm".

The artifact analysis of Grisha’s picturebook also suggests that his drawing skills were average – the lines of his drawings are crude, his color palette is limited to three colors, and the figures of his characters look more like symbolic representations of hockey players than actual drawings of human figures (see Chapter 7). Nevertheless, even though Grisha’s pictures were not as masterful and sophisticated as Sasha’s, Grisha’s picturebook shows the improvement of his drawing skills, as the final pages feature more details in rendering human figures and display his improved sense of composition. His characters are well placed in the middle of the page and they are the right size – not too small or too large, as it often happens in the drawings of beginning artists. The teacher notes that his compositions “look balanced and the characters are drawn in a confident manner”.

As for the second skill area, that of Grisha’s English skills, both the teacher journal and the interview with the EFL teacher concur that Grisha “was the star of the group”. The EFL teacher specifies that Grisha “had a natural talent for language learning”, was confident in his English skills, and his L2 vocabulary was larger than that of his classmates. At the same time, he made many grammar mistakes and his final grade was 4 (B). The teacher also added that his confidence in speaking English, and motivation to study English, increased over the semester and she attributed it to the experimental project.

These data allowed the researcher to conclude that Grisha’s artistic skills did match the challenge of the project’s creative part, whereas his English skills were a strong predictor of his flow during Phase I. Overall, this antecedent of Grisha’s flow was ranked the following way, on a scale 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of balance of skills and challenge
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	50	75	75	Good balance

2. *Concentration.*

The video-recordings of the project sessions suggest that in the beginning of the project (Lessons 1-6), Grisha's concentration was rather low. By far the most talkative student in the group, he can be seen constantly chatting with his classmates during Phase II. However, starting from Lesson 7 to the very end of the project, Grisha was consistently demonstrating the ability to inhibit distractions and work on his picturebook without interruptions. Even though he can still be seen talking to his classmates, he stays concentrated on his work, with his gaze being focused on his picturebook and his hand continuing to draw or color images.

The teacher journal also underlines the fact that Grisha was "often distracted and too chatty" in the beginning of the project. For example, the journal entry from Lesson 3 states that "Grisha came to the class 10 minutes late and could not concentrate on the work, looking at other students and trying to start a conversation with them". Another entry, from Lesson 10, notes that "the process of creating his picturebook transformed Grisha – he keeps drawing avidly and, if he starts speaking, it is about his picturebook". The journal entry from Lesson 18 states that

thanks to Grisha's ability to work without interruptions and distractions, he became the first participant to finish his picturebook (with his picturebook containing the largest number of pages in the class) and the first to start his second picturebook – so much pleasure he had derived from the process of creating the first one.

According to the teacher journal, Grisha's "constant readiness to answer questions, describe an image, or air his opinion on a picturebook during a discussion activity, made him perhaps the most focused student in the class during Phase I". The teacher also notes that "given the freedom to move around the classroom during Phase II and being generally an agile, athletic boy, Grisha did not interrupt his creative process, unless he needed to borrow a colored pencil".

In the end of the project, Grisha’s communicative and talkative nature, which was a source of distractions for him in Phase II, made him one of the most avid speakers in Phase I.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Grisha’s *concentration* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of concentration
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	25	100	100	High concentration

3. *Interest.*

The student interviews revealed that Grisha’s perception of the project was best described by the words “very interesting” as he repeated them a few times over a 15-minute long interview. Grisha’s interview data suggests that the feeling of interest towards the project activities evolved longitudinally throughout the project. Similarly to what Sasha said, Grisha posited that the students had not expected the project to be interesting in the beginning – “we thought it would be *boring*, like other classes”. However, according to Grisha, the students “were getting more and more interested and excited about the class”. The metaphor Grisha created to describe the growing interest and excitement of the participants as the project progressed through its middle and final parts is particularly vivid: “you know, it was like a thermometer and the temperature is going up, and up, and up, faster and faster, until it was very high!”

Teacher journal entries demonstrate that Grisha’s interest towards the project was not a constant element but developed from a low level to a high level of interest. For example, the teacher notes that Grisha was always late for the class in the beginning of the project (Lessons 1-5), Grisha himself explaining his tardiness by the shortness of the lunch break that preceded the class. However, starting from Lesson 6, Grisha comes to class “well in advance, still chewing on his food, but interested and excited about the class activities”.

The journal notes also suggest that he was equally excited about creative and discussion activities. The researcher describes Grisha’s interest towards both phases in the following way: “Grisha was the first to sit at the table for the picturebook discussion and called for all the other students to join him – “C’mon, guys, sit down!”- thus showing his impatience to start the discussion activity”. His curiosity, which is closely connected to the feeling of interest, is documented in the following passage: “Grisha entered the class and immediately said: “Teacher, hello! Will we draw picturebooks today? Yes?”

In addition, the questionnaire items focusing on students’ interest and excitement (e.g., “This activity was interesting in itself” and “This activity was exciting for me”) demonstrated the positive dynamics of Grisha’s feelings of interest, as he responded to them with “Maybe” in the beginning of the project and “Strongly agree” in the middle and end samples.

Based on these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Grisha’s *interest* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of interest
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	25	100	100	High interest

4. *Feeling of control.*

The teacher journal extensively discusses Grisha’s feeling of control during the project and its contributing factors. As it was stated above, Grisha’s drawing skills were average and were not a strong predictor of his flow. However, the teacher underlines that Grisha “exuded the feeling of control, with his outstanding self-confidence, popularity among classmates, and vivid imagination compensating for the lack of outstanding drawing skills”. The teacher comments that “Grisha’s natural charisma and swagger endowed him with the sense of control”.

The video-recordings demonstrate that Grisha’s feeling of control was especially evident during Phase I of each lesson. His feeling of control manifested itself in the highest number of L2 utterances produced by Grisha in most lessons (see Chapter 7) and in his active participation in the discussion of each picturebook, including the raising of his hand and shouting responses to the teacher’s questions faster and louder than his classmates. From the very beginning to the end of the project Grisha was the most confident and active participant – the records show him at the center of attention, always ready to raise a hand, ask or answer a question, volunteer to help, or share the cookie he brought from the cafeteria with the teacher.

The transcripts of student interviews provide additional confirmation that Grisha felt highly in control in the project classroom. For example, he said that the students “felt fear, fear to make a mistake” in their regular EFL class, whereas in the experimental class he “felt confident and was never afraid”.

Based on these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Grisha’s *feeling of control* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of control
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	75	100	100	High control

5. *Autotelic experience.*

As discussed in Chapter 2, the flow component of “autotelic experience” is closely related to the feeling of enjoyment and describes a person’s desire to repeat the activity because it is rewarding in itself. According to the interview transcripts, Grisha had stopped attending another afterschool class (target shooting) in order to be able to attend the “picturebook class” (as the two classes were offered at the same time). He explained his choice in the following way:

“Every time, it was all the same in the shooting class, nothing new - so it was really boring. And your class – it is never boring”.

The teacher journal notes that, commenting on the “picturebook class”, Grisha repeatedly said that the students “so much enjoyed the class that they could not wait for the next Tuesday, to come to your class again!” According to another journal entry, Grisha’s fascination with the project was manifested in his excited, loud greeting “Hello Teacher!” and the bright smile he was wearing when entering the classroom. The teacher journal also notes that Grisha asked on three occasions whether or not the teacher would be teaching the same class again the following year. Such eagerness to participate in picturebook creation and discussion again confirms that participation in the class activities was an intrinsically rewarding experience for Grisha.

Several notations based on video-recordings also document the high level of Grisha’s autotelic experience. For example, Grisha would become very excited when seeing a new picturebook in class - “Teacher, new picturebook! Let’s read! Let’s read!” In another example, Grisha says to the researcher, “You know, I never draw at home, I don’t like drawing very much. But I want to draw every time we are in your class!” These data suggest that he enjoyed both Phase I and Phase II activities and was eager to repeat them week after week.

Grisha’s feeling of enjoyment was also vividly manifested in his unexpected remark about the project – “I know what we should call this class!” he loudly exclaimed, while absorbed in coloring his picturebook: “I know what we should call this class – ART ENGLISH!” Grisha’s urge to repeat the creative activities he had come to enjoy so much, which is a characteristic feature of autotelic experiences, was manifested when he started working on a second picturebook immediately upon finishing his first one.

His questionnaire responses, however, show that his autotelic experience was not present in the beginning of the project and developed later. His initial responses to the statement “I would do this activity again” showed his hesitation (“Maybe”), suggesting a medium level of autotelic enjoyment in the beginning of the project. However, the middle and end of the term samples of the questionnaire consistently showed his high desire to continuously engage in the activities.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Grisha’s *autotelic experience* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of autotelic experience
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	50	100	100	High autotelic experience

6. *Merging of action and awareness.*

According to the teacher journal, Grisha talked more than other students while working on his picturebook and the conversations he initiated with his classmates and teacher were not necessarily about his picturebook. The teacher notes that Grisha could start talking on any topic – such as recent movies, ice hockey matches, or computer games. These observations suggest that Grisha’s mind was not entirely wrapped around his picturebook, which means that his awareness did not merge entirely with the current creative task he was engaged in (as was Sasha’s case). Therefore, for Phase II his awareness was not completely merged with his creative action.

The notations based on video-recordings, however, suggest that he did experience the merging of awareness and action during Phase I, but only in the middle and final parts of the project (Lessons 8-20). The merging of awareness and action is manifested in the lack of self-consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Video-recordings show that, in the beginning of the

project, Grisha did not volunteer to answer the teacher's questions and appeared taciturn and self-conscious. As he later admitted in the interview, the students "were afraid to make a mistake". As soon as the students began working on their own picturebooks, though, Grisha's attitude to Phase I changes entirely. Starting from Lesson 7, his attempts to speak in L2 become frequent and natural. The teacher notes in a journal entry that Grisha

never seems to think twice before attempting to say something in English. He doesn't hesitate to ask me a question in English and can comment on a picturebook in a very confident manner and very loudly. If he does not know an English word for a certain concept, he can throw in a Russian word pronounced with an American accent, or paraphrase his utterance in a different way. He freely "creates" his L2 utterances and without any trace of a doubt or fear to make a mistake.

This excerpt shows that Grisha lost his initial self-consciousness as his awareness merged with the creative nature of the class activities.

The student interviews revealed that Grisha's excitement about the project was due to how he perceived the project as a unique and authentic experience. Grisha shares in his interview that he felt "as if he was a student at some English or American school, where the classes were taught by real English or American teachers". The teacher journal documents that he actually repeated that simile during Lesson 15 as well, when he was "so engrossed in the process of picturebook creation that he wanted to share his excitement". This imaginary sensation of being "an American student in an American school" indicates Grisha's total absorption in the class environment (where the teacher spoke only English to students) and the merging of his awareness with actions. The teacher journal explains this phenomenon as follows:

Because many things in the project were unusual for the participants – because the teacher was speaking exclusively in English throughout the lesson, because the participants were allowed to express themselves and encouraged to speak in English at any moment of the lesson, and because they were involved in an unusual activity for an ordinary school – drawing and speaking in English at the same time – Grisha imagined himself being in a totally different environment, whereas the real environment of the Russian school he attended daily ceased to exist for him for 45 minutes on every Tuesday.

On the basis of the data discussed, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Grisha’s *merging of awareness and action* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment merging of awareness and action
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	50	100	100	High merging of awareness and action

7. *Distorted temporal perceptions.*

Based on teacher journal entries from the end of the semester (Lessons 16 and 18), in which Grisha is documented to be “surprised and annoyed that the lesson had already ended when he wanted to continue”, it can be suggested that Grisha experienced the distortion of temporal perceptions described by flow researchers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992) as one of the key characteristics of flow.

The careful review of the video-recordings also point out that this feature was absent in Grisha’s classroom behavior in the beginning and middle of the project, as he can be consistently seen putting his drawing utensils into his backpack and leaving the classroom without expressing any surprise all through Lessons 1 – 13. However, at the end of Lessons 14, 16, and 18, he does express his surprise that he did not notice the passage of time in the following phrases: “No way

- the bell went off too soon!” “Why? We have just started!” The analysis suggests that Grisha’s flow was growing over the semester, which was manifested in the appearance of the distortion of temporal perception in the final part of the project.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Sasha’s *distortion of temporal perception* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of distortion of temporal perception
	Start	Middle	Final	
Grisha	0	50	100	High time distortion

Questionnaire.

The self-reported data provided by Grisha’s questionnaires confirm that Grisha experienced flow both during Phase I and Phase II in the middle and end of the project. At the same time, his first questionnaire responses demonstrate that the intensity of his flow at the beginning of the project was not as high as it became on later stages: Sample 1: Phase I – 70; Phase II – 74; Sample 2: Phase I – 94; Phase II – 95. Sample 3: Phase I – 98; Phase II – 97. The questionnaire data show that, in Grisha’s own perception, he experienced flow throughout the project, with its intensity intensifying and reaching its peak in the second half of the project.

Summary of Grisha’s flow

Major components of flow	Teacher rankings			Overall Assessment
	Start	Middle	End	
<i>1. Balance between skills and challenge</i>	50	75	75	Good balance
<i>2. Concentration</i>	25	100	100	High
<i>3. Interest</i>	25	100	100	High
<i>4. Control</i>	75	100	100	High
<i>5. Autotelic experience</i>	50	100	100	High
<i>6. Merging of awareness and action</i>	50	100	100	High
<i>7. Distorted perception of time</i>	0	50	100	High
<i>Self-reported Questionnaire results</i>	72	95	97	High flow

Table 4.3. Grisha’s flow summary.

The case study of Grisha's flow allowed the researcher to create a composite qualitative profile of the key flow components exhibited in Grisha's behavior throughout the project. Based on the conducted data analysis, it can be concluded that Grisha experienced a high level of flow during both phases of lessons, which indicates that Grisha's case study allowed for the affirmative answer to RQ1a. In terms of RQ1b, the analysis of the dynamics of Grisha's flow suggested that the intensity of his flow increased over the course of the semester, reaching its peak in the middle of the project and staying at a consistently high level until its completion.

DIMA

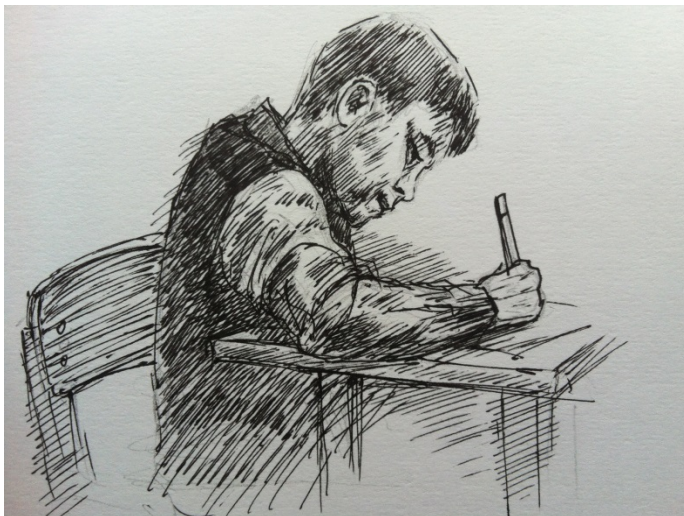


Figure 4.3. Dima working on his picturebook.

1. Balance between challenge and skills.

According to the teacher journal, Dima seemed to be unsure of his drawing skills and often asked for help with his drawings, either from the teacher or Sasha. Sometimes he seemed to be overwhelmed with the complexity of the task (e.g., when he tried to draw a soccer player for his picturebook) and dissatisfied with his achievements.

The artifact analysis of Dima's picturebook suggests that his drawing skills were rather poor. Some of his characters can be seen not in the middle but on the sides of pages and they can

be too small, which suggests a poor sense of composition. The human figures in his images (those that he drew without anybody's assistance) do not have normal human proportions and resemble caricatures.

The teacher interview provided an assessment of Dima's English skills, which were reported to be of the "overall good level, average level, for his age and grade". The EFL teacher reported that Dima was "a conscientious student, who always did homework, and was active at the lessons". However, she also noted that he did not have "a natural talent for English learning, rather he wanted to receive a good grade". Dima's overall grade in his regular EFL class was 4 (B), but the interviewed teacher reported that Dima's speaking skills had improved in the second half of the semester.

These data suggest that Dima's English skills were higher than his drawing skills and could predict his flow during Phase I. His drawing skills barely matched the creative challenges of the project and therefore were a poor predictor of his flow in Phase II. Overall, based on these data, the researcher ranked Dima's balance of skills and challenge the following way:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of balance of skills and challenge
	Start	Middle	Final	
Dima	25	50	50	Medium balance

2. *Concentration.*

According to the teacher journal entries, Dima was one of the most hard-working and conscientious students in the group and his concentration was high from the very start of the project. The teacher notes that Dima seemed to be more concentrated during the picturebook discussion activities, "when he was alert, focused on my questions and on pictures under discussion, and always ready to volunteer a response". The teacher observes, however, that during the creative phase, "Dima often seemed to be lost in thought, and slightly distracted". The

researcher suggests that this pattern could be related to Dima’s poor drawing skills and the fact that he relied on Sasha’s help in drawing – “he would often sit and wait patiently until Sasha would finish his drawing and help him”.

In his questionnaire responses he admitted that he had been “aware of distractions” during Phase II - but only in the last part of the project, when his picturebook had been mostly completed. The first two samples of his self-evaluation (beginning and middle of the project) show that he was “totally absorbed” in the project tasks.

The careful examination of the video-recordings from the beginning of the project (Lessons 1-6) show Dima’s high concentration during both Phase I and Phase II: he carefully listens to the teacher’s instructions and consistently volunteers to answer the teacher’s questions during picturebook discussions and, during Phase II, he draws images of his picturebook without interruptions for the whole duration of the activity. He never asked for a bathroom break during the project and interrupted his work only to ask for the teacher’s or Sasha’s help. However, the video-recordings of the final part of the project (Lessons 14-20) show that Dima became subject to occasional distractions towards the end of the project and would interrupt his creative process for a chat with his classmates.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Dima’s *concentration* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of concentration
	Start	Middle	Final	
Dima	100	100	75	High concentration

Thus, in terms of the dynamics of Dima’s concentration, its rankings slightly decreased towards the end of the project, though they were high throughout most of the project.

3. *Interest.*

One of the teacher journal entries from the middle of the project directly speaks of Dima's high level of interest towards the project activities:

Dima was invariably highly interested in all the tasks of the project. Be it a new picturebook I brought to the class, or some new images I taught them to draw, or new developments of his own picturebook and the picturebooks of his classmates – Dima was eager to learn it, everything in the classroom excited his interest and curiosity.

The teacher observations are corroborated by Dima's questionnaire, as he consistently gave the highest ratings in all three samples (Beginning, middle, and end of the project) to the statements designed to check the self-reported intensity of interest, excitement, and curiosity (see Appendix C).

The student interview data, however, suggest that the component of interest was not prominent in Dima's reactions to the project from the very beginning. Similarly to Sasha, he said that in the very beginning of the project the students did not expect much from the new class but, soon, when they began working on their own picturebooks (Lesson 6), it became "really interesting" and "fascinating". Dima also said that he and other students "could not wait until the next Tuesday" (as the lessons occurred on Tuesdays) – so much were they looking forward to the next session of the project. "Very interesting" was the word combination that Dima repeated many times while evaluating the project during his interview. Dima even shared that he had stopped attending the target shooting class in order to come to the picturebook class. The teacher notes in his journal that "for the best basketball and soccer player in his class, the very fact that Dima abandoned a sports activity in favor of my creative project provides a convincing proof that he was highly interested in the project".

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Dima’s *interest* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of interest
	Start	Middle	Final	
Dima	50	100	100	High interest

Thus, in terms of the dynamics of Dima’s interest, its intensity arguably increased from 50 in the beginning of the project, to 100 in its middle and final parts.

4. *Feeling of control.*

The teacher journal specifies that Dima’s drawing skills were “of a lower level than those of Sasha” but it was “his low self-perceived potential to draw” that negatively affected his feeling of control in Phase II. The teacher also notes that Dima was “too dependent on Sasha’s assistance and this did not allow him to feel fully in control” during the creative phase. As mentioned above, that was also the reason why Dima was sometimes distracted during Phase II. However, the journal entries maintain that “Dima’s popularity among his classmates and his overall good knowledge of English (as compared to other students in the class) allowed him to feel in control during the discussion phase”.

The careful analysis of video-recordings confirms that Dima showed the characteristics of the class leader during Phase I, as he can be seen in the very center of the group of participants as they were viewing and describing the images of a picturebook under discussion. Video-recordings also show that Dima’s hand was the highest when the participants would volunteer to answer a question and try to raise their hands higher than their classmates in order to be called on by the teacher. As for Phase II, Dima does not seem to experience the feeling of control except for the final stage of the project, when students were binding their finished picturebooks. This was also confirmed by his questionnaire, in which his responses to the item “While doing this

activity, I could make my own decisions about what to draw and what to say” indicate that his feeling of control increased towards the final stage compared to the beginning of the project.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Dima’s *feeling of control* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Dima	50	50	75	Medium feeling of control

5. *Autotelic Experience.*

The student interviews and questionnaire both provide evidence that Dima did have autotelic experience in the project, which is characterized by the person’s desire to participate in the activity in question again. He stated in his interview that he “would love to attend this class again”. In the questionnaire, he strongly agreed in all three samples that he would repeat the class activities.

The teacher journal notes that Dima was one of those participants (along with Sasha and Grisha) “who asked me multiple times if I was going to teach them again how to draw and speak English the following year”. These observations indirectly show the student’ excitement about the project and the fact that participation in it was for him an autotelic experience, calling for repetition.

Student interviews provide additional confirmation that participation in the project was the source of autotelic enjoyment for Dima. When asked to describe what activities of the project he preferred, Dima said that he “enjoyed all of it – speaking, drawing – everything was very interesting”. He added that “this class was so much different from the other classes”. When asked to describe the feelings he experienced in the class, he used one Russian word “*uvlecheniye*”. This word can be translated into English as “excitement, drive, being deep in the

act, feeling elated about and interested in the activity”. All these words and phrases can be used to define flow as “autotelic experience”. The fact that the participant himself identified the state he experienced in the experimental class using the word “uvlecheniye”, indicates his realization of the uniqueness of his experience. When asked how he would describe the word “uvlecheniye” for American people, who do not understand Russian, Dima said the following:

It is when you are doing something and every moment of it is interesting, and you don’t want it to stop. You want to do it again and again...Or it is like the inspiration that artists and poets feel.

Based on these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Dima’s *autotelic experience* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Dima	75	100	100	High autotelic experience

6. *Merging of action and awareness.*

The video-recordings of the class sessions show that Dima was not as entirely absorbed in the creative activities as Sasha and would often turn around to his classmates in order to look at their creations and exchange a few words. Given the freedom to move around the classroom, Dima would sometimes stand up and approach other students. This suggests that Dima’s awareness was not completely focused on the creative activity at hand.

The teacher journal also specifies that “even though Dima obviously enjoyed the project, he was fully aware of where he was – hence his frequent exchanges of giggling remarks with Grisha and other students”. The video-recordings show his reticence during speaking activities in the beginning of the project, which can be explained by his fear of making a mistake and by

his being fully aware of his imperfect L2 skills. These data suggest that no merging of awareness and action was experienced by Dima in the first part of the project.

The teacher journal also documents the rarity of Dima’s attempts to initiate a conversation in English with the teacher (as opposed to Grisha who did so on a regular basis). It was only at the end of the project, at lesson 17, that Dima initiated a dialogue with the teacher in L2 - even though he had been one of the most active L2 speakers in the class, in terms of responding to the teacher’s questions. This episode indicates that he began losing his self-consciousness and started using the L2 spontaneously in the end of the project.

The student interviews reveal that Dima did feel merging of awareness and action to some extent. In his assessment of how he felt in the creative classroom, he very nearly repeated Sasha’s interview observation – namely, that while working on their picturebooks, he felt “as if we were working on real books, as professional writers and artists”. This signifies that, though only occasionally, he also identified himself with his creative work and at such moments the reality ceased to exist, being replaced by the world of imagination, triggered by the creative activities.

Based on these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Dima’s *merging of awareness and action* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Dima	25	50	75	Medium merging of awareness and action

7. *Distorted sense of time.*

The teacher journal does not contain any entries documenting any direct or indirect indications of Dima’s distorted temporal perception during all three stages of the project. In this aspect, his behavior differed from that of other students (e.g., Kolya and Leva repeatedly

commented on their surprise that the “lesson ended too soon!”) Dima never expressed his surprise or annoyance that the lessons “ended too soon”, nor did he ever keep working on his picturebook (as Sasha did) after the bell.

The video-recordings of the final parts of the lessons show that Dima would usually calmly collect his notebook and drawing utensils and wait for Sasha (the two of them were inseparable) to finish his drawing so they could walk home together. Because such behavior presented a contrast to that of many other students in the project, who explicitly commented on the “strangely short” lessons, the researcher asked Dima in the interview if he had also felt that the lessons of the project seemed shorter than the regular classes. Dima did admit that he had felt that the time “was flying very fast, especially in the end of the project”. However, the fact that his comment was prompted by the teacher’s question and the lack of any other evidence confirming Dima’s distorted perception of time, suggest that this component of flow did not manifest itself in any noticeable degree in Dima’s case.

As a result of this analysis of data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of the intensity of Dima’s *distortion of temporal perception* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of distortion of temporal perception
	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	0	0	25	Low level of temporal distortion

Questionnaire.

The self-reported questionnaire data suggests that, in Dima’s own perception, he did experience flow in the project and its intensity increased over the semester. When the questionnaire was administered the first time (Lesson 6), his score for both phases was 71. Since the border-line between the presence and absence of flow lies at the score of 70, his self-perceived flow in the beginning of the project was of medium intensity. The samples from the

middle and end of the project shows the increase of Dima’s self-reported flow - Middle: Phase I – 87; Phase II – 83; End: Phase I – 91; Phase II – 89. Even though Dima’s high questionnaire scores could be partly due to his general respect for the teacher and excitement about the project, it must be noted that the questionnaire results confirm the teacher’s observations that Dima experienced flow more during the discussion activities than creative ones.

Summary of Dima’s flow

Major components of flow	Teacher rankings			Overall Assessment
	Start	Middle	End	
1. <i>Balance between skills and challenge</i>	25	50	50	Medium balance
2. <i>Concentration</i>	100	100	75	High
3. <i>Interest</i>	50	100	100	High
4. <i>Control</i>	50	50	75	Medium
5. <i>Autotelic experience</i>	75	100	100	High
6. <i>Merging of awareness and action</i>	25	50	75	Medium
7. <i>Distorted perception of time</i>	0	0	25	Low
<i>Self-reported Questionnaire results</i>	71	85	90	Medium/High

Table 4.4. Dima’s flow summary.

The conducted analysis of Dima’s case yielded slightly controversial results. On the one hand, Dima exhibited high concentration, interest, and autotelic drive. At the same time, his feeling of control and merging of awareness and action were of the medium level, with a rising tendency at the end. Distorted perception of time was almost non-existent in his case. His questionnaire results, however, suggest quite a high level of flow, with a tendency to increase towards the end of the project. These discrepancies can be explained by the participant’s poor balance between drawing skills and challenge, which resulted in his medium feeling of control and, consequently, less pronounced flow during the picturebook creation phase. However, thanks to his general excitement about the project (manifested in his high concentration and interest), and the autotelic enjoyment he derived from the discussion activities, Dima did experience flow of medium/high intensity. Therefore, Dima’s case study allowed the researcher to answer RQ1a

affirmatively. As for the dynamics of flow intensity (RQ1b), Dima's flow slightly increased over the semester.

ALESHA



Figure 4.4. Alesha drawing on a piece of paper.

1. *Balance between challenge and skills.*

The teacher journal entries specify from the very beginning of the project that Alesha's drawing and English skills were the lowest in the group. In addition to his overall low skills, Alesha is described in the journal as a "very passive and lazy boy, who did not try to improve his skills and did not believe he could improve them". The teacher notes that the challenge of picturebook creation could be "slightly overwhelming" for Alesha, who did not show any artistic skill during the preparatory stage as he could not copy any image after the teacher's example.

The analysis of the artifact produced by Alesha (see Chapter 7) provides an additional confirmation of his poorly developed artistic skills as the figures of "gangsters" in his images are represented by straight lines for bodies and limbs and circles for heads, with dots for eyes. However, the very fact that Alesha eventually created a few pages of images, in which he tried to

narrate his story suggests that he did improve his skills, no matter how slightly, in the middle and final parts of the project.

The teacher interview suggested that Alesha’s English skills were also of the lowest level among his classmates. The EFL teacher stated that Alesha’s knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar was extremely limited and he lacked any motivation or interest to study English. His overall grade was 3 (C) and the teacher admitted that, “in fact, he hardly deserved it”.

These data suggest that, from the beginning of the project, the balance of Alesha’s skills and the project’s challenges was not in his favor and could hardly predict his flow experience. On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked Alesha’s balance of skills and challenge the following way, on a scale 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of balance of skills and challenge
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	10	10	Poor balance

2. *Concentration.*

According to the teacher journal, Alesha’s level of concentration was the lowest in the class both during Phase I and Phase II. The teacher notes that “up until Lesson 10, Alesha acted in a fidgety way and was distracted most of the time”. According to the journal entries, Alesha could not keep his attention on a given task and “was off task most of the time”. The teacher notes that Lesson 10 “became a turning point for Alesha as he finally came up with a topic for his picturebook and his concentration suddenly increased” in the middle of the project. The teacher specifies that his higher concentration during Phase II “transferred into Phase I as, after Lesson 10, Alesha was consistently more concentrated on picturebook discussion activities than in the beginning of the project”.

The review of video-recordings confirms that Alesha could not keep drawing or participating in a picturebook discussion for longer than a few minutes in the beginning of the project. He was distractedly looking at other students, asking random questions in Russian, or playing with his cell phone. He also asked for bathroom breaks at every lesson before Lesson 10. These observations suggest that he was either bored or did not feel confident about participating in the activities. However, after Lesson 10, when he finally started working in earnest on his picturebook, he became more concentrated. He can be seen in the recordings absorbed in drawing the images (Phase II) and eagerly participating in describing picturebook images (Phase I).

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked the dynamics of Alesha’s intensity of *concentration* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of concentration
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	50	50	Low/Medium concentration

3. *Interest.*

According to the teacher journal, Alesha’s interest towards drawing and picturebooks was very low in the beginning of the project. The journal entries from that period note that when the teacher was teaching the students to draw figures of animals and people,

Alesha was the only participant who did not even try to copy my drawings. Only after I asked him what he would like to draw and drew a military tank on the board at his request, he began to try drawing the images after my example. He was only interested in drawing military and civilian vehicles.

The teacher’s descriptions of Alesha’s participation in picturebook discussion in the initial part of the project (“Alesha never raised a hand”; “Alesha looked at other students rather than at the

picturebook under discussion”) suggest that he had little interest towards Phase I activities. However, the entries from the middle and end of the project confirm that Alesha’s interest towards the project activities increased, which was manifested in “frequent volunteering to answer a question”, “raising a hand and volunteering to describe a picture”, and “sharing his picturebook ideas with other students”.

Alesha’s questionnaire responses to items 1 and 2 focusing on student’s interest reveal that his self-reported rating of interest in the beginning of the project (4) grew to 6 in its middle and final parts, which means that the participant himself realized his increased interest towards the project activities in the second half of the project.

Additionally, student interviews suggest that Alesha’s attitude towards the project changed after the moment he began working on his picturebook. He shared that it seemed too difficult in the beginning, when we drew people and animals... I can’t draw well and I was afraid everyone would laugh at my drawings. But when I started my picturebook, it became really interesting – I wanted to draw more and more pages”.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked Alesha’s intensity of *interest* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	50	50	Low/Medium level of interest

4. *Control.*

According to the teacher journal, Alesha’s artistic skill level was the lowest among the study participants – “not only was Alesha bad at drawing, he was also painfully self-conscious about it”. Another entry states that “Alesha’s lack of confidence in drawing and poor imagination rendered him unable to come up with any idea for his picturebook for four lessons”. The

researcher also notes that “Alesha was the least confident L2 speaker in the class, which could be a result of his transfer from another school”. As a consequence, Alesha’s feeling of control was at the lowest level both during Phase I and Phase II in the beginning of the project.

The notations based on video-recordings also suggest that his feeling of control can be assessed as non-existent, as during the first nine lessons Alesha can be seen either sitting at his desk in a state of apathy (which is a state opposite to flow, as was discussed in Chapter 2) or wandering around the classroom and watching other students drawing. At first he was trying to mimic other participants’ picturebook plots but, because of his poor drawing results, he soon quit those attempts. Only after the teacher had suggested to him that he should draw his picturebook using simple circles for heads and lines for arms and legs (“the way human figures are sometimes drawn in comics”), he became interested in the idea and started drawing. Soon he could be seen covering page after page with the images of such “simplified” figures. This happened at Lesson 10, and Alesha’s initially negative experience in the project suddenly turned into a more positive one.

The video-recordings show that Alesha was constantly asking either the teacher or his peers for help in the beginning of the project – he needed help both in terms of ideas for his picturebook and in terms of drawing the images. Similarly, a teacher journal entry states that “Alesha did not even try to draw anything on his own, thus expressing his total lack of confidence and control”. However, in the second half of the project, his requests for help became much rarer, which also shows that his sense of control had slightly grown.

Alesha’s questionnaire responses additionally confirm his low self-assessment of his feeling of control in the project. His answers to the item “I felt in control of what I was doing”

feature the low scores of 3 (disagree) for both the initial and midterm samples. However, his self-reported feeling of control increased to 5 (agree) in the end of the project.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked Alesha’s intensity of *control* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the feeling of control
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	25	25	Low level of control

5. *Autotelic experience.*

The teacher journal entries suggest that Alesha did not enjoy the project sessions as much as other participants did. The notes maintain that

Alesha would often come to the classroom after the start of the lesson and would leave it the earliest. He would never linger in the classroom after the lesson, as many other students did, sharing their picturebooks, nor would he come to the class earlier in eager anticipation of the class activities.

The teacher specifies that it was apparent that, for Alesha, participation in the project was not an autotelic experience, as he “did not evince any genuine desire to participate in the project activities over and over again”. Rather, Alesha tried to “fit in” and followed the example of other students in order to gain their respect.

The analysis of video-recordings of the first half of the project suggest that Alesha was the most unwilling student to proceed to the creative stage after Phase I. It seems that he dreaded Phase II as he said “Oh, no...” on a few occasions before the creative phase. At the same time, he did not show much enthusiasm about Phase I either. For example, he never asked “Are we going to read this book today?” as many other students did. However, in the middle part of the project, he began asking the teacher “Are we going to draw our picturebooks again?” from the

very start of the lesson, which suggests that he was in anticipation of the creative process. Once, at Lesson 11, he even said “Teacher, I want to draw more pages today”, thus indicating his growing autotelic drive towards participating in creative activities.

Alesha’s questionnaire responses show that his desire to repeat the project activities (which is a sign of autotelic experience) slightly grew in the end of the project, as he “agreed” to the statement “I would do this activity again” in the final sample, while responding “maybe” in the first two samples.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked Alesha’s intensity of *autotelic experience* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	25	25	Low autotelic experience

6. *Merging of awareness and action.*

According to the teacher journal, during the first half of the project, Alesha was “painfully aware of his inability to create anything” and the video-recordings do not show him “absorbed” in any class activity for any length of time. As discussed in Chapter 2, merging of awareness and action, which is a key component of flow, is usually accompanied by loss of self-consciousness. The teacher underlines that Alesha was extremely self-conscious during the first half of the project.

The video-recordings show a sudden change in Alesha’s behavior in and after Lesson 10, when he found his “minimalistic” style (circles and lines) and could be observed drawing compulsively for a few lessons in a row. At this point it can be argued that Alesha’s awareness was merged with his actions during Phase II. His behavior and attitude towards the project changed after that – he became interested, more confident, inspired, and happy. This is what

Vygotsky (2004) referred to as “catharsis” brought about by creativity (see Chapter 2). This change of attitude also transferred into Alesha’s participation in Phase I, as he became more interested in the discussion of picturebooks and began to volunteer his responses more regularly than before. However, the recordings show that, in the end of the project, Alesha became apathetic again, as he did not know how to finish his picturebook.

The student interviews provide additional data supporting the claim that Alesha did experience merging of awareness and action in the second half of the project. While describing his creative process in the middle of the project, Alesha noted that “sometimes it was so interesting, that I began to like it, and I could not stop drawing... I never felt it before... As if somebody pushed me to draw and draw and did not allow me to stop”.

On the basis of these data, the researcher ranked Alesha’s intensity of *merging of awareness and action* the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of the component
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	50	25	Low/Middle level of merging

7. *Distorted perception of time*

The teacher journal does not provide any positive evidence that Alesha experienced the distortion of temporal perception. In contrast to other students, who commented on the brevity of the project lessons or expressed their annoyance that the bell rang too early, Alesha did not express such feelings.

The careful examination of the video-recordings of lessons did not provide such evidence either. Alesha was not seen staying in the classroom after the bell, still working on his picturebook, nor was he ever surprised by the bell announcing the end of a lesson. He would immediately stand up, pack up his belongings and head out of the classroom.

Based on the lack of any evidence of distorted perception of time in Alesha’s case, the researcher ranked it in the following way, on a scale from 0-100:

Participant	Teacher-researcher ratings			Overall assessment of distorted temporal perception
	Start	Middle	Final	
Alesha	0	0	0	Non-existent

Questionnaire.

The overall scores of Alesha’s questionnaire responses show that he did not perceive his state in the beginning of the project as a flow experience – he scored 55 for Phase I and 61 for Phase II. The midterm sample showed an increase in his self-reported assessment of flow - 60 and 70 points for Phases I and II respectively. The final sample manifested a further increase – 67 points for Phase I and 74 for Phase II. Considering that any scores of 70 points and higher suggest the participant’s experience of flow (as was discussed in Chapter 3), Alesha’s self-reported data suggest that he began experiencing a state close to flow in the middle and final parts of the project, and that his flow was also more noticeable during Phase II than Phase I. However, the high scores of Alesha’s self-assessment could also have been influenced by the general excitement of other participants about the project and Alesha’s desire to “fit in” with his classmates.

Summary of Alesha’s flow

Major components of flow	Teacher rankings			Overall Assessment
	Start	Middle	End	
<i>1. Balance between skills and challenge</i>	0	10	10	Poor balance
<i>2. Concentration</i>	0	50	50	Low/Medium
<i>3. Interest</i>	0	50	50	Low/Medium
<i>4. Control</i>	0	25	25	Low
<i>5. Autotelic experience</i>	0	25	25	Low
<i>6. Merging of awareness and action</i>	0	50	25	Medium/Low
<i>7. Distorted perception of time</i>	0	0	0	Non-existent
Self-reported Questionnaire results	58	65	71	Low flow

Table 4.5. Alesha’s flow summary.

The case study of Alesha’s participation in the project allowed the researcher to create a composite qualitative profile of the major flow components as they were manifested in Alesha’s behavior throughout the project. Based on the conducted analysis, it can be concluded that, even though Alesha’s skills hardly matched the project’s challenges, Alesha did experience flow both in Phase I and Phase II, albeit the intensity of his flow was rather low. Alesha’s case study provide the affirmative answer to RQ1 and suggests that flow can occur in a creative L2 project even in the context of low creative and L2 skills. In terms of RQ1b, Alesha’s case demonstrated that student flow can be non-existent in the beginning of such a project and originate in the second half of the project, with some components of flow being more noticeable than others.

Flow analysis summary

Participants	Teacher ratings			Student self-ratings			Overall assessment of flow
	Start	Middle	Final	Start	Middle	Final	
Sasha	50	100	100	74	87	93	High
Grisha	50	100	100	72	95	97	High
Dima	50	75	75	71	85	90	Medium/High
Kolya	60	50	65	66	75	81	Medium
Leva	30	60	65	57	71	76	Medium
Nikita³		40	50		58	71	Low
Alesha	0	30	30	58	65	71	Low

Table 4.6. Teacher’s ratings of students’ flow and students’ self-reported ratings.

The analysis of the four individual case studies presented in this chapter allowed the researcher to affirmatively answer RQ1a and conclude that student flow does occur in the process of picturebook creation introduced in an experimental afterschool L2 teaching project. The cases of three other participants were analyzed following the same procedures and the analysis of their cases yielded similar results. Due to the length of the analysis, they are not presented here but all of the teacher’s rankings of students’ flow, as well as their self-reported

³ Nikita started participating in the project from Lesson 8.

ratings, can be seen in Table 4.6. The data analysis shows that two of the seven study participants (Sasha and Grisha) experienced a High level of flow during both the creative and discussion parts of the lessons, especially in the middle and final stages of the project. Dima experienced flow of a lower intensity (Medium/High level), with his flow being more pronounced during the discussion phase. Two other participants (Kolya and Leva) experienced flow of a Medium level during both phases and their flow also intensified during the second part of the project. The cases of Nikita and Alesha only showed a Low level of flow, which was manifested in the middle and end of the project.

The conducted analysis also suggests that even students with low levels of artistic skills (e.g., Dima) and L2 skills (e.g., Alesha) can experience flow in an arts-based L2 program but students with better developed drawing skills and L2 skills (e.g., Sasha and Grisha) achieve higher levels of flow. The results of the analysis confirm one of the major tenets of the flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; 1996, 1997), stating *balance between skills and challenge* to be the key predictor of flow.

The analysis of data collected from multiple data sources suggests that flow was not a stable phenomenon experienced by students on a permanent basis – rather, it proved to be a dynamic, fluctuating state, which increased in intensity over the course of the semester. Although the participants experienced flow of different levels of intensity (see Table 4.6), the overall flow intensity was found to have increased in each student’s case from the beginning of the project to its end. This conclusion allows the researcher to answer RQ1b in the following way: once achieved, flow tends to increase in intensity in a L2 project based on picturebook creation.

The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that flow can be achieved and fostered in an arts-based afterschool L2 program. It is of even more importance for creative L2 educators to

establish how flow can be fostered in a creative L2 classroom, or what factors are crucial for fostering student flow. Factors contributing to student flow are the focus of the analysis presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FLOW IN AN ARTS-BASED L2 PROJECT

The analysis of individual case studies presented in the previous chapter focused on the emergence of flow and its dynamics in each participant's case. This chapter presents the second part of data analysis, which was undertaken to answer RQ1c, **“Which factors do the dynamics of flow depend on?”** The goal of this part of the analysis was to establish what particular components of the arts-based project contributed the most to student flow in order to provide guidelines for creatively-minded L2 educators on how flow can be fostered. For this purpose, the growing intensity of flow in the project is juxtaposed to its main events, materials, and activities, in order to identify those of them that were particularly conducive to flow.

As opposed to the previous part of the analysis, where each student's case was analyzed separately, in this segment of the analysis the whole group of participants was treated as a single case. The teacher journal and the researcher's visual journal were used as primary data sources, along with video-recordings of lessons, lesson plans, and students' interviews. Carefully reading teacher journal entries, transcripts of video-recordings, lesson plans, and viewing the sketches of participants, the researcher used Inductive Content Analysis in order to look for relevant common “themes” in these sources of data associated with the emergence and development of flow. As a result, the following major “themes” were identified in the data:

- *Sufficiently high challenge and relevance of activities;*
- *Students' control over the creative activities;*
- *Difference from students' regular classes (Novelty);*

- *Introduction of new artistic (craft) tools and activities;*
- *Egalitarian style of interactions within the classroom community.*

In the following sub-sections, the data belonging to each of these major themes are analyzed in juxtaposition to the “key moments” of the project in terms of student flow – when individual participants began experiencing flow during Phase II; when they started showing signs of flow in Phase I; when flow became apparent in the behavior of the whole group; and when flow seemed to intensify in reference to the introduction of certain new elements of the project.

Sufficiently high challenge and relevance of activities

According to the teacher journal, it was evident that during the first five lessons, flow failed to materialize in the experimental classroom either during Phase I or Phase II. According to the journal entries describing Lesson 3, the students “looked shy and rigid... they seemed to be quite willing to draw but they were reticent and looked apprehensive when the teacher asked them questions in English”. The teacher repeatedly comments on students’ high self-consciousness in the initial part of the project. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the state of flow, self-consciousness tends to disappear due to the merging of awareness and action (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), so high self-consciousness suggests lack of flow.

The review of the researcher’s sketches confirms the journal observations that participants expressed a high level of self-consciousness and were not actively engaged during the beginning of the project. For example, Figure 5.1 below features a sketch of two participants (Leva and Kolya) in Lesson 4. In the sketch, they do not appear to be “absorbed” in the activity and look self-conscious - they avoid eye contact with the teacher and try to sit upright, with their hands and elbows on the desk, as it is required of them in their regular classes.



Figure 5.1. Leva and Kolya drawing during Lesson 3.

Figure 5.2 (below) presents the same two students at Lesson 6, when they were just in the beginning of the actual process of picturebook creation. In this researcher sketch Leva and Kolya look different from the previous image – their gazes are focused on their drawing pads, their bodies bend over the desk, and their hands firmly hold their pencils. The students appear attentive, interested, and concentrated, which can signify the emergence of flow. To use the definition of flow suggested by Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi (2009), the students in the sketch appear to be “so involved in the activity, nothing else seems to matter” (p. 135).



Figure 5.2. Leva and Kolya working on their picturebooks during Lesson 6.

The review of the lesson plans suggests that the difference in participants’ states during the initial five lessons and the subsequent lessons can be explained by the fact that the

picturebook creation process “per se” was introduced during Lesson 6, which caused flow to emerge in the classroom during Phase II. According to the lesson plans (see Appendix C), the first five lessons of the project were dedicated to teaching students how to draw simple individual images of animals, people, and fairy tale creatures, thus familiarizing students with the inclusion of arts in an EFL class, before the actual launch of the picturebook creation process.

As discussed in previous chapters, the balance between the challenge of the activity and the skill of the performer is key to the state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Whalen, 1997). The researchers maintain that both skill and challenge should be high for flow to occur. Schmidt and Savage (1992), on the other hand, found that flow could be achieved in activities that were not challenging and did not require high skill (see Chapter 2, p. 39). The lack of student flow during the first five lessons of this project suggests that the single-dimensional and imitational nature of copying images created by the teacher *did not provide a high enough challenge* for the students.

According to student interviews, participants felt that the challenge of the creative tasks in the beginning of the project was not high enough – e.g., one of the participants shared that “simply drawing animals after you was very easy”. Another student noted in his interview that he did not enjoy drawing animals and fairy-tale creatures because “it was not interesting for me... but when you started to draw a dinosaur, then I was like “cool!” – because, you know, I love dinosaurs!” This remark suggests that drawing certain subjects, selected by the teacher, was not *relevant* for some students and consequently, it was not conducive to flow. Whereas the picturebook creation process allowed the students to select those topics that were *relevant* for them.

The teacher journal entries suggest that while the challenge of drawing activities might not have been high enough in the initial part of the project, the picturebook discussion phase, in

which students were engaged in the discussions of picturebooks in English, on the contrary, was initially too challenging for them. The journal entries maintain that “students were highly self-conscious” when the teacher asked them questions about a book’s plot – “they avoided eye contact with the teacher and raised a hand to volunteer a response rarely and with much hesitation”.

According to the student interviews, participants were not prepared for the challenge of Phase I – as one of the students shared in his interview, “nobody spoke to us only in English before, so we were a bit afraid, afraid to make a mistake”. This shows that, initially, the participants were not prepared to be immersed in the English language for the duration of a lesson, as, according to the interviews, their regular EFL teacher often used Russian in the classroom. If flow began to be experienced by students during creative activities at Lesson 6, it took a few more lessons for the students to also experience it during speaking activities.

The teacher journal notes suggest that, starting from Lessons 7 and 8, the majority of the participants became accustomed to the “immersion” atmosphere of the arts-based project and “began being actively engaged in picturebook discussions”. The journal entries maintain that at that point students began to enjoy the “English-only” speaking environment of the project. This was manifested in the frequent reminders they addressed to each other in the middle and final parts of the project, the general message of which was “hey, we speak only English here!”

The teacher journal entries during the final stage of the project present a stark contrast to those from the start of the project:

During the discussion phase, all the students raised their hands volunteering to speak in English. Not only the usual leaders of the class (Grisha, Sasha, Dima) were in flow and actively participating, but also Kolya, Leva, Alesha, and Nikita, who usually were less

engaged in the discussion activities. Apparently, their speaking skills had improved during the semester, thanks to their growing L2 confidence, and matched the level of the task's challenge, which finally allowed all the students to experience flow not only during the creative phase but also during the discussion phase (Teacher Journal, Lesson 20).

The researcher sketch from the final part of the project (Figure 5.3) depicts the eagerness with which the participants volunteered to respond to the teacher's questions and describe the picturebook plot and images. The sketch represents six students engaged in a picturebook discussion. Three students are raising their hands simultaneously to volunteer to describe an image, with two of them even standing up - so their hands are higher than those of others in order to persuade the teacher to call on them.



Figure 5.3. Students volunteering a response to the teacher's question.

Overall, the picturebook creation, being a multifaceted process, which includes drawing images, creating a plot, writing captions, and binding the book together, presented a *sufficiently high challenge* for the participants and was much more conducive to flow than drawing individual images. Also, the creation of students' own picturebooks made the reading and discussion of picturebooks in English *more relevant* for the students. This has been manifested in

students' interviews performed at the end of the project. As one student shared, he “felt as if they were real artists, creating picturebooks in a workshop of a real magazine”. Another student stated that he felt as if he was “a student in an American school, where everyone spoke English”. Thus, speaking in English became a relevant, authentic activity for the participants by the end of the project, whereas in its beginning students were self-conscious and reticent.

In summary, the analysis of data suggests that the level of challenge of the creative activities should be sufficiently high in an arts-based L2 project such as this, whereas a low level of challenge (as it was during the first five lessons) is not conducive to flow. This finding provides support to what Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 2007) and Whalen (1997) maintain about flow, as opposed to the findings achieved by Schmidt and Savage (1992), who claimed that leisure activities of low challenge could lead to flow as well.

Students' control over the creative activities

As discussed in Chapter 4, the participants did not feel “*in control*” during the first five lessons. In the interviews, they discussed having had to follow the teacher's drawing examples and *not creating* anything “*per se*”. The researcher visual journal confirms the interview data. For example, the sketch below (Figure 5.4) depicts three students at Lesson 3, who do not appear to be rigid and self-conscious. Their stiff, alert postures suggest that they try to produce an impression of “good”, “conscientious” students, but it is evident that they are not enjoying the activity very much. The way the students are sitting behind their desks, in neat, conventional rows, suggests that they are not in control – the teacher is. The review of the lesson plans reveals that the first five lessons were centered around the teacher, who drew images he himself selected on the board, helped the students with their drawings, and asked them questions in L2 about what

they were drawing. The “teacher-centeredness” of the first lessons, along with the low challenge of the drawing activities (as discussed above), was not conducive to student flow.



Figure 5.4. Students drawing at Lesson 3.

As it was established in the previous chapter, several participants (Sasha, Grisha, Dima) began experiencing flow at Lesson 6, when they finally began creating their own picturebooks. The link between the independent, creative character of the picturebook creation process and the immediate emergence of student flow was obvious. The teacher journal maintains that “as soon as the students were given the opportunity to select their own topic and characters, to work at their own pace, and to choose how to organize their work (e.g., whether to draw images and write captions simultaneously or to do it separately), they immediately began showing signs of flow”. The researcher sketches from the middle of the project demonstrate the heightened concentration, interest, and enjoyment, characteristic to flow (as described in Chapter 2) in the representations of the study participants. For example, Figure 5.5 depicts Nikita and Grisha working on their picturebooks at Lesson 8. Contrary to the formal and stiff postures of the students in the previous images, the participants in this picture look different: Nikita is eagerly drawing something, balancing his body in the position of half-standing and half-sitting, which is usually adopted by people in moments of complete absorption in the activity at hand. This

posture suggests his lack of self-awareness, which is a characteristic feature of flow (as discussed in Chapter 2). Grisha's hand is covering his mouth and he seems to be entirely absorbed in visualizing the events of his picturebook plot. As opposed to the previous images, the students in this image appear to be "*liberated*" from the initial self-consciousness of the first lessons.



Figure 5.5. Grisha and Nikita working on their picturebooks.

According to the teacher journal, students began to be consistently in flow when, due to the collaborative character of the picturebook creation process, they realized that they were allowed (unlike their regular classes) “to move freely around the classroom, if their movements were mandated by their creative needs – e.g., when they needed to borrow pencils or wanted to share their creations or glance at another student’s work-in-progress”. The freedom to move around the classroom allowed them to share ideas and provide each other feedback. The teacher specifies that giving such freedom to the students was “an important instrument of creating the atmosphere of a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991)”.

The teacher journal also links those moments of the project when all the participants appeared to be experiencing flow of high intensity to the opportunity to work on multiple creative tasks – “students tended to be especially in flow, when they were engaged in multiple creative activities during one lesson and could choose whether to work on them independently or

in small groups”. For example, according to the journal entry describing Lesson 14, the participants were simultaneously engaged in three different activities –

some of them were binding their picturebooks, others were drawing, while still others were coloring their picturebook images. Each student could choose what activity to join in at any given moment. This opportunity to participate in various creative activities one after the other gave students the feeling of *being in control* and, when they operated the binding tool, they could see the immediate positive result of their creative effort – a book in its binding.

The researcher sketch presented in Figure 5.6 confirms that the simultaneous engagement of students in various creative activities in the classroom was conducive to their heightened feeling of control and, consequently, flow. In the image, two students are engaged in coloring their picturebooks, while another group of 3 students are engaged in the book binding activity. The students in both groups appear to be interested, excited, and fully absorbed in the activity.



Figure 5.6. Students working in small groups on their picturebooks.

At the same time, the researcher notes that “the control and confidence students experienced during creative activities, transferred into their attempts to speak English for

interpersonal classroom interactions”. As flow is characterized by the disappearance of self-awareness and self-consciousness (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), the “flow-rich” atmosphere in the creative classroom was conducive to students’ willingness to follow the teacher’s example and try to speak English when asking for an artistic tool (e.g., a colored pencil) or exchanging comments. The video-recordings demonstrate that students began to exchange interpersonal remarks in English when working on their picturebooks during the middle and final parts of the project, whereas in the beginning they only used Russian in such cases. For example, Sasha and Alesha had the following spontaneous dialogue, while drawing:

Sasha: *I want... to speak English now*

Alesha: *Do you speak English?*

Sasha: *Yes, I am*

This was one of the many moments in the project, when it was obvious that students’ flow was conducive to higher L2 WTC, which will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Difference from regular classes (novelty)

Another recurrent theme found in the data, which was linked to students’ flow, was “*Difference from regular classes*” or “*novelty*”. According to student interviews, the first lessons of the project were “too much like regular classes” and the students thought “it would be another boring class”. This evidence suggests that, in its initial part, the project lessons did not seem to the participants to be different from other classes, and this factor was detrimental to their flow. This factor is closely linked to the factor of “control”. As discussed in the teacher journal, the first lessons were “too teacher-centered during the initial stage of the project and that is why they resembled other classes the students attended”.

The teacher journal states that “*elements of novelty*”, i.e. the elements distinguishing the experimental class from other classes, began to appear at Lesson 6, the first of which was

allowing students to move freely around the classroom during the picturebook creation process. As already mentioned above, the first signs of flow were observed during Lesson 6. Another important distinguishing feature described in the journal was the new sitting arrangement the teacher introduced at Lesson 8 during Phase I (picturebook discussion). Starting from that lesson on, during Phase I the students sat around the teacher in a semi-circle, as opposed to the teacher-fronted discussion that had been used in Lessons 1 -7. The teacher's notes specify that "the students immediately liked this arrangement and their participation in oral discussions of picturebooks became much more active".



Figure 5.7. Picturebook discussion phase.

The researcher sketch (Figure 5.7) confirms the narrative journal data. It shows three students sitting in a semi-circle around their teacher, one of which (Grisha) is eagerly gesticulating and trying to say something in English, while two others are carefully listening. Viewing this image through the lens of flow components, we can see that Grisha is evidently "in flow". The image depicts the moment when Grisha was "describing the picture in English, trying to come up with a long sentence, and looking for the necessary words" (Teacher Journal, Lesson 10). In the sketch, Grisha is actively involved in constructing a sentence, his consciousness being

“entirely focused on his “hunt” for English words in the “jungle” of his memory”. His hand gesture, resembling an attempt to “catch” some words in the air, together with his gaze, directed upwards in an effort of recollection, show his total *loss of self-awareness and self-consciousness*, which is characteristic to flow.

Such “egalitarian” sitting arrangement, in which all the students are seated around the teacher and have equal access to the picturebook images and the teacher’s attention, was another “*novelty*” that distinguished the experimental class from other classes and was conducive to student flow. According to the teacher journal, student flow during such discussions in the middle and final parts of the project was evident “in the way the students eagerly took turns in describing images of a picturebook under discussion”.



Figure 5.8. Students sitting together and discussing a picturebook.

Another sketch (Figure 5.8) depicts the group of participants (Grisha, Dima, Sasha, Alesha, and Kolya) in the process of describing the pictures of *Willy the Champ* by A. Browne. At that stage of the project (Lesson 14) all the students were experiencing flow during Phase I, which can be confirmed by their undivided attention given to the book (*absorption*), accentuated

by their gazes, focused on the picture (*concentration*), Alesha's finger, pointing at a certain exciting detail (*interest*), and the students' relaxed, informal postures (*loss of self-awareness*).

In the image described above, all the students are seated at the same desk, close to each other. The teacher journal reveals that the students “enjoyed that *close-knit* sitting arrangement so much that, if I happened to forget to tell them to sit together, they would remind me and gather together at the same desk in the middle of the room, waiting for a new picturebook as a bunch of puppies for a bowl of milk”. The teacher journal also documents that during such discussion sessions of the second half of the project, the students were so “engrossed in trying to speak in English, that they would begin to collectively create longer L2 utterances, eagerly adding details to the previous speaker's response”. This entry suggests that the novel sitting arrangement was conducive to student collaboration and flow during Phase I.

According to lesson plans, another distinguishing feature of the project was the teacher-authored pencil poster depicting Harry Potter brandishing a magic wand and asking the viewers to speak in English (see Figure 5.9). The poster was introduced at Lesson 6 and became an important part of the lessons as a reminder for students to speak only English in the classroom. As student interviews suggest, the Harry Potter poster made the students feel “as if we were in an English school – because we were supposed to speak only English now, like English school kids”. This remark suggests that the poster further distinguished the arts-based class from the students' regular classes and contributed to the “*authenticity*” of the classroom environment.



Figure 5.9. “SPEAK ENGLISH!” poster featuring Harry Potter.

The teacher journal maintains that the “SPEAK ENGLISH!” sign was immediately liked by all the participants and they began reminding each other to “stick to English” by pointing at the poster in the subsequent lessons. Many students shared in the interviews that they liked the poster because they were reading the books about Harry Potter and had watched the films about him. Harry Potter being part of the students’ lives “outside of school”⁴ and something students could “relate to”, the poster further contributed to the *uniqueness* of the project in the students’ perception and helped to create an “English speaking community of practice” within the project.

Introduction of new materials and activities

The teacher journal entries contain multiple references to how student flow was affected by the *introduction of new materials and activities*. The researcher notes emphasize the connection between the introduction of new art tools, picturebooks, and activities and students’ level of engagement. The first such connection is described in the entry for Lesson 6, when a *new activity of creating picturebooks* was introduced, accompanied by the distribution of the art

⁴ Books by J. K. Rowling about Harry Potter are not part of the reading curricula in Russian schools.

tools, special drawing notepads and graphite pencils, among the participants. The positive impact of the new activity and tools on the students became especially evident at the following lesson, conducted a week later. The teacher journal entry for Lesson 7 states the following:

Today the students were particularly excited when they were entering the classroom and chatting about their picturebook ideas. Apparently, they had been “hooked” by the idea of creating a picturebook, had been thinking about their picturebook plots over the weekend, and came to the class eager to implement them. From the very start of the lesson the students kept asking me when they would again start working on their picturebooks.

The excerpt from the teacher journal suggests that the participants had been highly excited about the picturebook creation process, and were eager to resume working on their picturebooks.

The researcher sketches provide additional evidence of student flow and its connection to the picturebook creation activities. For example, Figure 5.10 represents Sasha and Dima at Lesson 8. All the students depicted in this image appear to be highly focused and “absorbed” in drawing. Sasha is looking straight at the researcher because he had been asked a question about his picturebook plot. Sasha’s excitement and concentration is visible in his firm grasp of the pencil and his intent, attentive posture. He is portrayed at the moment when he interrupted the drawing process and began to eagerly explain the details of his plot, trying to recall the necessary English words (“It’s about...potato...potato-boy... angry potato”, from video-recording transcripts). As discussed in Chapter 2, flow makes people lose their self-consciousness due to the *merging of awareness and action* (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). This explains why Sasha, usually a very shy and quiet boy, began to lose his shyness and attempt to reply in English, the foreign language he only knew the basics of. Thus, the introduction of the

picturebook creation activity led students into flow, which contributed to their L2 WTC (see Chapters 6 and 7).



Figure 5.10. Sasha and Dima begin working on their picturebooks.

The teacher journal describes the students' attitude to classroom activities (after Lesson 6) with words "*interest*", "*enthusiasm*" and "*excitement*" and claims that, starting from Lesson 8, most participants "experienced flow during both the picturebook drawing and picturebook discussion activities".

According to the teacher journal, the *introduction of colored pencils* at Lesson 14 became another example of how new art tools could contribute to students' flow. The teacher journal specifies that the students brought their own sets of pencils and the teacher shared his large set of colored pencils, which had been brought from the USA. The set included pencils of multiple colors and hues, which had the English names of their colors written on them. These pencils became very popular with the students and they shared them, using polite requests in English and asking each other for a pencil of a particular color. The teacher's notes maintain that

at that point of the project English began to be used almost exclusively by the students for classroom communication – it had become natural for them to negotiate the exchange of

colored pencils and other “tools of the trade” in English and they obviously enjoyed it. If anyone spoke Russian, he was immediately reminded to stick to English by the rest of the group.

This suggests that the introduction of colored pencils was not only beneficial in terms of sustaining student flow during Phase II – it also was instrumental in encouraging them to speak English for spontaneous classroom communication. The fact that they experienced flow while engaged in such spontaneous negotiations for colored pencils is supported by visual sketches. For example, Figure 5.11 documents many signs of student flow, including interest, focused attention, and lack of self-consciousness, which can be seen in the students’ postures, gazes, and facial expressions. In this image, Grisha and Sasha are speaking English to negotiate the exchange of colored pencils, and Dima is coloring the images of his picturebook. They all appear to be “completely absorbed” in their activities, which, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), is synonymous to flow.



Figure 5.11. Students coloring their picturebooks and sharing colored pencils.

According to the lesson plans (Appendix C), another new craft tool that the students were introduced to in the final part of the project (Lesson 16) was a *Fiskars paper crafting trimmer*. The teacher journal notes that the introduction of this creative tool, which had been brought by the teacher from the USA, “further intensified the students’ interest, curiosity, and the feeling of *authenticity* of the creative process they were part of”. The journal states that “all the participants were extremely curious about the device and took turns operating it to make covers for their picturebooks”.

According to student interviews, the implementation of the paper trimmer became the “crowning point” of the project. One of the participants said the following:

We did not know how we would finish our books... but then you brought that device and showed us how to make book covers – and we were like “WOW!” Now it really looks like a real book, and our books will be like that too!

The teacher sketches representing the final part of the project (Lessons 16 – 20) show that the students worked in two small groups (Figure 5.6 above), alternating their activities between binding their books and coloring them. Figure 5.12 below represents Sasha and Dima using the paper trimmer, while Grisha (in the background) is coloring his picturebook. Again, their flow is manifested in the students’ attentive gazes, confident postures, and the apparent general lack of self-consciousness.

Additionally, the teacher journal posits that at Lessons 16, when the paper trimmer was introduced, the students were “so much *engrossed in the activities* that they did not notice that the lesson had finished and the final bell surprised everyone”. The teacher maintains that the *distortion of temporal perceptions*, which is a characteristic feature of flow (Egbert, 2003),

manifested itself in almost every lesson of the second part of the project, as the students repeatedly complained that “these lessons finish too soon!”



Figure 5.12. Using a Fiskars paper trimmer at Lesson 17.

Finally, flow was enhanced by the *introduction of new picturebooks* during the discussion phase of the project lessons. All in all, nine picturebooks were used in the project for discussion activities (see the whole list on pp. 15-17, Chapter 3), with each picturebook being discussed for two or three lessons. The teacher journal documents the excitement the students expressed when they saw a new picturebook in the classroom. For example, the teacher journal entry for Lesson 17 describes the students’ reaction to a new picturebook in this way:

A new picturebook was introduced today, namely A. Browne’s *Willy’s Pictures*. All the students immediately noticed the book on the teacher’s desk and, shouting “New book! New book about Willy! It’s about Willy”, sat around the desk, in a semi-circle, waiting for me to join them and eager to begin viewing the pictures of the new picturebook and discussing them.



Figure 5.13. Students in the process of picturebook discussion.

The students' *excitement* about a new picturebook can be observed in Figure 5.13, in which five students are sitting around a single desk (their favorite arrangement for Phase I) with a colorful picturebook lying in the middle. The students are eagerly viewing the pictures of the book, pointing at details and naming the objects depicted there. Their profound interest and absorption in the book (characteristic to flow, as was described in Chapter 2) can be seen in their wide-open eyes, interested facial expressions, and proximity to each other. The teacher journal states the following about the activity:

When discussing picturebooks, the students always chose to sit together and very closely to one another, as if such “communal” sharing of a picturebook in close proximity to each other made the activity even more enjoyable. Whenever I see them cuddling comfortably together over a picturebook, they remind me of a bunch of puppies over a bowl of milk eagerly devouring its contents (Lesson 17).

The journal specifies that students were particularly excited about the fact that most of the books under discussion in the afterschool class were about the same character – Willy, a little

anthropomorphic chimpanzee (created by A. Browne), to whom the students could easily relate, as Willy appeared to be of the same age as they were. The journal states that, at Lesson 18, two students (Sasha and Dima) volunteered to enumerate the books about Willy that had been viewed and discussed over the semester, and they correctly named all of them, which implicitly showed the students' excitement about the series of picturebooks about Willy. As Dima later stated in his interview, the participants had been always happy to see a new book about Willy, as "it was like watching a new episode of your favorite TV show".

Egalitarian community of collaborators

The final recurrent theme that was found in the data can be identified as the *atmosphere of the egalitarian community of collaborators* that gradually permeated the classroom. According to the teacher journal, the students were sharing the results of their creative efforts with each other from the outset of the picturebook creation process (Lesson 6). They exchanged feedback and suggestions on how to improve their picturebooks, and asked each other for advice and assistance during each class meeting. The teacher notes that even though the individual creative achievement of each student varied in terms of the quality of drawings or logical completeness of their stories, "the whole class consistently worked as a single unit, with individual students showing a desire and responsibility to help others". In this regard, the afterschool class manifested what Vygotsky (2004) called *collaborative creativity* and a smooth cohesion between "*I-creativity*" and "*we-creativity*" (Glăveanu, 2010, as discussed in Chapter 2, p. 19), in the sense that the students' independent creative work did not come into conflict with their efforts to assist each other.

The student interviews confirmed the teacher's claim that the students "felt to be part of a creative community". For example, this excerpt from Sasha's interview – "I felt as though we

were real artists working on picturebooks in a workshop of a magazine” – shows that he perceived himself a “part of a creative team”.

The teacher’s reflections on his role in the classroom, presented in the journal, also emphasize the positive role of “egalitarian interactions” between the teacher and students:

During the first five lessons I was the center of the creative process – performing the traditional role of the teacher while modelling drawing exercises for the students. At that point, the students clearly were not experiencing flow. However, when my role changed from that of a “teacher per se” to a “more proficient collaborator”, which happened as we started working on picturebooks, the students began to be in flow.

As specified by flow researchers (Andersen, 2005, see Chapter 2, p. 48), egalitarian models of interaction between teachers and students have been found to be conducive to student flow. The findings of this dissertation study led to the same conclusion.



Figure 5.14. The front cover of unpublished *Kefir* picturebook.

According to the teacher journal, an important step in establishing the atmosphere of an “egalitarian community of collaborators” was made at Lesson 7, when the teacher shared with the participants the picturebook he had created as part of one of his courses at the University of

Georgia (see Figure 5.14). The teacher specifies that “it was done in order to show my students that to create a picturebook was “doable” and no special publishing equipment was necessary – it can be simply drawn with pencils with the captions written in ink”.

The researcher sketch below (Figure 5.15) shows how *focused* and *interested* the students were during the teacher’s presentation of his picturebook. The researcher describes the students’ reaction thus:

They were eagerly pointing at images, describing the main characters, offering their comments on the pictures, and suggesting what could happen next. As I had expected, my picturebook became the source of inspiration for the participants as they set to work on their picturebooks with even more energy and abandon after viewing and discussing my book.



Figure 5.15. The researcher shares his picturebook with the students.

As the teacher journal points out, Lessons 7 and 8 were remarkable in that “many students (Grisha, Sasha, Dima, and Kolya) began showing signs of flow during the picturebook

discussion phase”. The egalitarian model of interactions between the teacher and students, initiated by the teacher’s sharing of his picturebook, appears to have contributed to student flow during Phase I, which originally only manifested itself in Phase II.

The researcher sketches document multiple instances of the students sharing their picturebooks and providing feedback to one another in the form of appreciating remarks, creative tips, or simply a smile, which played an important role in creating the atmosphere of egalitarian collaboration in the classroom. For example, in Figure 5.16, Dima is offering feedback to Grisha in the form of an understanding smile. Figure 5.17 features Grisha attentively observing Nikita’s drawing process, ready to provide his comments. *Immediate feedback* is one of the necessary antecedents of flow (see Chapter 2, p. 39) and the participants regularly received positive immediate feedback from both their teacher and peers.



Figures 5.16 and 5.17. Students sharing their picturebooks and giving feedback.

As the student interviews suggest, the atmosphere of an egalitarian creative community, established in the class after Lesson 7, was conducive to flow. The participants shared in their interviews that they “*could not wait until the next Tuesday*”, when they would come again to the afterschool class. Such eager anticipation is a sign of *autotelic experience*, which is characteristic to flow (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Close collaboration between some students in the

class did not distract other students, who were working on their projects independently. This excerpt from the teacher journal emphasizes the degree of the students' concentration: "The students were so focused, that when another teacher entered the classroom, they had not even noticed it".

Another example of students' collaboration in the state of flow can be seen in Figure 5.18. The sketch depicts a moment of Lesson 15, when Dima (on the right) had just asked Leva for advice on his picturebook plot, and Leva (on the left) is looking dreamily in front of himself, trying to come up with ideas that would help his friend. At the background, two other students are also collaborating on a picturebook, going over the completed pages and discussing the possible ways to further develop the plot.



Figure 5.18. Students' collaboration.

The teacher journal confirms that the students highly enjoyed the collaborative aspect of the class. As opposed to the conventional classroom arrangement adopted in Russian schools, when students sit by two at their desks, three participants asked the teacher for permission to sit together at the same desk. Even though they looked slightly cramped and uncomfortable (see Figure 5.19), they preferred working on their books in close proximity to each other. They

explained that, this way, they could immediately share their current achievements and easily exchange feedback.



Figure 5.19. Three students drawing at the same desk.

The teacher notes in his journal that the assistance he provided to the students, - both in terms of drawing and English speaking, became a model for the students, who also began helping each other. As the best artist in the class, Sasha soon became the center of the creative process as the other students would come to him for help most often and he never turned anyone down. In the researcher sketch below (Figure 5.20), Sasha is providing feedback to Kolya on his picturebook, while Leva is also offering his comments. In a similar way, the students helped each other to describe pictures during Phase I. The atmosphere of a “creative workshop” that reigned the classroom and the collaboration between more skillful and less skillful students contributed to student flow. Thus, the afterschool class became an *egalitarian community of practice*, where the students could develop the skills of picturebook creation and speaking in English.

It is also worthy of mention that the afterschool class was not the only venue where the teacher interacted with the participants. The teacher describes in his journal that after the class, he would often challenge the students for a game of soccer or basketball on the school’s

playground, on the condition that we would try to speak English while playing. The journal entries report that the students enjoyed such moments of “out-of-class” interactions with the teacher and that the games contributed to the egalitarian atmosphere of the class. The teacher notes that he became part of their community – as a co-creator, interlocutor, and confidant: “By the end of the project they began asking me questions (in English) – they asked me if I had watched the latest ice hockey game, what computer games I played, or what breed my dog was”.



Figure 5.20. Sasha and Leva provide their feedback to Kolya.

Summary of findings

The qualitative analysis of the data presented in this chapter suggests that flow experienced by students in the arts-based L2 after-school program during the middle and final parts of the project (Lessons 6 – 20) was influenced by the following factors: (1) *sufficiently high challenge of creative activities and their relevance*; (2) *students’ control over the classroom activities*; (3) *difference of the after-school class from regular classes*; (4) *introduction of new creative tools and activities*; and (5) *atmosphere of egalitarian community of collaborators* that emerged in the classroom. It is therefore suggested that these factors should be taken in consideration in designing and implementing similar arts-based L2 projects.

One of the important findings of this study is that creative activities of relatively higher challenge, in which children could actually create and express themselves (picturebook creation) were more conducive to flow than those of lower challenge and based on reproduction (copying the teacher's drawings). Thus, three participants out of the initial ten dropped the after-school class after Lesson 4. According to the analysis presented in Chapters 4 and 5, students were not in flow during the first five lessons due to the low challenge of drawing activities introduced in the beginning of the project. This finding supports Csikszentmihalyi's (1990, 2007) claim that higher challenge and higher skills were necessary for flow, as opposed to Schmidt and Savage's (1992) observation that leisure activities of low challenge could be equally conducive to flow. This finding suggests that had the picturebook creation process been introduced earlier, more students would have stayed in the project and benefited from it. At the same time, it should be noted that the focus of this study was on the challenges of creative activities, whereas the challenge of the speaking part of the project was not specifically addressed.

The findings also suggest that the flow experienced by students during picturebook creation activities transfers into students' L2 speaking and can positively influence students' willingness to communicate in English. The positive effects of students' participation in the after-school creative project on their L2 WTC are investigated in more detail in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

L2 WTC DYNAMICS ANALYSIS

The analysis presented in this chapter was undertaken to answer the research question 2a:
What are the dynamics of L2 WTC changes in an L2 classroom where L2 learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation?

To describe the dynamics of students' L2 WTC in my research project I analyze samples of participants' oral L2 output produced during project lessons. I begin by analyzing participants' initial L2 WTC at the beginning of the project (Lessons 1 and 2), in the middle of the project (Lessons 8, 9, and 10), and during the final part of the project (Lessons 15, 18, and 20). The data analyzed in this chapter includes teacher journal entries, video-recordings of these lessons, and interviews with the study participants.

I track changes in students' WTC quantitatively by documenting the number and length of their solicited and unsolicited utterances from the transcripts of the recorded lessons. I analyze students' L2 behavior qualitatively by describing the psychological conditions of *security*, *excitement*, and *responsibility*, which have been argued (Kang, 2005) to serve as the major antecedents of L2 WTC (also see Chapter 2, p. 63). To do so, I draw on the relevant entries in the teacher journal, by reviewing relevant multimodal information in the video recordings, and interviews with the participants.

Lesson 1

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.1 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during the first lesson of the project.

	Single word L2 utterances	Multiple-word L2 turns	Unsolicited L2 turns
Grisha	Hello; head; hockey; leg; yes	-	-
Sasha	Basketball; back; yes; leg	-	-
Dima	Hello; leg; football; no; yes	-	-
Kolya	Football; eyes; no; legs	-	-
Leva	Basketball; yes	-	-
Alesha	No; yes	-	-

Table 6.1. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 1.

The first lesson was an introductory lesson⁵, the main goals of which included (1) practicing introductions in L2; (2) checking the students' ability to understand simple questions and respond to them; (3) leading students through a drawing activity guided by the teacher; and (4) checking the level of students' drawing abilities and motivation towards drawing. According to the plan, the teacher-researcher asked the students' first names, checked their L2 level by asking them simple questions, and guided them through an introductory drawing activity. The lesson was attended by nine students, three of whom stopped participating in the project after Lesson 4. Therefore, the dynamics of L2 WTC of six students will be analyzed here.

All student L2 turns (N=22) were one-word responses to the teacher's questions and none of the students attempted to ask the teacher a question or volunteer a comment on their own, so there were no unsolicited (spontaneous) L2 turns taken by students. None of the participants were able to produce an utterance in L2 longer than one word, even though they had been studying English for three years and knew how to say simple phrases like "My name is..." Instead, when the teacher asked the students' names, they only said their names in response.

⁵ The lesson plans for each lesson can be found in Appendix C.

Similarly, their responses to any questions consisted of a single word. This can be seen in the following example.

Ex. 1:

T: What is your favorite sport?

S1: Football

T: Great! Dima's favorite sport is football. What about you, Sasha?

S2: Basketball

As teacher-researcher I did not require full sentences from the students because I wanted to perform the role of a more proficient FL interlocutor (communicator), rather than a demanding teacher (as discussed in Chapter 2, p.). Rather, I was waiting to see if their engagement in the project would lead them to producing longer English phrases.

Security

Kang (2005) defines *security* in the context of L2 WTC as “feeling safe from the fears that nonnative speakers tend to have in L2 communication” (p. 282). Bearing in mind that L2 WTC is understood as readiness to speak in L2 when such an opportunity arises (MacIntyre, 2007), students’ L2 WTC can be considered low as they avoided speaking in L2 when they had this opportunity. The video-recordings show visible shyness and hesitancy in the body language of the students when the teacher asked questions addressing the whole group: they often looked away and/or kept their heads down to avoid answering. The students only responded when the teacher called on them personally.

The students’ shyness and avoidance to use the L2 could be caused by the students’ high level of *communication apprehension* (MacIntyre et al., 2001). Researchers (Dörnyei, 2005; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) have found that L2 learners with high levels of fear or anxiety regarding L2 communication in a particular situation or with a particular person often

prefer to avoid or withdraw from communication in an L2. The students in my study might have had high communication apprehension, and consequently low WTC, due to their unfamiliarity with their new teacher. At the same time, in their interviews taken at the end of the project all participants stated that they were always “afraid to speak” during their regular EFL class because they “were afraid or making a mistake” and getting a bad grade. This suggests that the students had a low *situational confidence* in their regular EFL class, which MacIntyre et al. (2001) name among the most immediate antecedents of WTC. Their low L2 confidence could have transferred into my afterschool project by association with the regular EFL class. These observations suggest that the participants did not feel secure during the first lesson.

Excitement

Kang (2005) defines *excitement* in the context of situational WTC as “a feeling of elation about the act of talking” (p. 284). The video-recordings of the lesson show that when the teacher and students began drawing lions, the participants became more willing to try using the L2. They responded orally by repeating the English words denoting body parts after the teacher and some of them raised their hands to volunteer responses to the teacher’s questions (e.g., name the body parts of the animals in the teacher’s drawing).

However, as the participants stated later in their interviews, they had thought in the beginning of the project, that it would be “another boring lesson”, and that they would “not even draw anything interesting” (Sasha) there. This shows that initially they were not excited about the project, which was one of the reasons for their low L2 WTC.

This sketch from the researcher’s visual journal (Figure 6.1) was drawn to represent the students’ shyness in speaking up as they were drawing in silence without any interaction with each other and avoiding eye contact with the teacher.



Figure 6.1. Alesha and Dima drawing.

Responsibility

According to Kang (2005), *responsibility* in the context of L2 WTC is understood as “a feeling of obligation or duty to deliver or understand a message, or to make it clear” (p. 285). In a low proficiency L2 classroom responsibility would include learners’ willingness to answer the teacher’s questions. In the context of Lesson 1, that meant providing information about themselves. The video-recordings of the lesson show that some of the participants responded to simple general questions the teacher asked them in L2 (e.g., “do you like to draw?” or “can you play football?”) with brief “yes” or “no”. Some of them gave one-word responses to special questions, as in the following example: *Teacher – What is your favorite sport? Dima: -*

Football... Grisha: - Hockey... Sasha: - Basketball.

However, when the teacher tried to elicit more information from them, asking them to elaborate (e.g., “Can you explain why?”) the participants either lowered their gaze and remained silent or responded with a quiet “yes” or “no”. This suggests that they were either unwilling or not confident enough to try and provide clarifications in the L2, both of which supported the claim that their WTC was very low at Lesson 1.

Summary

The observational data discussed above, along with the low number of L2 utterances produced by students, suggest that their L2 WTC was very low in the beginning of the project. Kang (2005) emphasizes that WTC factors, such as security, excitement, and responsibility, should be present simultaneously for high WTC to occur. However, there is no evidence that suggests that at the first lesson of my project any of these feelings were experienced by the participants, showing that the learners' WTC was low during Lesson 1.

Lesson 2

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.2 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during the second lesson of the arts-based project. According to the lesson plans, the main objectives of the lesson included (1) teaching students how to start drawing from a rough outline and gradually add details to the image; and (2) practicing using Present Simple and relevant L2 vocabulary to describe images of the picturebook (*Willy and Hugh*, by A. Browne).

	Single word L2 utterances	Multiple-word L2 turns	Unsolicited L2 turns
Grisha	Hello; spider; Willy; book; pen; lonely; green	-	-
Sasha	Monkey; pencil; blue; zoo; brown	-	-
Dima	Hello; gorilla; yes; black; friends	-	-
Kolya	Hello; monkey; white; picture	-	-
Leva	Yes; black	-	-
Alesha	Yes; red	-	-

Table 6.2. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 2.

The overall number of L2 utterances produced by students at Lesson 2 was only slightly higher than that at the previous lesson (**N=25**). Again, all of the student L2 utterances consisted of single words.

Security

The video-recordings show that, when the teacher introduced *Willy and Hugh*, a picturebook by A. Browne, to the students, and asked the students simple questions about the characters and the plot of the picturebook (e.g., What is Willy holding? Why is Willy sad?), some participants (Grisha, Dima, Sasha, Kolya) were raising their hands volunteering a response. The mere fact that they volunteered to respond by raising hands shows their growing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). However, when the teacher asked them to say whole sentences and modeled such for the students, they invariably responded with one-word utterances, using the words from the book (e.g., *spider, gorilla, lonely, friends, zoo, read, go*). This reluctance to produce a longer utterance can be explained by their lack of *security* (Kang, 2005), or *communicative confidence* (MacIntyre et al., 2001), which probably stems from the lack of communicative opportunities in their regular EFL class. According to participant interviews, the students were not allowed to say anything in English in their regular EFL class, unless they first raised a hand. Such strict rules about initiating an answer in a L2 classroom can hardly be beneficial in terms of learners' WTC, as they made them feel stiff, self-conscious, and insecure.

Excitement

The participants showed the same reluctance to answer the teacher's questions during the creative phase, when students were drawing fairy-tale creatures after the teacher's model. They often avoided eye contact with the teacher and kept concentrating on the pictures they were drawing when asked a question, as can be seen in Figure 6.2.



Figure 6.2. Sasha and Dima drawing

The students rarely volunteered to respond and their responses were again limited to single-word utterances (e.g., *green, red, blue, black, brown, pen, pencil, book, picture*). The analysis of student flow conducted in the previous chapter showed that the participants were not excited about the project at the beginning and a review of interview transcripts reveals that the attitude persevered during the initial lessons. This lack of excitement about the project during its initial stage negatively influenced their WTC. This conclusion serves as an important pedagogical take-away: both the drawing assignments and classroom interactions need to be customized to students' interest to raise their level of excitement about learning arts and talking about drawing and artistic artifacts.

Responsibility

As established in the previous chapter, students did not enjoy the first five lessons as much as they did the following ones because they were drawing images after the teacher's example (as opposed to creating their own picturebooks, which they started to do at Lesson 6). They could not choose their own topic and this lack of control was detrimental for their flow. According to Kang (2005), the feeling of *responsibility*, when L2 learners feel the urge to deliver or clarify a message they consider to be important, enhances L2 WTC. The nature of the activities offered by the teacher at Lesson 2, which were centered around the teacher while the

students were repeating after him, did not endow the participants with the feeling of responsibility. Since the students lacked *agency* in the lesson activities, they did not feel the need to contribute to the classroom conversation in a meaningful way.

Summary for Lesson 2

Similar to Lesson 1, students did not feel excited about speaking in the L2, they lacked the feeling of security to engage in L2 speaking when they had an opportunity to do so, and did not feel the responsibility to contribute to the classroom interaction in the L2. In the absence of these leading WTC antecedents, their L2 WTC was still low, which is proven by the low number of the L2 utterances produced by students during Lesson 2.

Taking into consideration other factors influencing L2 WTC (described in Chapter 2), the participants' low L2 WTC at that point of the project could also be explained by the students' *negative attitude to the learning environment* (Dörnyei, 2005). As many students confessed later in their interviews, they thought "it would be another boring class", and this is indicative of *low intrinsic motivation to L2 learning* (MacIntyre, 2007). As some of the students stated in the interviews, initially they did not see the value of English learning (e.g., "I thought – why should I learn English? We live in Russia and not in England or America. People speak Russian here").

Lessons 3 - 7

The data shows that the participants' WTC during the three subsequent lessons persisted at a rather low level. According to the analysis of student flow conducted in Chapters 4 and 5, students were not in flow during the first five lessons, which can be explained by the fact that they did not choose the topics for their drawings due to the teacher-centered nature of that activity. This resulted in the students' lack of the *feeling of control*, which is an important element of flow (Shernof & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). At the same time, while students were

provided with many opportunities to speak in the L2, they did not use them often and still seemed rather passive during the speaking activities. The participants produced 21, 26, and 24 L2 utterances at Lessons 3, 4, and 5 respectively, the majority of which consisted of one word.

This situation began to change around Lesson 6, when students started working on their own picturebooks, sharing their creative ideas, and exhibiting the first signs of flow (see Chapter 4). The first signs of students' interest, engagement, and creative collaboration (sharing creative results, offering feedback and advice) can be seen in Figures 6.3 and 6.4.



Figures 6.3 and 6.4. Students begin working on their picturebooks, sharing creative ideas.

Soon after that, starting from Lesson 8, the dynamics of L2 WTC began to change as well. The number of L2 utterances produced by students per lesson considerably grew from Lesson 6 to Lesson 10, which can be seen in Table 6.3.

The analysis of student flow showed that most of them were consistently in flow starting from the middle of the project (Lessons 8 – 10), and in that same period the obvious changes in students' L2 WTC occurred. Lessons 8, 9, and 10, which became the “turning point” of the project in terms of students' L2 WTC, are analyzed in detail below.

Lesson	Total number of L2 turns	Number of single-word L2 turns	Number of longer L2 turns	Number of unsolicited L2 turns
6	28	25	3	0
7	32	24	8	0

8	49	19	22	8
9	65	37	22	6
10	79	38	22	19

Table 6.3. Number of students' L2 utterances produced during Lessons 6 – 10.

Lesson 8

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.4 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during Lesson 8 of the arts-based project.

	Single word L2 utterances	Multiple-word L2 turns	Unsolicited L2 turns
Grisha	Nobody fantastic dribbling shooting bathroom	Nobody...wants to play He is wearing... Willy jumps in bed His boots....magic Willy run home He is shooting	Hello teacher! Good game It's a good game! I like it!
Sasha	Bananas three stranger shooting heading	He meets stranger They play.... to football Willy cleans boots Willy put on pajamas Willy run to home	
Dima	Bananas magic shooting passing dribbling	He likes to play football He....doesn't have boots They practice Willy goes home Willy run He starts...to play football	
Kolya	Soccer boots shooting	He likes play football Willy go home Willy is fantastic Because fans	
Leva		Magic boots	Hello!
Nikita	Bananas	Willy play...fantastic	Need for Speed Petri Dish Good game
Alesha	Boots		

Table 6.4. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 8.

According to the lesson plans, the main objectives of Lesson 8 included (1) continuing drawing images of students' picturebooks; and (2) practicing affirmative and negative sentences in Present Simple and relevant L2 vocabulary while describing images of the picturebook (*Willy the Wizard*, by A. Browne).

The transcripts of video-recordings show that, for the first time in the project, the number of students' multiple-word L2 turns was even higher than that of single-word ones (**22 and 19** respectively). Also, for the first time since the beginning of the project, some students began producing unsolicited L2 utterances (**N=8**), which means that they began producing L2 utterances speaking to the teacher or each other when it was not an assignment – e.g., when they were drawing images. It must be specified that the students had communicated with each other during the previous lessons, albeit in Russian, whereas they only used English when it was part of a speaking activity, initiated by the teacher. For example, the video-recordings demonstrate that while working on their picturebooks, Nikita and Grisha began talking (in Russian) about computer games, occasionally inserting short English utterances into their conversation – *“it’s a good game”, “I like it”, “it’s good”, “oh, yes”*. It was the first instance since the beginning of the project when the participants used the L2 in their spontaneous (unsolicited by the teacher) student-to-student interaction. However, the majority of L2 utterances at Lesson 8 were produced by Grisha, Dima, and Sasha, whereas Leva and Alesha rarely tried to speak in L2 and mostly worked silently on their picturebooks, which can be explained by the lower level of flow experienced by the latter students during Lesson 8.

Security



Figure 6.5. Students in close collaboration, eagerly discussing a picturebook.

The teacher journal entries demonstrate that the L2 WTC of the majority of participants was considerably higher than during the previous lessons: the students answered the teacher's questions about the picturebook images with "*willingness and enthusiasm, constantly raising hands or simply shouting their replies in L2 in order to be the first to answer*". The fact that the students were raising their voices and "shouting" their responses in L2 suggests a high level of their feeling of *security* (Kang, 2005) or *situational confidence* (MacIntyre, 2007). The students' *security and excitement* are documented in my sketch, showing the participants sitting closely and comfortably together ("as a bunch of puppies over a bowl of milk", the teacher journal) and eagerly discussing a picturebook (Figure 6.5). As can be seen in the sketch, students are seated at the same desk, whereas in the previous images they sat at separate desks. This arrangement was introduced for the picturebook discussion stage and the students enjoyed it. The review of the student interviews shows that they felt "equal and doing the same thing, together" and "different from usual classrooms" when seated at the same desk. This suggests that this seating arrangement was beneficial for their feelings of security and excitement.

As opposed to the first lessons, when students mostly gave one word replies, now they tended to respond in full sentences: “*Willy like play football*”, “*They not pass ball*”, or “*Willy not have boots*”. Since many of their sentences were grammatically incorrect, the teacher corrected them by recasting student responses and asked the students to repeat the correct forms after him. The video recordings suggest that teacher’s error corrections did not interrupt the flow of communication or dampen the students’ willingness to respond. Even though, according to the students’ final interviews, they were afraid of making mistakes in their regular EFL class, it seems that in the creative project they had no fears and felt safe to try speaking in English. As flow researchers (Csikszentmyhalyi, 1990, 1997; Egbert, 2003) suggest, in the state of flow people tend to lose self-consciousness, fears, and anxieties - so the students’ “lack of fear” was arguably due to the flow they were experiencing in the project.

Excitement

In the previous chapter it was established that many participants (Sasha, Grisha, Dima, and Kolya) began experiencing flow both during the discussion and creative phases at Lesson 8. Their excitement about speaking in the L2 manifested itself in their eagerness to be the first to make an oral response to the teacher’s questions. The video-recordings show that when the instructor called for volunteers to describe the picturebook images, all of the students promptly raised their hands, with some of them jumping up from their seats and shouted answers at the same moment. Because of the general excitement, caused by the flow of the class leaders (Grisha, Sasha, Dima), even usually reticent students (Leva) started producing L2 utterances (e.g., *Teacher: Why did Willy play so well? – Leva: **Magic boots!***).

Responsibility

This component of WTC was absent in the students' L2 behavior, as they did not have feel the need or duty to provide any clarifications or deliver a message. The participants still did not feel confident enough to initiate a discussion of a topic of their choice with the teacher. Therefore, they still used English spontaneously very rarely – rather they still waited to be asked by the teacher, as it was their custom in the regular EFL class.

Summary

The amount of the participants' overall L2 output, although limited, had grown considerably as compared to the initial lessons. Also, the length of L2 utterances increased. Together with their growing feelings of *excitement and security* about speaking English in the classroom, it suggests that L2 WTC of the majority of the participants (Grisha, Dima, Kolya, Sasha) increased, as compared to the previous lessons. It should be noted that the students' growing interest in drawing coincided with and possibly supported their growing L2 WTC as the creative process made L2 speaking more personal and meaningful to them.

Lesson 9

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.5 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during Lesson 9 of the arts-based project. According to the Lesson Plans, the objectives of the lesson included: (1) drawing images of students' picturebooks and writing captions for them; (2) practicing describing picturebook images with the help of Present Progressive and the relevant L2 vocabulary. Even though only four students attended Lesson 9 due to an outbreak of a virus, they produced even more L2 utterances than a larger number of students during the previous sessions. Overall, the participants produced 65 L2 turns, 37 of which were single-word

utterances, 22 longer phrases, and 6 unsolicited turns, when the students addressed each other and the teacher on their own volition.

Participant	Single word utterances	Sentences and word combinations	Unsolicited turns
Grisha	See run scoring coaching at ten four score blue two heading goalkeeper hockey	I am fine Gorillas... look...on the boots...Willy Because of Willy's boots His boots are...magic! one-zero one-one Willy scores He see...his name...on the...paper He wake up at nine forty five Willy is dribbling The red win	I am sorry, teacher, I am late, may I come in? Draw book! I like speak English! This is Nikita, I, Dima
Dima	Hello good chimpanzee small yes dribbling boots magic dribble four three pass	Willy the Wizard blue team play football he wake up At quarter to ten one-zero one-one two-one My book is about...life...of Cristiano	
Kolya	Willy; football; no; look; wake; up; passing; old; heading; score; four; tomato	Willy the Wizard Willy run home	Hello! Don't speak Russian!
Leva	monkey	My book...Jurassic world	Hello!

Table 6.5. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 9.

Security and excitement

As it was established in Chapter 4, three of the four students (Grisha, Dima, and Kolya) were in flow during both the discussion and creative activities, whereas Leva, who preferred the

creative part of the project, did not express any willingness to participate in the discussion. As can be seen in the video-recordings, Grisha, Dima, and Kolya were eagerly raising their hands during the picturebook discussion. Their *excitement* about taking the opportunity to say something in L2 was demonstrated by the fact that they often raised hands even before the teacher finished asking a question.



Figure 6.6. Grisha engaged in mental search for an English word.

At the same time, they would often raise a hand, but when given the chance to speak, they would make a pause to run a mental search for the needed L2 words in order to form a sentence (see Figure 6.6). Such instances demonstrated their feeling of security as the students felt safe taking their time remembering necessary words and constructing a sentence.

The video-recording also show that Dima was listening to the teacher's descriptions of the picturebook images very attentively and trying to simultaneously mimic in a whisper the teacher's L2 utterances. He was so "absorbed" in this "inner speech" that it sounded as if he was continually humming something in English under his breath. That showed both his flow (as he expressed a complete *merging or action and awareness*) and his high L2 WTC (as he was willing to repeat after the teacher whatever L2 output the latter was producing).

Responsibility

The video-recordings show that participants were still often using their L1 for interpersonal interactions during creative sessions – but they also began to remind each other of the necessity to speak in English by pointing at the “Speak English!” sign (see Chapter 3). For example, Kolya addressed his peers in L2 with a loud and demanding “*Don’t speak Russian!*” reminder, to which Grisha added “*I like to speak English!*” Such instances show their growing feeling of responsibility to try and speak English and their increasing awareness of participating in a unique experience. However, the low number of their unsolicited utterances suggests that they still did not have enough L2 communicative confidence to start a conversation on their own.

Summary

The observational data discussed above suggest that the participants’ L2 WTC continued to grow. Lesson 9 became the second lesson in a row during which students produced unsolicited utterances in English - there was a growing tendency among the participants to use L2 of their own volition.

The participants’ growing L2 WTC can be explained by the fact that the creative process introduced the participants into the state of flow and flow produced a positive impact on a few factors conducive to L2 WTC: (1) flow by definition liberates individuals of self-consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007), and therefore lowers their *communication apprehension*, which is reversely proportional to L2 WTC (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996); and (2) flow produces the feelings of *security and excitement*, which SLA researchers (Kang, 2005) found to be strong predictors of high L2 WTC.

Lesson 10

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.6 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during Lesson 10 of the arts-based project. According to the Lesson Plans (see Appendix C), the main goals of the lesson included (1) drawing picturebook images, writing captions for them, and sharing the current creative achievements; and (2) describing images of the picturebook (*Willy the Dreamer*, by A. Browne) using compound nouns (e.g., “banana-fish”).

Participant	Single word utterances	Sentences and word combinations	Unsolicited utterances
Grisha	Banana stone picture head arms finger legs ship yes sofa octopus star castle eyes head ears nose teeth people	Willy the dreamer This chair Blue banana Red and green This is a banana Banana-boots Flying cow banana-castle I’m drawing his head I drawing his eyes I’m drawing his nose I’m drawing his ears Ten pages	Socks...red and green Willy sleeps and... Big banana! Big...biggest! Biggest banana Banana ring! Willy don’t...play Ship-banana The chair on the sheep-banana Flying bananas The people...see...on the TV Many bananas Calibri-banana Cheshire Cat! Sea-star! Flying Cupidon! (Cupid) I know how we can call our class! (in Russian) – English Art! (in English) Hobbit – yes, yes, yes!
Sasha	(he arrived late)	Five pages	
Dima	Bananas head hands police penguin eyes teeth yes sofa writer head nose	Willy the Dreamer His head His teeth I’m drawing his arm Six pages	Trees grow on... head flying cow
Alesha	Bananas Dracula	Red and green His head	Banana-pen Dog-fish

	Frankenstein microphone ship		
Leva	(remained silent)		

Table 6.6. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 10.

Even though the lesson was attended by only 5 students, one of whom remained silent (Leva) and the other one came at the very end of the lesson (Sasha), the students produced 78 L2 utterances, including 38 single-word utterances, 21 teacher-solicited multiple-word L2 utterances, and 20 unsolicited ones. The growing L2 output and the growing number of instances when students decided to use the L2 entirely on their own suggest that students' overall L2 WTC continued to grow (with the exception of one student).

Security and excitement

Willy the Dreamer by A. Browne is a picturebook that is full of “banana-pictures” – bananas are present on each page and they appear in different guises: banana-shoes, banana-ships, banana-cushions, banana-sofas. The students noticed that feature and, even without the teacher's prompt, began pointing at the unusual images and describing them: *plane-banana*, *chair-banana*, *monkey-banana*. After the teacher's correction, they began saying such word combinations correctly, according to the rules of English compound nouns: *banana-ship*, *banana-rocket*, *banana-king*. Every student, including the usually passive Alesha, was willing to form such two-word combinations. This kind of spontaneous L2 use by the study participants would have been impossible if they had not felt secure in my classroom (knowing that they would not be punished by a lower grade for a mistake) and excited about the class activities.

Kang (2005) established that the combination of the feelings of *security and excitement* causes L2 WTC and the data suggests that it was true in the context of the study presented here as well. Most of the participants can be concluded to have been experiencing flow by that point

of the project and the feelings of security and excitement that accompany flow transferred into their WTC in English.

Responsibility

The teacher journal points out that Lesson 10 became the turning point of Grisha's L2 WTC, as he began producing a large number of unsolicited utterances in L2. He would start describing a picture in English without waiting for the teacher's question, "*taking wild chances to say a sentence in the L2 and trying to recollect the necessary words*" (Teacher Journal). The other students still did not produce as many unsolicited utterances, which can be explained by Grisha's higher trait-like confidence and self-perceived L2 competence, which, according to SLA researchers (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987; Ortega, 2009) have a greater impact on a learner's L2 WTC than his actual L2 competence.



Figure 6.7. Dima, Grisha, Alesha, and Sasha, engaged in sentence construction.

In his interview, Grisha stated that he felt in the experimental classroom “as if we were in an American or English school”. And then he added – “because you spoke only English to us, I felt like an American boy in his American school, and I felt that I should speak English as much

as possible”. Grisha’s statements show that, thanks to the project, he perceived himself endowed with a new identity, that of a native speaker of English, and this phenomenon of “cultural drag” (Wooten, 2010) gave him the feeling of *responsibility* to engage in L2 production as much as he could. This feeling of responsibility became the reason why Grisha produced so many unsolicited L2 utterances.

Summary

Both the observational data and the number of L2 utterances produced by students at Lesson 10 show that the participants’ L2 WTC continued to grow with each lesson of the project. Feelings of *excitement and security*, characteristic to flow, influenced students’ WTC in a positive way. The feeling of *responsibility* (Kang, 2005) caused one of the students (Grisha) to initiate more unsolicited L2 utterances than usual, which showed that his L2 WTC was the highest in the group.

Lesson 15

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.7 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during Lesson 15 of the arts-based project. The main objectives of the lesson included (1) coloring the images of students’ picturebooks and sharing current achievements; and (2) describing images of the picturebook (*Willy the Wimp*, by A. Browne) using the Present Simple, relevant L2 vocabulary, and pronouns “this” and “that”. Table 6.7 demonstrates that the steady growth of the number of L2 utterances produced by students per lesson reached its culmination point at Lesson 15 – the overall number was 139, among which 35 utterances were unsolicited and 36 more utterances were longer than one word. This achievement was only surpassed at the final lesson of

the project, Lesson 20. As can be seen in the table above, all the participants contributed to the group's oral L2 production, even the usually more taciturn Leva and Nikita.

Participant	Single Word L2 Turns	Multiple-word teacher-solicited L2 turns	Unsolicited L2 Turns
Grisha	Teacher! Head Willy ear eye nose big face weak chimpanzee arm leg foot Friendly! Magazine!	He live in home One eye Big ear Big head Willy....small He goes... He is fifteen... fifteen friends Yes, many! Boys and girls Who are you? He say, I am sorry He wimp! No, he doesn't like it He is sitting sofa	Teacher, this super paper! Stop, people! Teacher, you play game Eyes? What is the...? Banana in the beach... picture New picture for Willy – Willy bandit! Teacher, teacher, teacher, new picture of Willy! I believe I can fly! Please, color Please red and blue Please yellow Sasha don't clear boy Go forest! Please please black pencil!
Sasha	No yes head chimpanzee selfie mouth mouse face hair body Buster Nose nice attack okay	I am cutting It's makaka (hahaha) Big head It's chimpanzee! Comic book! Oh, I am sorry He says, I am sorry He is sitting on the sofa	Willy the Wimp - Give me a picture! Please...Give me a picture! Thank you! Help me this book! "s-a-s-h-a" (he spelled his name to Dima while writing it in his book). You are a woman? (to Dima You are a woman? (to Nikita) Well, you are blue boy? Blue color I have one black Good bye, everybody!
Dima	Head; small; weak; chimpanzee; go; fly; okay; yellow; good	It's makaka, hahaha (codeswitching); No, no, no Okay, red and blue	
Kolya	Head; small; smallest; hair; everybody; feed; go; superman!	I am cutting Small.... Body Willy opened it... and a book Pistol gun	Oh, respect! I believe I can fly! (singing) Willy book?
Leva	Okay, okay	Face swap	Sasha, please..... give me

	food superman	Oh, I am sorry Gorilla gang Dead pull	Happy end! (speaking about his book)
Nikita	Ear; eye; face; body; foot; feet; nose; arm; hair; legs; good read! Gang; gangster!	Reading the book	Everybody dance now! Please, kill me! Kill me please!! Blue sucker What? Run, Forrest, run!

Table 6.7. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 15.

Security, excitement, and responsibility

The Teacher Journal describes Lesson 15 as “*a pivotal point of the entire project in terms of L2 WTC*” because four participants simultaneously engaged in a spontaneous, jocular conversation in the L2 while working on their picturebooks. Four of the students (Sasha, Dima, Grisha, and Nikita) were sitting close to each other, as they deliberately chose to sit as a close-knit group of collaborators. They were visibly in flow, as the video recordings show them concentrated on their work, eagerly coloring their picturebooks, and sharing the colored pencils. Their spontaneous, prolonged, multiple turn conversation in the L2 started with their negotiations for the exchange of colored pencils, as can be seen in Example 2a below.

Ex. 2a

Grisha: *Please, color – give me all!* (asking Dima for the whole box of pencils)

Dima: *No, no, no!* (refusing to lend the whole box)

Grisha: *Please, red color... and blue* (with a solicitous intonation)

Dima: *Okay, red, blue* (giving him the pencils)

Grisha: *Please, yellow and.. red* (asking for more pencils)

Dima: *Yellow* (giving him the pencil and then withdrawing it from Grisha's reach)

Grisha: *Give me this! and blue!* (with a demanding intonation)

As we can see in Ex. 2, the students used English as a language for play, negotiating for pencils in a playful manner - refusing, soliciting, and demanding – in other words, they were performing, trying on their new, “English”, identities. Throughout the conversation, Grisha and Dima kept

smiling, obviously enjoying their playful use of the FL as a mediating tool. Their smiles show how secure and comfortable they felt using English. Other students were listening to their dialogue with much interest and joined it.

Ex. 2b

Nikita: **Blue sucker!** (with a conspiratorial smile, after hearing the word “blue”)

Sasha: **What?** (turning around, smiling, and demanding an explanation)

Nikita: **Blue sucker...** (in a hushed voice, as if it was an inside joke)

Sasha: **You are a woman?** (turning to Dima and asking him)

Dima: **No, no, no, no!** (laughing and waiving his hand negatively)

Sasha: **You are a woman?** (turning to Nikita and asking him)

Nikita: **What??** (with a surprised intonation, which made the other students laugh)

Sasha: **Well, you are a blue boy?** (asking Nikita in the tone of a mock interrogation)

The students were apparently talking about one of their “inside jokes”, the context of which was unknown to the teacher/researcher. Their conversation sounded nonsensical for an outsider but it definitely was meaningful for the students and, again, they were using English for spontaneous, playful conversation. When the teacher asked for a clarification: “*What are you guys talking about?*” Grisha immediately tried to clarify the subject for the teacher, which shows his feeling of *responsibility* (Kang, 2005).

Ex. 2c

Grisha: **That Sasha... isn't clear... boy** (trying to provide a clarification)

Sasha: ??? (says something unintelligible under his breath)

Grisha: **What??** (asking Sasha for a clarification)

Sasha: **Blue color!** (explaining that he was talking about a colored pencil and laughing)

Grisha: **Go forest!** (exclaiming loudly in order to end the “weird” conversation)

Sasha: **Goodbye, everybody!** (aptly bringing the exchange to a closure)

Nikita: **Run, Forrest, run!** (expanding on Grisha's remark and using his knowledge of a classical American movie).

Grisha: *Sasha, give me... give me please red!* (changing the topic with a polite request)

Grisha: *Thank you!*

Grisha: *Sasha, give me black color, please, please!*

Sasha: *I have only one.*

The spontaneous group conversation described above consisted of 25 L2 utterances, produced by four study participants, who were taking turns at talk one after another. Not only was it indicative of their high L2 WTC in terms of the sheer number of consecutive L2 turns but also in terms of various pragmatic reasons for which the students were using their L2. Even though the conversation sounded nonsensical to the teacher/researcher, the students tried to joke and tease each other in L2 and the exchange was meaningful to them. They tried to ask for clarifications and provide clarifications to the teacher, which shows their feeling of *responsibility*. They were making polite requests and negotiating the exchange. If Grisha had often used the L2 for unsolicited conversations before, for Sasha and Nikita it was the first time that they tried to freely express themselves in the foreign language when they could have safely remained silent or used their L1. The fact that the students participated in a spontaneous conversation in the L2 points at the feeling of *security* they experienced in the creative afterschool classroom. Their use of English for language play, as well as their smiles and laughter throughout the conversation, show that they felt excitement about speaking in L2.

The expressions of excitement, eagerness, and interest can be seen on the students' faces and in their body language as represented in Figure 6.8 - Grisha is half-standing, Dima and Sasha have turned around to make an eye-contact with Nikita and Grisha, and Nikita is smiling, listening to Sasha with interest. The combination of *security, excitement, and responsibility* resulted in the students' high L2 WTC, just as it was previously described by Kang (2005). Also, their communication in English served all the major communicative functions, as described by

Savignon (2005) – ideational (exchange of information), textual (using English for humor and language play, correcting each other), and interpersonal (asking for and providing clarifications, expressing politeness and gratitude).



Figure 6.8. Dima, Sasha, Grisha, and Nikita, engaged in a humorous conversation in English, while coloring the images of their picturebooks.

The described exchange in L2 was not the only instance when students used the L2 for spontaneous interpersonal interaction, caused by both their *excitement* about the project, *security* of the learning environment, *responsibility* to try and speak in the L2. Dima and Nikita, for example, showed their picturebooks to each other and exchanged a few comments in English: “*Good book*” (Dima) - “*Please, kill me!*” (Nikita). Even though Nikita pretended to act as if he was ashamed of the poor quality of his creation, it was obvious that he was still excited about the creative process and the opportunity to practice speaking English.

Kolya also demonstrated his feeling of responsibility asking for a clarification – when the teacher asked him to bring the picturebook to his desk, he asked in the L2 “*Willy book?*” Even Leva, who was mostly silent that day, used his chance to speak in L2 in the midst of the creative

process. When he needed an eraser, he addressed Sasha in the L2 – “*Sasha, please give me...*” The fact that he did not know the word “eraser” and couldn’t finish his sentence did not prevent him from attempting to form his request in the L2, which demonstrated his growing L2 WTC. At the end of the lesson he happily announced the completion of his picturebook - “*Happy end!*” The fact that he wanted to share this moment with the others by making this announcement in English proves that he felt excited and this led to his higher than usual L2 WTC.

The video-recordings showed that students were using the L2 even when the teacher was not near them and could not even follow their conversations. For instance, Sasha approached Kolya and said: “*Give me a picture! Please...Give me a picture! Thank you!*” Sasha used English to demand for his picturebook to be returned to him, even though the teacher could not hear him and did not praise him for that. It simply became “natural” for him to speak in the L2 in the experimental class. In comparison, when the researcher interviewed the participants, they stated that they “never spoke in English” to each other in their regular EFL class, if they were not mandated to do so by an assignment.

In another example of students’ unsolicited use of English, Nikita and Grisha were looking at Alesha’s book and Sasha turned to them and said: “*I help him this book!*” Even though Sasha’s phrase was not grammatically correct, it shows that he felt confident in using English and responsible for providing a clarification for his classmates.

Security

Students’ feeling of security was best manifested when they began to sing parts of popular songs in English, while working on their picturebooks. Such instances showed that they felt comfortable and secure during creative activities and willing to use English for various purposes, even for spontaneous singing. For example, Nikita heard the word “body” and

immediately reacted by singing “*Everybody dance now!*” which he repeated a few minutes later. Sometime later, when Kolya heard the familiar word “fly”, he could not help singing “*I believe I can fly*”, which was repeated by Grisha a few times, when he was busy coloring his picturebook.

Summary

All of the described examples of the students’ use of English for a variety of reasons (asking for clarification, providing clarification, humor, entertainment, polite request) showed that their overall L2 WTC reached the highest point at this stage of the project. This claim is supported by the large number of both solicited and unsolicited utterances produced by students in the lesson. They were almost never silent and, by this point of the project, had mostly stopped using Russian in the classroom. All the immediate antecedents of WTC - security, excitement, and responsibility (Kang, 2005) – were exhibited by students, which also suggests their high WTC.

Lesson 18

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.8 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during Lesson 18 of the arts-based project. The main goals of the lesson included (1) learning how to bind picturebooks using the paper trimmer; (2) making covers for students’ picturebooks, drawing front cover pictures, and entitling the books; (3) describing images of the picturebook (*Willy’s Pictures*) using the relevant vocabulary; (4) practicing using polite requests in L2.

Parti- cipants	Single Word L2 Turns	Multiple Word L2 Turns	Unsolicited L2 Turns
Grisha	small mysterious net pencil painter slippers	Brick wall Mona Lisa She have...has... mysterious smile... because...she lost...her teeth	Smile-tear No, no, no, pig in the bananas Brush your hair Teacher, give me please color pencils! Don’t say – this is a bad word!

	TV Football! Guys!	Willy up....in a...boat! In the sea! In the window very favorite stars This is his girlfriend	Don't speak Russian! I..me father Sasha, thank you very much! Sasha, please give me red pencil! Sasha, thank you very much!
Sasha	Toy boat net! Smiling painter Mine! Super-Tomato Ronaldo	Mona Lisa She have... mystery... smile... a mysterious smile! She has a toy They swim on a boat He is drawing a picture It's Willy Buster Nose wearing hat	Hello, how are you? Willy sadder... another Please, my brown pencil! (to Grisha, who took a pencil from him) – please my brown pencil! Yellow pencil...
Dima	dress smile fishermen! Chimpanzee tear! Hat! My!	Mona Lisa mysterious smile Fisher-chimpanzee Angry potato Sasha's book is about angry potato Kolya's about Spiderman And the first book about Super-Tomato Grisha's book about Tractor – Admiral Dead Pull	
Kolya	Fisherman painter boat scream	Mona Lisa She is Mona Lisa- Chimpanzee Brush-oar pig-banana There swim a pig Willy scream Willy tears This is mine! This is...Grisha's This is... hockey Leon's book is about Dead Pull and Dinosaurs This is a zombie!	Do you speak English? (to Nikita, when he was talking too much in Russian)
Leva	Whale; teeth; trumpet; whale; girlfriend	False teeth Dead Pull and Jurassic Park!	Speak English!
Nikita	Tail; scream; toy; scream!! Trumpet; Lost; no	Fisher-chimpanzee mysterious smile	Why not? Use the force, Luke!!!

Alesha	Hat; bananas; chimpanzee		
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Table 6.8. Students' L2 utterances produced at Lesson 18.

The overall number of L2 utterances produced by the students during the lesson was one of the highest in the project – 114, which included 54 single-word turns; 41 multiple-word turns, and 19 unsolicited turns. The transcripts of the video recordings document many sentences consisting of six and more words:

Ex. 3a. Grisha: *“Teacher, give me please color pencils!”*

Ex. 3b. Grisha: *“Don’t say – this is a bad word!”*

Ex. 3c. Grisha: *“She have...has...mysterious smile...because...she lost...her teeth”*

According to Ely (1986), students' readiness to try out a difficult sentence in class or make requests in the L2 without concern for grammatical mistakes is a sign of high WTC. The growing complexity of my study participants' L2 utterances, many of which were spontaneous requests produced by students without any concern for grammar mistakes, suggests their high L2 WTC.

Excitement

The teacher journal states that, while describing the images of the picturebook, the participants *“were blurting out the L2 words and sentences so fast and everyone at once”* that the teacher had to stop them and ask them to raise their hands first. The situation when the students are *“blurting out”* L2 sentences presents a striking contrast to the situation in the beginning of the project, when students *“seemed either too shy or unwilling to volunteer a response in L2”* (Lesson 2). After the teacher's request to raise hands, most of the students (with the exception of Nikita and Alesha) kept raising their hands immediately upon hearing the teacher's questions, which suggests that students were highly excited about the opportunity to produce an utterance in

English (see Figure 6.9). MacIntyre (2007) points out that hand-raising, just like actual L2 production, is a manifestation of L2 WTC.



Figure 6.9. Study participants' hand-raising during a picturebook discussion session.

Some of the participants, as can be seen in video-recording of the lesson, never even lowered their hands in between the questions. In their interviews, many students confessed that they had often raised their hands even before they could hear the question - so excited were they about using the opportunity to speak the L2.

Security

The transcripts of the video-recordings demonstrate that many students of the class, especially Grisha, Sasha, and Dima, were actively trying to construct longer and more complex sentences by adding more details to their oral descriptions of pictures (as in Example 3c, p. 215). The pauses in Grisha's L2 utterance indicate that he was looking for the necessary L2 words during the process of constructing the sentence and was not afraid to start a sentence without

knowing exactly how he would finish it. While the students were thus constructing the sentences, they also made self-corrections, as in the following example:

Ex. 4. Sasha: “*Mona Lisa is ... chimpanzee...she have...mystery...smile...has...a mysterious smile!*”

Such instances of self-correction show that the students were becoming not only more willing to communicate in the L2 but also more aware of the grammatical correctness of their L2 output. Both the creation of longer and more sophisticated sentences on the part of students and their self-corrections suggest the presence of *security* – they had no fears of making mistakes and “losing face” (Kang, 2005), and *responsibility* – they tried to convey more information and in a grammatically acceptable way.

The absence of L2 anxiety, or fear of making mistakes, can also be seen in how swiftly and confidently students pronounced shorter and less complex sentences. For example, the students would say simple L2 sentences immediately upon seeing a new image of the picturebook: “*She has a toy*”, “*They swim on a boat*”, “*He is drawing a picture*”, “*Buster Nose is wearing hat*”, “*She is Mona Lisa!*” “*There swims a pig!*”, “*Willy screams!*”

The video-recordings also show that Sasha and Grisha exchanged a few English phrases when the teacher was not even listening to them during their work on their picturebooks. Example 5 demonstrates that the students were making both polite and (playfully) demanding requests and giving thanks in English:

Ex. 5

Grisha: *Sasha, please give me brown pencil!* (Sasha gives him a pencil)

Grisha: *Thank you very much, Sasha!* (expressing gratitude)

Sasha: *Please, my brown pencil!* (asking Grisha to return his pencil after a while)

Sasha: *PLEASE MY BROWN PENCIL!* (in a demanding tone)

It was obvious that they used the L2 not in order to “show off” or be praised by the teacher but *because they had become accustomed to speaking in the L2 during creative activities*. This episode is illustrated in Figure 6.10. The fact that the students were using the L2 as a meaningful communicative tool, the way they would use their L1 - making polite requests and persistent demands - was indicative of their high L2 WTC.



Figure 6.10. Grisha and Sasha are negotiating the exchange of colored pencils, while the teacher and two other students are busy working on picturebooks.

Responsibility

By this time in the project, students themselves felt the *responsibility* to speak only in English in class and reminded each other about that during the creative activities (in the beginning of the project it was done by the teacher). For example, Kolya reminded Nikita to stop speaking in L1 and switch to L2 by asking him a question: “*Do you speak English?*” Grisha also used the L2 while trying to uphold the proper discipline in class. First, he said to Nikita “*Don’t say – this is a bad word!*” and later he demanded that his classmates should speak English only – “*Don’t speak Russian!*”

Powerful examples of students' willingness to speak in L2 during the creative activities include instances when they were busy coloring their picturebooks, while the teacher was using this time to asking them questions about their picturebooks. The video-recordings of the lesson show how comfortable and confident the students were during that activity. Their *excitement* about their creations transferred into their willingness to talk about them in L2, as can be seen in their readiness to respond presented in Table 6.9.

Teacher's question	Student's response	Student
<i>Whose book is about Angry Potato?</i>	<i>Mine!</i>	Sasha
<i>Whose book is about Cristiano Ronaldo?</i>	<i>It's my!</i>	Dima
<i>Whose book is about Spiderman?</i>	<i>This is mine!</i>	Kolya
<i>Whose book is about Zombies?</i>	<i>My zombies... (after a pause)</i>	Alesha
<i>What s Sasha's book about?</i>	<i>Angry Potato!</i>	Dima
<i>What is Dima's book about?</i>	<i>Football!</i> <i>No, about Ronaldo!</i>	Grisha Sasha
<i>What is Kolya's book about?</i>	<i>Kolya's about Spiderman!</i>	Dima
<i>And his first book?</i>	<i>The first book about Super-Tomato</i>	Dima
<i>What is Grisha's book about?</i>	<i>This is...Grisha's... this is hockey</i> <i>Grisha's book about Tractor-Admiral</i>	Kolya Dima

Table 6.9. Students' responses concerning picturebook topics.

According to Table 6.9, all students eagerly participated in that speaking activity but Dima and Kolya were the most active speakers. During the previous weeks, they seemed to be willing to talk in the L2 but often chose to remain silent. However, when asked questions about their classmates' picturebooks they produced a high number of L2 utterances and spoke the L2 very confidently and fast. This suggests that the students were excited not only about their own creations but also about those of their peers and the project in general. This feeling of

excitement, born from the flow they experienced in the project, led them to high L2 WTC, especially during the second half of the project.

Summary

These observational data, along with the calculated number of L2 utterances produced by students, suggest that the participants' L2 WTC (excepting Nikita and Alesha) was high at Lesson 18. Nikita's and Alesha's lower L2 WTC can be explained by the fact that they were not so much in flow during the project as compared to the other participants, as was shown in the previous chapter. This indicates that higher flow in an L2 classroom is conducive to higher WTC, and vice versa.

Lesson 20

Number, length, and quality of L2 turns produced by the participants

Table 6.10 documents all of the English utterances produced by study participants during Lesson 20 of the arts-based project. The main objectives of the lesson included (1) completing working on picturebooks and presenting them before the class; (2) describing images of a new picturebook (*Tunnel*, by A. Browne) using relevant L2 vocabulary; and (3) describing the plots of students' picturebooks.

Parti- cipants	Single Word L2 Turns	Multiple Word L2 Turns	Unsolicited L2 Turns
Grisha	Different argue girl skirt Jacket brown football skirt tail Axe Fire bird	A new book...Tunnel! Boots and socks Willy scared of tunnel Girl and boy - sister and brother Yes, yes, they very different! They are long and short Long hair – small hair She like read books His hair...light Kicking ball She very afraid! She scared boot	In Russian it is “tunnel” Willy is afraid of tunnel! What is it? She live in a beautiful house and he don't in a beautiful house! Her...her brother say...go inside...no - go outside! Mother say: “go outside”! Look! Girl sometimes ... scary... see boots...and face and face!

	Basket wolf RIP dark!	Very scared scary killer She is very scared that he come and kill you...her! Her! He very argue This is boy They play in.... they play in not clean place He goes in tunnel! She is very scarred He go in a very magic...forest Her brother My book from Hockey... match Tractor Admiral... and meteorite and... from meteorite came a bear...	No, no, no, they happy and they friendly! New...America...English girl Teacher, I can do from...My craft? You can write "My craft"? Boys, who give me "lineika"? (codeswitching, as "lineika" means "ruler" in Russian).
Sasha	scared oh! Dress tunnel brown wolf Fire trees Wolf No! Yes!	Angry potato They are different Short hair his hair... He like... play football She read She crawl Funny face It's my hero...he became lonely potato He lonely...because...he is angry potato. I: he is bad to his friends Sasha: and his grandmother, and strawberry...and apple...	American boy American stars – American boy! And rabbit kill you... Turn into... No, he turned into... Made in China! (He made a joke, alluding to the poor quality of the ruler that broke).
Dima	Scary; girl; different; dress; brown; head; yes! Skirt; no, no! trees; boar; bear; leopard; angry; My craft!	Short hair Play football Of her brother They argue Play football In tunnel She go Her brother This book about sister and brother! My book is about Cristiano Ronaldo...history He was a boy and became football player	Turn into stone! Turned into girl! (joke) He...you...help...me... draw...Captain America? (he wanted me to help him but he did not know how to ask correctly – and still he began constructing this request).
Kolya	Argue; different;	Tunnel... Willy the tunnel	Sister and brother he like to

	brown; rabbit; finger; axe; owl; bear; scarred; scared	She... read book In tunnel My book is about tomato... he...(became) super-hero	play football! (Russian) May I say? (English) Sister...hug a brother! Kolya volunteered to write “mine craft” on the board
Nikita	No, no, no argue crawl! bear The forest! Dark! My craft!	Her hair brown brown and blond He have...ball He crawl She walking No, she run! He turned into stone! My book about.... Sonic.	Turned into boy Very scared (corrected Grisha, who said “very scarred”) Run, girl, run! (previously, he had said “Run, Forrest, run!”) Anthony Browne

Table 6.10. Students’ L2 utterances at Lesson 20.

The final lesson of the project was remarkable in many ways. First, as the transcripts illustrate, all the five participants present at that lesson used English for making unsolicited L2 remarks. This showed that their communicative confidence had reached such level at which they all felt confident enough to initiate spontaneous communication in L2 with their peers and teacher.

Second, the total number of L2 turns per lesson was the highest in the project – 154. The number of multiple-word L2 turns was even higher than the number of single word turns (64 versus 62, respectively), which means that participants were willing to attempt producing more complex L2 utterances, whereas in the beginning of the project, they almost exclusively used single-word L2 phrases. Even in the middle of the project, when most students were already in flow, their single-word turns outnumbered longer phrases (e.g., 37 to 22, respectively, at Lesson 9). The growing number and complexity of L2 phrases the students produced show how excited they were about using their new language and how secure they felt in their attempts to use it.

Excitement and security

It must be noted that, besides improvements in their L2 WTC, the students also evinced improvements in their overall L2 competence. Even though the new picturebook under discussion (*The Tunnel* by A. Browne) was more difficult for understanding than most of the picturebooks used at previous lessons, the students discussed it with much interest and enthusiasm. The questions the teacher was asking the participants were also more complex than before: e.g., *How are they different? What do they prefer to do? What is she afraid of? What can be scary in the room? Do they like to play with each other? What animals can you see in the forest?* In the beginning of the project, the participants had problems understanding much simpler questions, let alone answering them in L2. However, at Lesson 20, they understood the questions immediately and eagerly volunteered to answer them.



Figure 6.11. Students engaged in collaborative discussion of a picturebook.

The students were so excited about the discussion of the new picturebook that they reminded me that they wanted to be seated together, all five of them, at the same desk. This shows how excited and secure they felt during their collaborative, meaning-making discussions

of picturebooks in English. Their excitement and engagement can be seen in their eager, interested gazes as represented in Figure 6.11.

The video-recordings show that sometimes the students often spoke at the same time, giving different answers to the same question, adding comments to the previous responses, and eagerly using the L2 words prompted by the teacher:

Ex. 6

T: Who are these? – S1: A boy and a girl! – S2: A brother and sister! T: Are they different? – S2: Yes, she has long hair and he has – T: Short? - S3: Yes, short hair! - S4: He has a jacket and she has.... T: a dress? – S4: Yes, a dress! T: What is the color of her hair? – S1: Her hair is brown and his hair is...light – T: Blond? – S1: Yes, blond! T: Do they like each other? – S3: No! They don't. – S2: No! She likes to read books and he likes to play football.

Responsibility

Not only were the participants highly willing to speak in the L2, but their responses were also more grammatically accurate than before. The recordings also contain instances of self and peer correction. For example, when Sasha said “*He like play football*”, Dima corrected him “*to play football*”, and Sasha immediately self-corrected his phrase. Such episodes show, on the one hand, an improvements in their grasp of the English grammar, and on the other hand, their growing feeling of responsibility to speak English correctly and help each other to do so. The improvements in grammar were also visible in how well the students were using Present Continuous – the verb tense that we had been using the most while describing various picturebook images:

Ex. 7

T: What is she doing? – S1: She is reading.[...] T: What is it? – S2: It is a tunnel! I: What is he doing in the tunnel? – S1: He is crawling in the tunnel. [...] T: Is she still crawling? – S3: No, she is walking!

The book discussion provided a lot of opportunities for mini-dialogues about the pictures and the characters depicted therein. Also, it provided a space for the students to practice L2 vocabulary, including such words as *scary*, *scared*, *axe*, *owl*, *crawl*, *hug*, *magic*, etc. (The words were written on the board and it took only three minutes at the beginning of the lesson for the teacher to introduce them: the students and teacher read the words and translated them into L1).

The video-recordings show that the collaboration among the participants had become a pattern, as they felt it their duty to add more information to their peers' responses.

Ex. 8

T: Is she scared? – S1: Yes, she is very scared! T: Why is she scared? What is scary? S1: This is scary – S2: the wolf is scary – S3: he is scary, this is her brother...- S1: this is scary (pointing at the red sleeping gown hanging on the door) – like a killer. T: Guys, look at him! What happened? – S2: He turned into stone! S1: She hug him! S2: Yes, she hugs him!

Kolya noticed that even the background in the picture gets brighter as the boy turns into his normal human self after being hugged by his sister and he immediately drew everybody's attention to it – *Look, it's dark here, but it's light here!* The student noticed something interesting in the image and felt the responsibility to share it with the others.

The final lesson really became the high point of the project, as every participant obviously experienced flow while talking in English about the picturebook – as they all contributed to the discussion with a lot of interest and delight:

Ex. 9

T: So, what happens to him? – Sasha: He... turns...into a real boy.

T: Do they like each other now? – Kolya: Yes, they like each other!

T: Is she scared now? – Dima: No, she is not scared!

T: Are they friends now? – Nikita: Yes, they are friends!

As can be seen in the previous examples, the grammatical correctness of students' L2 output had improved as compared to the beginning of the project, even though grammar was not the focus of the project. Apparently, the students' grammar improved thanks to the instruction they were receiving in their regular EFL class and the occasional corrective feedback the teacher-researcher provided throughout the project.

Particularly indicative of the students' growing L2 WTC were the students' spontaneous micro-dialogues in L2, in which they were collaboratively making meaning of the picturebook images:

Ex.10

Grisha: *She live in a beautiful house and he don't in a beautiful house!*

Nikita: *Yes, yes, – his window is brick wall.*

Sasha: *No, no, no – they live in one house.*

The psychological condition of *responsibility* can be manifested in the language learners' desire to make a clarification or help the interlocutor. The participants of the study were collaboratively co-constructing sentences, trying to help each other and convey the meaning of the pictures:

Ex.11. Grisha: *She is scared... boot...* + Dima: *of her brother...* + Grisha: *in the...fairy tale...wolf and the red...hat.*

Responsibility can also be seen in how the participants noticed each other's mistakes and made corrections:

Ex.12. T: *Is she happy?* Grisha: *No, she is very... scarred!* Nikita: *very SCARED!*

The students also helped each other by suggesting necessary words to complete a sentence:

Ex.13. Grisha: *He go in a very magic...* Nikita: *forest! Magic forest!*

The psychological condition of *excitement* about speaking in the L2 manifested itself in how they used the modal verb "may" requesting the teacher's permission to speak –

Ex.14. Kolya: *May I? May I? Please? Sister hugs her brother!*

The condition of *security* was manifested in their attempts to say a joke in L2, as in the following example:

Ex.15. *T: Yes, she is hugging her brother and her brother... Dima: **turned into stone!***

*Sasha: **No, he turned into...** Nikita: **he turned into a boy!** Dima: **he turned into a girl!***

This extended dialogue in Example 15 was remarkable in that it started with one student's comment, was followed by other students' clarifications, and ended with an attempt to joke in the L2. Dima's use of L2 for making a verbal joke (the first time during the project and, most probably, in his life) demonstrated his growing L2 WTC. The fact that he felt confident enough to try telling a joke in the L2 and believed that his classmates would understand it, is indicative of his feeling of *security*.



Figure 6.12. Sasha, Grisha, and Dima presenting their completed picturebooks.

The students' final presentations of their picturebooks showed more grammar mistakes as the assignment was novel to them. The novelty of the task did not deter the students, who did not hesitate describing their creations, and did not seem concerned about their grammar mistakes:

Teacher's questions	Students' remarks	Student
	<i>My picturebook about potato, lonely potato</i>	Sasha
<i>Why is he lonely?</i>	<i>Ahhh... because he is bad</i>	Sasha
<i>Is he bad to his friends?</i>	<i>Yes, he is bad to Apple, and Strawberry, and his grandmother</i>	Sasha
<i>What does he say in the end?</i>	<i>Excuse me, I am sorry!</i>	Sasha
<i>Grisha, tell us about your picturebook, please!</i>	<i>My book is about hockey... Tractor versus Admiral... and meteorite, and bear – bear come from the meteorite and go to Tractor stadium... Tractor wins.</i>	Grisha
<i>Dima, what is your picturebook about?</i>	<i>My book is about Cristiano Ronaldo...history... He was a boy and... he now football player.</i>	Dima

Table 6.11. Students' mini-presentations of picturebooks.

These “mini-presentations” of students’ picturebooks show that they could still occasionally miss the 3rd person singular endings in Present Simple, as well as copula “is” but one of the goals of the project was achieved – to make students willing to speak in L2 with the help of creative activities. According to Ely (1986), trying out a difficult L2 sentence or communicative task in class without concern for grammar mistakes is characteristic to L2 learners with high WTC. Sasha, Grisha, and Dima used the L2 to present their books in a few quite coherent and meaningful sentences, albeit with grammar mistakes, while standing in front of their classmates and presenting their picturebooks.

In summary, students’ mini-presentations of their completed picturebooks, as well as the other examples of student L2 production at the final lesson, showed that the project had helped the participants to acquire a notably higher L2 communicative confidence than what was observed in the beginning of the project, which is one of the most important components of L2 WTC (MacIntyre, 2007; Dörnyei, 2005).

Summary of findings

The L2 production of the study participants grew throughout the project, which suggests the growth of their L2 WTC. The following table represents the overall number of L2 utterances produced by study participants per lesson. As can be seen in the table, the turning point in the project occurred around Lessons 8 and 9, when students began producing a large number of L2 turns per lesson, and then students' L2 oral output continued to increase, reaching its peak at Lesson 20. The number of multiple-word L2 turns also continued to increase, indicating that students were becoming increasingly more confident in constructing longer and more sophisticated L2 utterances, which also suggests the growth of their L2 WTC.

Lesson	Total number of L2 turns	Single word L2 turns	Multiple-word L2 turns (teacher-solicited)	Unsolicited L2 turns
1	22	22	0	0
2	25	25	0	0
3	21	19	2	0
4	26	23	3	0
5	24	20	4	0
6	28	25	3	0
7	32	24	8	0
8	49	19	22	8
9	65	37	22	6
10	79	38	21	20
11	52	22	15	15
12	59	26	16	17
13	89	38	28	23
14	85	31	25	29
15	139	68	36	35
16	59	30	22	7
17	99	55	18	26
18	114	54	41	19
19	94	58	24	12
20	154	62	64	28

Table 6.12. Number of students' L2 utterances produced at each project lesson.

The following diagram (Figure 6.13) shows the steady growth of the participant group’s L2 WTC over the course of the semester as it was manifested in the students’ oral L2 production.

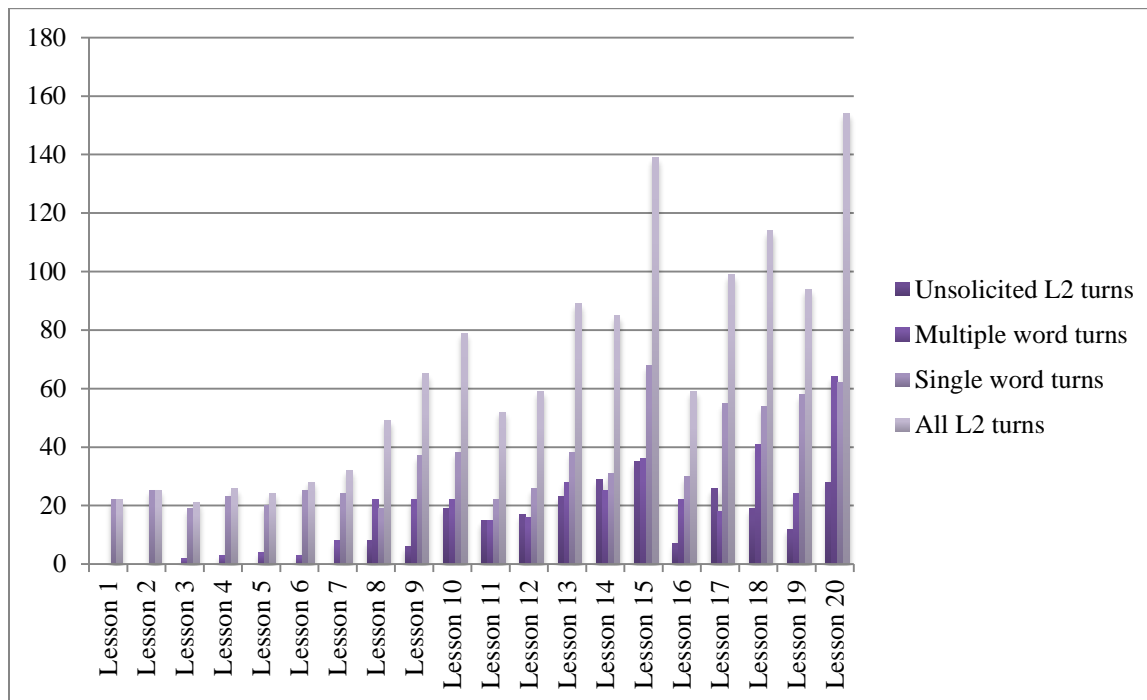


Figure 6.13. Diagram showing participants’ growing L2 output in the project.

The qualitative analysis of the participants’ L2 WTC, based on the psychological conditions of *excitement, security, and responsibility* (Kang, 2005), showed that the study participants had low L2 WTC in the beginning of the project (Lessons 1 – 6). The conditions of excitement and security began to emerge around Lesson 7, along with the students’ flow (see Chapter 4). From then on, excitement and security, caused by students’ flow, were invariably present in the students’ behavior and caused the growth of their L2 WTC. The psychological condition of responsibility came into play at around Lesson 10, when the students began to feel their *agency* (synonymous to “control”, see Chapter 4), which further heightened their WTC.

The psychological conditions of excitement, security, and responsibility also vividly manifested themselves in the students’ unsolicited L2 utterances. As can be seen in Table 6.12

and Figure 6.1, during the first 7 lessons the participants only spoke in the L2 when directly “called on” by the teacher-researcher. The situation began to change around Lessons 8, when some students (Grisha, Sasha, Dima) began to spontaneously address the teacher in English (greeting him, asking simple questions, and saying good bye). After a few more lessons, other students began using L2 spontaneously (Kolya and Nikita). The observations showed that during the second half of the project, Grisha and Sasha regularly tried to use English for spontaneous communication with their teacher and classmates, whereas Kolya, Nikita, Dima, and Leva would also do so occasionally.

Students’ spontaneous conversations in English (see Examples 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 5) show that communication among the participants in the experimental classroom served all the major functions of communication as defined by Savignon (2005) – ideational, textual, and interpersonal. This suggests that creative activities of the project were conducive to genuine communication in L2 among the study participants.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data pertaining to the research question “**What are the dynamics of L2 WTC changes in an L2 classroom where L2 learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation?**” reveals a steady overall growth of L2 WTC among the study participants with the participants starting at near zero WTC, their proficiency steadily growing throughout the project as their flow increased and crowned at the conclusion of the project when the learners’ excitement about the project, sense of security in using L2, and their responsibility for using English for meaningful communication also reached the maximum points.

However, not all the participants benefited from the project in terms of their L2 WTC in equal measure. The data analysis suggests that some of the participants (Sasha, Grisha) made

more obvious gains in L2 WTC than others (Dima, Kolya, Nikita), while some students (Leva, Alesha) demonstrated rather limited gains in their L2 WTC. It seemed plausible that the students' individual psychological traits and/or artistic skills were affecting their susceptibility to the proposed arts-based approach to L2 teaching, and consequently their L2 WTC. The final objective of this study was to identify the major reasons behind such differentiation in students' susceptibility to the proposed approach and their gains in L2 WTC. For this purpose, I analyzed the study data at the individual level of four selected study participants in order to answer the final research question – namely, **“How can we explain the dynamics of change in L2 WTC for individual students in such a context?”** This part of data analysis is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

L2 WTC ANALYSIS – INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The data analysis presented in the previous chapters confirmed that students experienced flow in an afterschool L2 class centered around picturebook creation and also revealed that their L2 WTC increased over the course of the study. It also became apparent that not all the students benefited from such creative L2 instruction equally, with some students' L2 WTC increasing more than that of others. In order to answer RQ2b, **How can we explain the dynamics of change in L2 WTC for individual students in such a context?**, I analyze the L2 WTC of four selected students with the help of categories representing both trait-like and situational WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Kang, 2005; Cao, 2009).

As discussed in Chapter 2, actual performance of L2 learners in any given situation is triggered by their situational L2 WTC. However, the differences in their performance can be caused by both their trait-like WTC, which depends of their personality, self-confidence, and motivation to study the L2 (MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre, 2007), and situational L2 WTC factors, including attitude to the learning situation, L2 anxiety, and situational L2 confidence. The latter factors can also be affected by the flow the students experienced in the classroom.

Case studies of focal students' L2 WTC

The analysis presented in the previous chapter showed that the study participants benefited from the project in terms of their L2 WTC in varying degrees. The following table demonstrates the total number of L2 utterances produced by all individual participants in the experimental classroom during the project and the number of their unsolicited utterances.

	Total number of L2 utterances	Number of unsolicited L2 utterances
All students	1169	208
Grisha	442	136
Sasha	215	34
Dima	192	5
Kolya	131	12
Nikita	70	11
Leva	66	9
Alesha	53	1

Table 7.1. Total number of L2 utterances produced by study participants.

The table shows that Grisha was the most “prolific” speaker in the group, whereas Leva and Alesha showed the lowest L2 WTC. The difference in the students’ L2 WTC becomes even more evident if a diagram is applied (Figure 7.1).

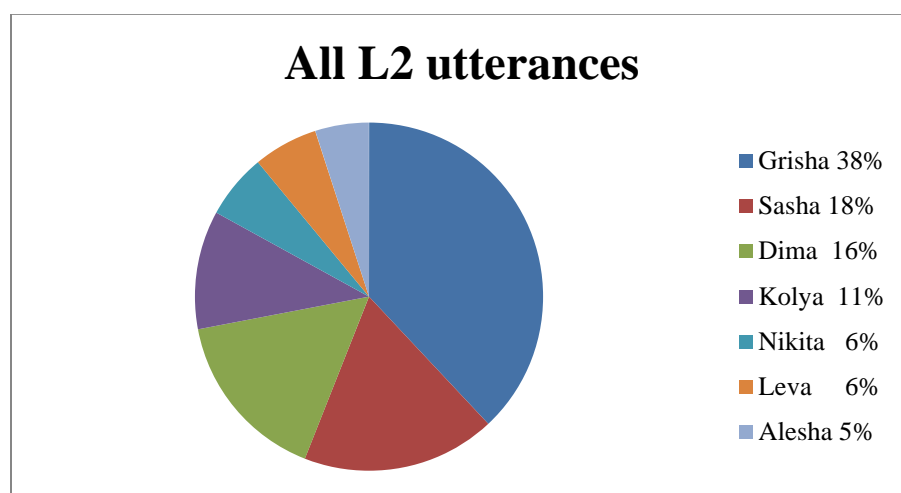


Figure 7.1. Varying contributions of study participants in the group’s L2 output.

The diagram shows that Grisha’s overall L2 production was the highest (38%), and he is followed by Sasha and Dima, who produced 18% and 16% of the group’s L2 output respectively. If we look specifically at the number of unsolicited L2 utterances taken by students (Figure 7.2), Grisha’s leading position becomes even more prevalent – 65%, thus confirming the fact that Grisha displayed the highest level of L2 WTC in the group. Sasha’s second position remains the same – with 16%, he showed a relatively high level of L2 WTC in terms of speaking the L2

spontaneously. Dima, however, only produced 3% of the unsolicited utterances in the group, which suggests that some factors prohibited him from reaching the same level of L2 WTC as Grisha and Sasha. Dima's results suggest that he felt more willing to speak in English when specifically called on by the teacher and was reticent in terms of initiating L2 conversations with his peers and teacher of his own volition.

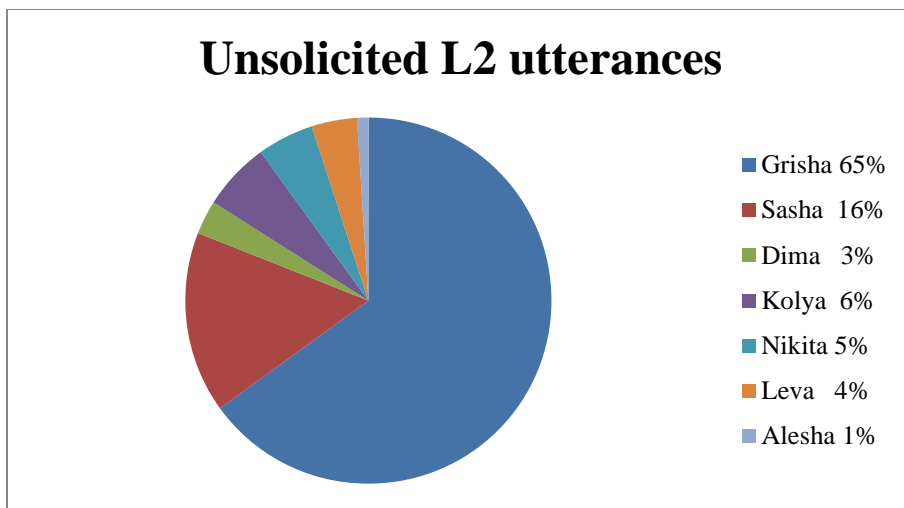


Figure 7.2. Varying numbers of unsolicited L2 utterances produced by participants.

The numbers representing the L2 output produced by Kolya reveal a medium level of L2 WTC, which is slightly lower than that of Dima. Both the overall number of L2 utterances produced by Nikita, Leva, and Alesha and the number of their unsolicited utterances suggest their relatively low level of L2 WTC.

After reviewing this data, I selected the cases of Grisha and Sasha as the cases of the most "willing" L2 speakers in the group; Dima's case because this student showed a certain ambiguity in his L2 WTC (willingness to speak when asked by the teacher and reticence in initiating L2 conversations on his own); and Alesha's case as that of the least successful participant in terms of his flow and L2 WTC. In the following sections, I analyze study data

pertaining to these four study participants' L2 WTC through the lens of both trait-like and situational variables.

GRISHA

L2 performance in the project

I begin the analysis of Grisha's WTC and the factors contributing to it by looking at his L2 performance in the creative project in terms of the number and quality of his L2 utterances. I do this in order to show how his L2 WTC grew over the semester of the study.

In the beginning of the project (first 5 lessons), Grisha was showing low L2 WTC, which was reflected in the low number of L2 utterances volunteered by him, most of which were single-word responses to the teacher's questions. In contrast, at the end of the project (six months later), Grisha spoke in English in the classroom almost non-stop, trying longer, more sophisticated utterances and often starting conversations with the teacher and his fellow students in English of his own volition (unsolicited utterances). Table 7.1 shows his progress in L2 production over the semester.

	All L2 utterances	Single word utterances	Multiple word utterances (solicited)	Unsolicited L2 utterances
Lesson 1	5	5	0	0
Lesson 2	7	7	0	0
Lesson 4	9	7	2	0
Lesson 5	8	6	2	0
Lesson 6	9	7	2	0
Lesson 8	15	5	6	4
Lesson 9	27	12	11	4
Lesson 10	50	19	14	17
Lesson 11	16	3	3	10
Lesson 12	32	9	10	13
Lesson 13	38	12	12	14
Lesson 14	39	5	16	18
Lesson 15	43	17	12	14
Lesson 17	44	20	11	13
Lesson 18	25	9	7	9
Lesson 19	32	17	10	5

Lesson 20	51	16	23	12
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Table 7.2. Grisha’s L2 WTC progress reflected in his growing L2 output.

As can be seen in Table 7.2 and the diagram below (Figure 7.3), Grisha made an outstanding progress in terms of his L2 WTC in the course of the project. He started with mostly single-word L2 utterances but, by Lesson 9, he began producing many multiple word utterances at every lesson. Lesson 10 marks the turning point of Grisha’s L2 WTC development, when he began regularly producing a large quantity of unsolicited turns in L2 – ranging from 10 to 18 per lesson, with the only exception of Lesson 19, which was only due to the fact that half of the lesson was dedicated to student interviews.

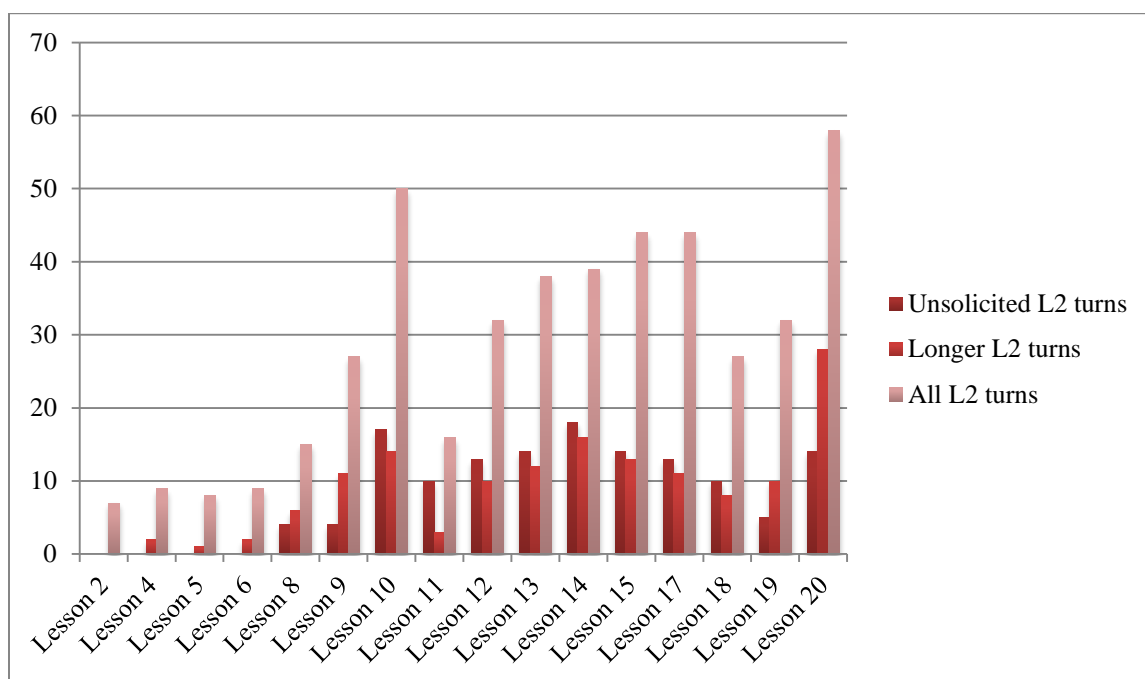


Figure 7.3. Grisha’s growing L2 production.

The progress in Grisha’s overall L2 proficiency throughout the semester is also seen in his growing MLU (Table 7.2). Like all the other participants, he started with MLU index of 1 and progressed to 2.67 at Lesson 15, and 4 at the final lesson of the project, thus showing the highest MLU values in the group. The growth in Grisha’s MLU parallels the increase of the

number of his L2 utterances (see Figure 7.1 and Table 7.2). The fact that his English utterances included increasingly more words also suggests the growth of his WTC.

Lesson	2	8	15	18	20
# of words	7	34	115	91	204
# of utterances	7	15	43	25	51
MLU	1	2.27	2.67	3.64	4

Table 7.3. Progress in Grisha’s MLU throughout the semester.

The growing sophistication of Grisha’s L2 utterances can be seen in the following examples. Around the middle of the project (Lesson 8), he was able to produce short sentences, such as “Willy jump in bed”, “His boots are magic”, “Willy runs home”. At this point, all his utterances mainly serve the ideational function. Later on, starting from Lesson 11, he began producing longer sentences and the range of pragmatic functions of his utterances also increased: e.g. “Don’t play on my pencil case!” (an imperative request – ideational and interpersonal functions). By Lesson 12, Grisha was often addressing spontaneous questions to the teacher: e.g., “Teacher, you play game ‘Eyes’?” (ideational and interpersonal functions). He was often using the L2 in order to get other people’s attention: e.g., “Teacher, teacher, new picture of Willy!” At Lesson 15, he used the L2 to provide clarifications as he tried to explain to the teacher the meaning of Sasha’s cryptic L2 remark: “Sasha is not clear boy”. In Lesson 17, he spontaneously asked a question “Teacher, teacher, close the door?” referring to the noise in the recreation and meaning to ask me if I wanted him to close the door. In the same lesson he provided an unsolicited comment on the gun I was drawing for Alesha’s picturebook: “This is a Russian machine gun!”

These examples show that not only did the number of his unsolicited L2 utterances increase towards the end of the project but they also became more diverse in terms of pragmatic functions – Grisha was asking questions, offering comments and explanations in L2, making

polite requests, reminding others to speak only English, and initiating conversations in the L2. In accordance with Savignon's (2005) view of L2 communication as serving ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions, Grisha demonstrated all these functions in his use of English. Overall, at any given point in the project, Grisha showed the highest L2 WTC in the participant group. In the following sections, I analyze the factors that contributed to his high L2 WTC.

Personality vignette

A young and promising athlete, Grisha attended ice-hockey practice sessions on a regular basis and participated in weekly matches. The “manly” character of the sport made Grisha very self-confident and highly respected by his classmates. The teachers stated in their interviews that Grisha, along with Dima, was one of the “born leaders”. Besides his swaggering confidence, Grisha was also a “paragon” of extroversion – the EFL teacher even called him a “super-extravert”. Not only was Grisha the “star” of the class and a bit of a “show-off”, he was also a good-natured, imaginative, and honest boy.

The Math teacher said that Grisha was a “very capable student” and the EFL teacher called him a “natural polyglot”, referring to his outstanding L2 learning ability. All of the teachers agreed that Grisha enjoyed being in the limelight and was a very bright student. He was curious and inquisitive, but not very hard-working. He could get easily bored and distracted in the classroom. If he enjoyed a class, he did not hesitate to show his appreciation to the teacher – for instance, he once sent an appreciation letter to the Math teacher with an inscription “to a great teacher from a secret admirer”.

It was established, with the help of teacher interviews, that Grisha possessed a *highly extroverted*, outgoing personality and was *extremely talkative*. Since extroversion and

talkativeness are important antecedents of WTC (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987), Grisha's high extroversion and talkativeness contributed to his high L2 WTC.

Self-confidence

According to the teachers, Grisha was very self-confident – the most confident student in his class. His self-confidence was probably best described by the math teacher in the following phrase – “Grisha would always volunteer to do any task, even before he knew what exactly the task was about”. These observations allowed me to rate his self-confidence as *Very High*.

L2 self-confidence

L2 self-confidence is one of the major antecedents of L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998), which may or may not be a derivative of personal self-confidence. In Grisha's case, his extraordinary self-confidence contributed to his L2 self-confidence. For example, his self-confidence allowed him to address a Canadian ice hockey player, who played for a local team. As Grisha retold the episode in his interview, many children were waiting for the famous players inside the hockey arena to ask them for an autograph or a souvenir and Grisha began shouting to the Canadian player in English: “Brent, please stick, please stick!” – asking him for his hockey stick as a souvenir.

Grisha's L2 confidence was also influenced by his relatively high (for his age and grade) L2 competence. Besides referring to Grisha as a “natural polyglot” and emphasizing his brilliant L2 potential, the EFL teacher noted that he had good English pronunciation and knew “more English words than his classmates”. She did not give him the highest grade at the end of the semester because he “still made many mistakes and could forget to do a homework”, but she evaluated his progress in English over the semester as “impressive”. Grisha's *high L2 self-confidence* contributed to his high L2 WTC.

Motivation to study L2

The Math teacher saw the roots of Grisha's interest to study in his desire "to be the star". He always had his hand up because he wanted to "shine". The history teacher emphasized Grisha's craving for knowledge – Grisha, according to him, always wanted "to dig deeper and understand the topic on a deeper level".

Grisha's high motivation to study in general was especially pronounced in his English learning. The possibility of playing in the North-American Hockey League (NHL) in the future is a common dream of all young hockey players in Russia. Grisha was no exception and he did express his integrative motivation (Gardner, 2001) for studying English. In one interview he said: "I always prepare myself. I imagine a situation – if we fly to some place, how I will speak English there". For Grisha, a conversation with a native speaker of English did not seem a remote possibility – he even wanted to discuss a specific historical topic with English speakers, including the American president: "So, I want to ask him this question: who won WWII? My father says that Americans think they won the war". This example shows that Grisha wanted to use English as an instrument to learn more about Americans and their opinions on certain issues, and he also wanted to share his own opinion with them. Such instrumental motivation for language learning (Gardner, 2001) is one of the most important incentives of L2 learning.

However, Grisha admitted that his attitude towards studying English before the start of the project had not been very positive. He shared that, when he was studying at a different school the year before, he "did not want to go to English lessons at all because I had bad grades there". He also confessed that he was often bored in his regular EFL class at his current school – "it's boring 99% of the time". The regular EFL teacher in her interview stated that Grisha's motivation "changed dramatically" over the semester of the study and she credited this change to

the influence of the afterschool project. These considerations allow me to conclude that Grisha's motivation to study English increased as a result of the project and rate it as "*High*".

Fear of making a mistake (L2 anxiety)

The EFL teacher said that Grisha was so confident that he was "never afraid of making a mistake". However, Grisha himself claimed that he spoke "very rarely" in the regular EFL class and when he was asked about the reason for being so quiet there, he said "FEAR!" Fear of making a mistake was mentioned by all study participants as the most prominent factor precluding them from speaking in L2 in their regular EFL class. In his interview, Grisha stated that fear was absent in the afterschool class: "We are not afraid of making mistakes in your class – because it is so interesting and we feel as if we are in a real American school, and English is our language". This statement shows that Grisha stopped feeling L2 anxiety due to his flow ("it is so interesting") and to "cultural drag" (Wooten, 2010). He imagined being an American schoolboy in his Arts class (thanks to the creative activities of the project) and his imaginary identity of an American student liberated him from L2 anxiety (since English was no longer a foreign language but a "mother tongue" for his imaginary self). The dissertation study confirmed that L2 anxiety is a situational variable (Baker & ManIntyre, 2003, MacIntyre et al., 1998), which can be changed rather quickly with the help of a creative approach to L2 teaching. Based on these observational data, I can state that the level of Grisha's L2 anxiety changed from "medium" to "very low".

Feelings about the learning environment

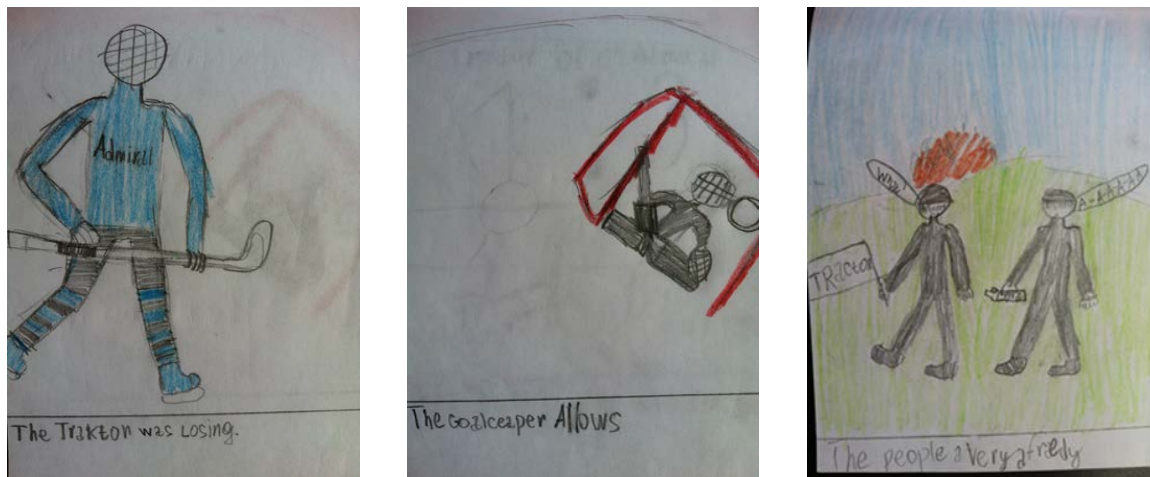
L2 learners' WTC can be greatly affected by their evaluation of and attitude towards their language teacher, course, and curriculum (Dörnyei, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002). According to the interview data, in the beginning of the project Grisha thought that "it would be as boring as our

English class”. However, soon his evaluation of and attitude towards the afterschool class changed completely. His excitement about his participation in the afterschool class can best be exemplified by the following interview statement: “I felt as if I was in an Arts class of an American school”. The facts that he invariably greeted me with a cheerful “Hello Teacher!” (starting from Lesson 6) and often brought me cookies from the school cafeteria suggest that he highly valued me as a teacher. Grisha highly appreciated the opportunity to speak in English freely (as opposed to speaking “on demand” in the regular EFL class) during the process of picturebook creation and constantly reminded his classmates to stick to English (“Don’t speak Russian!”). These data suggest that his attitude towards the learning environment of the experimental class changed from mostly neutral to very positive.

Artistic ability and imagination

In this section I briefly describe Grisha’s creative output and his work on his picturebook, as it helps to evaluate his artistic ability and his excitement about the creative process. There were definite parallels between the participants’ work on their picturebooks and their L2 WTC. For example, Grisha showed the highest WTC in the group and he was very excited about creating his picturebook. Grisha was the “most prolific” artist in the class, as his picturebook contained the largest number of pages (20), and also the “fastest artist”, completing his picturebook faster than his classmates. At the same time, the quality of Grisha’s drawings was not very high but rather average for his age and grade, which can be seen in the following images from his picturebook. The lines of his drawings are rather crude, his images are often located on the side of a page and not in its middle, and his drawings lack sophistication – for example, Grisha avoids drawing his characters’ faces. The Art teacher’s evaluation of Grisha’s artistic

ability echoed my evaluation – “average”, but she stressed that Grisha had “excellent imagination”.



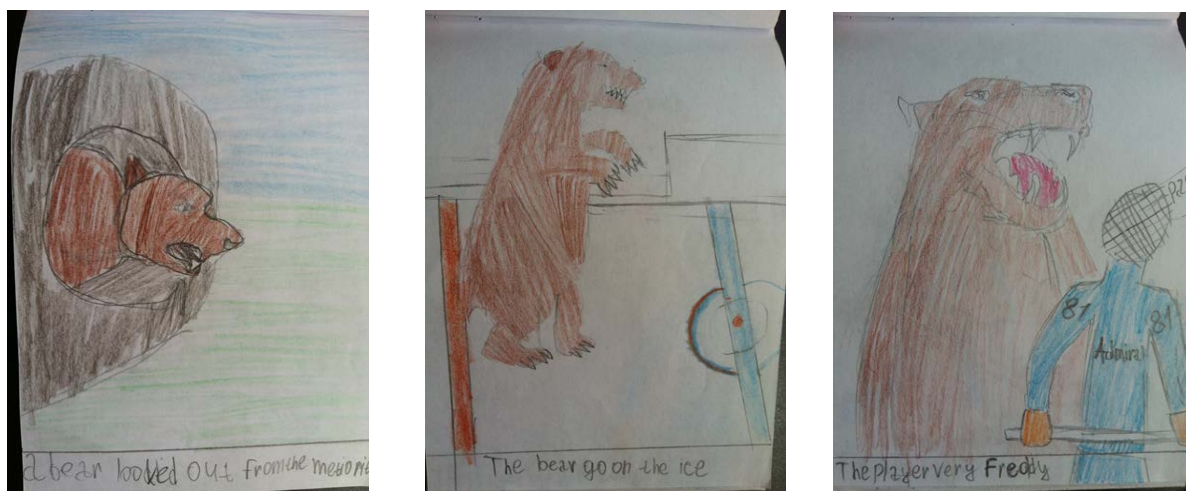
Figures 7.4 – 7.6. The first pages of Grisha’s picturebook⁶.

Grisha drew his visuals very quickly and immediately wrote captions for them, which showed his excitement about the creative process. In the beginning of the project he said that he “hated using color pencils”. Nevertheless, as soon as he had drawn his black and white images, he immersed himself in the process of coloring them. It was obvious that, thanks to his flow (as discussed in Chapter 4), Grisha began to appreciate every aspect of picturebook creation, including coloring the images.

Grisha’s mediocre drawing abilities also made him ask the teacher for assistance, for example, to draw the bear. The teacher supplied him with slightly visible outlines of a bear’s head and body, which Grisha elaborated on and colored (see Figures 7.7 – 7.9). Grisha’s artistic skills actually grew over the semester, quite in accordance with Vygotsky’s concept of ZPD, thanks to his collaboration with the teacher. The improvements can be seen in Figures 7.10 – 7.12, as Grisha became more confident in his drawings. In the last pages of his picturebook he tries to draw a player’s face and fingers, and his images are now located in the middle of the

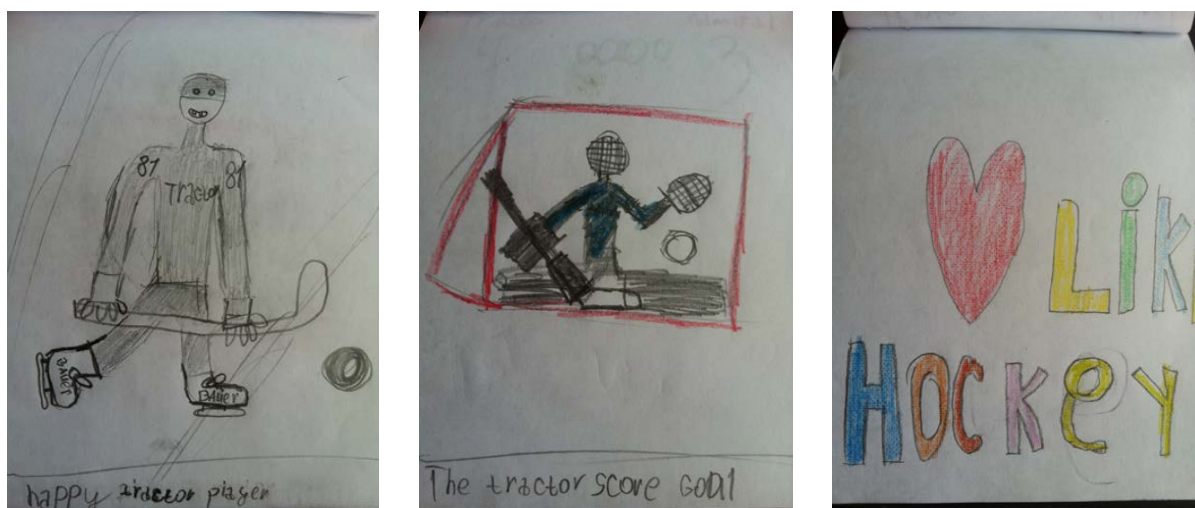
⁶ Students’ picturebooks can be seen in their entirety in Appendix E.

page. His “hatred” towards coloring is replaced with excitement about colors as he uses multiple colored pencils to finish the last page of his picturebook.



Figures 7.7 – 7.9. Grisha’s drawings, in which he was assisted by the teacher.

Grisha’s example shows that it is not just children with outstanding artistic potential who can benefit from such an arts-based approach to L2 instruction, but virtually all children with good imagination, high self-confidence, and at least some interest in drawing.



Figures 7.10 – 7.12. Grisha’s growing artistic skills (final pages).

Summary

Personality-level variables – permanent features	
<i>Personality</i>	Extroverted
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	Very high
<i>Motivation to L2 learning</i>	High
<i>Artistic ability</i>	Medium
Situational-level variables – these being transient factors, I am providing here the estimated values for the beginning and the end of the project.	
<i>L2 self-confidence</i>	From Medium to Very High
<i>L2 anxiety</i>	From Medium to Very Low
<i>Feelings towards L2 learning environment</i>	From Neutral to Very Positive
Flow	95-100% Very High
L2 WTC	Progressed from Medium to Very High

Table 7.4. Summary of Grisha’s L2 WTC factors.

The state of flow experienced by Grisha in the creative L2 classroom (as discussed in Chapter 4) allowed Grisha to make a leap in his spontaneous L2 production, which was mostly suppressed in his regular EFL classroom by the fear of making a mistake (L2 anxiety). Personality-level factors, such as extraversion, self-confidence, and motivation to study the L2, contributed to Grisha’s L2 WTC. His excitement about the picturebook creation project and the opportunity to speak English for interpersonal communication (as opposed to doing it for an assignment) completely liberated him from L2 anxiety, which created a fruitful ground for the growth of his L2 WTC.

Even though Grisha’s artistic skills were of the average level for his age and grade, he benefited from the participation in creative activities in terms of his WTC. The combination of Grisha’s outgoing and self-confident personality, the liberating influence of flow, and his positive attitude towards the learning environment (creative activities of the project, teacher, and classmates) brought about a considerable increase in his L2 WTC. Due to his extroversion, cheerful disposition, self-confidence and good imagination, Grisha was an ideal student for this kind of creative L2 instruction.

SASHA

L2 performance in the project

According to the EFL teacher, Sasha and Grisha were the two students of the class who had made the most significant progress in their English during the semester of the experiment. She added that Sasha was reticent because of his fear of making a mistake and preferred written English exercises to oral ones – “probably, due to his speech impediment”. His L2 anxiety and speech impediment notwithstanding, Sasha’s L2 WTC had considerably increased by the end of the experiment, as demonstrated by his oral L2 production in the experimental classroom (Table 7.5).

	All L2 Utterances	Single Word L2 Utterances	Multiple Word L2 Utterances (solicited)	Unsolicited L2 Utterances
Lesson 2	3	3	0	0
Lesson 3	2	2	0	0
Lesson 4	3	3	0	0
Lesson 5	4	3	1	0
Lesson 6	4	4	0	0
Lesson 7	13	12	1	0
Lesson 8	10	5	5	0
Lesson 11	10	6	4	0
Lesson 12	14	9	4	1
Lesson 13	14	6	6	2
Lesson 14	15	8	4	3
Lesson 15	30	15	7	8
Lesson 16	16	6	7	3
Lesson 17	16	8	3	5
Lesson 18	20	8	8	4
Lesson 19	18	11	4	3
Lesson 20	28	11	12	5

Table 7.5. Sasha’s L2 WTC progress reflected in his growing L2 output.

In the initial stage of the experiment (Lessons 1 through 6), Sasha only volunteered single-word responses in L2 (Teacher: What sport is it? – Sasha: Football!). He did try to say a longer sentence in English but he would only repeat it after the teacher’s model (Teacher: He

doesn't have boots. – Sasha and Kolya: He doesn't have boots). At Lesson 7, he still volunteered mostly single-word answers but he also tried to say a longer sentence in order to suggest another way of saying a sentence (Grisha: He don't have boots – Sasha: *or he hasn't boots*). However, if we look now at his L2 production at Lesson 20, we can see longer, complete sentences, such as “*He likes kicking ball*”.

If we look at the L2 utterances produced by Sasha from a quantitative angle, we can see that their number was consistently increasing throughout the course of the project (Figure 7.13).

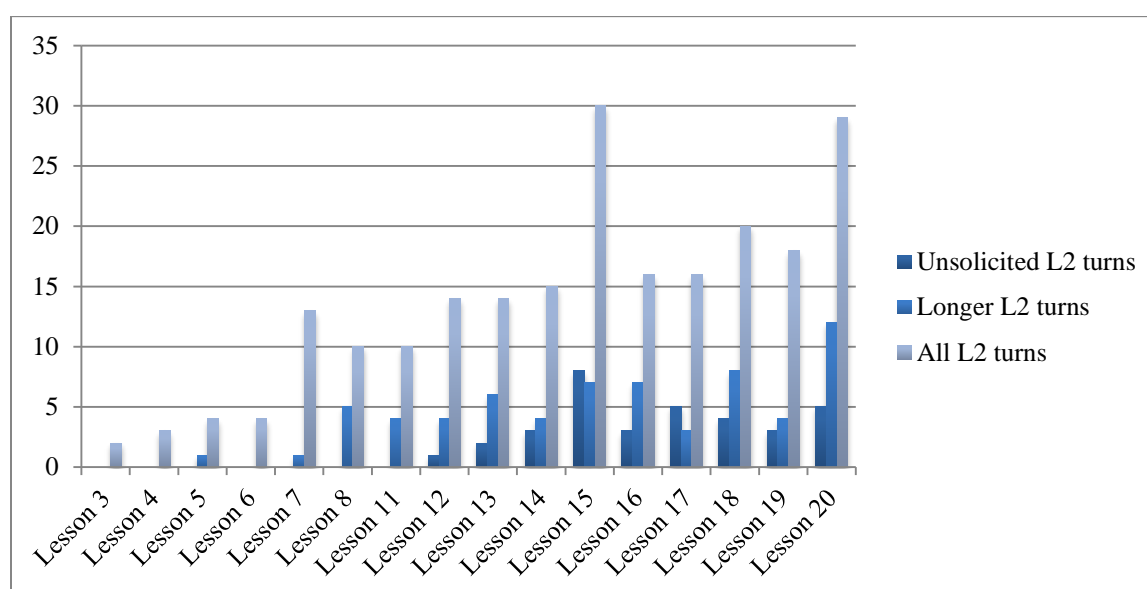


Figure 7.13. Sasha's growing L2 production.

The diagram shows the dynamics of Sasha's L2 WTC, which is similar to Grisha's: for the first six lessons both students were reticent. During Lessons 7 – 14, their L2 confidence grew. Lessons 15 – 20 demonstrate the peak of their L2 WTC. As we can see in the diagram, around Lesson 15 a “break-through” occurred in Sasha's performance as he started to initiate and participate in spontaneous conversations in L2 with his classmates. For example, at Lesson 15 he started a humorous conversation in L2 with Dima, Nikita, and Grisha (see Chapter 6, p. 207), in

which he produced five remarks, three of which were questions. From that point on, Sasha produced unsolicited L2 utterances at each lesson.

Lesson	2	8	15	18	20
# of words	5	23	83	57	71
# of utterances	5	10	33	20	28
MLU	1	2.3	2.52	2.85	2.54

Table 7.6. Progress in Sasha’s MLU throughout the semester.

Sasha’s MLU also increased considerably (though slightly less so than Grisha’s) over the length of the project – from 1 at the initial lessons, to 2.3 at Lesson 8, to 2.85 at Lesson 18. This suggests that his length of utterance increased as his overall WTC progressed, as a result of his participation in the project’s activities.

His readiness to speak in English at the end of the project was manifested in his interview - when Sasha was asked a question (“Do you like to draw?”) in Russian, he chose to respond in English (“I very love to draw”), even though it had been explained to him that he could respond in Russian. That, along with his quite numerous unsolicited L2 utterances, showed Sasha’s high L2 WTC at the end of the project. It is noteworthy that, during the second part of the project, Sasha was also at the peak of his Flow (see Chapter 4). Such parallels between students’ flow and their L2 production demonstrate that flow influenced students’ L2 WTC.

The EFL teacher stated in an interview that Sasha had made the most considerable progress in English among his classmates over the semester. According to her, his grade in the previous semester was 4 (Russian equivalent of B) but that he had so much improved his English over the semester that she had awarded him with a final 5 (equivalent of A) and it was the only highest grade in the class. However, the EFL teacher observed that she “did not notice in Sasha a particular talent to learning foreign languages, as opposed to Grisha”. In her opinion, Sasha was successful in L2 learning because he was “simply good at everything”.

Personality vignette

Sasha was one of the most active participants of the project, along with Grisha and Dima. A very kind and intelligent boy, Sasha was always ready to help his classmates and, since he was the best artist in his class, he helped his friends with their picturebooks. Sasha and Dima seemed to be inseparable friends and they both seemed very comfortable in the class.

All the interviewed school teachers agreed that Sasha was an “outstanding student” and “definitely an introvert”. They stated that he was the most intelligent student in the class and also a very reliable friend. The Math teacher called Sasha a “real star” of the class, who often asked for more difficult assignments and “who could work independently, without even looking at what his classmates were doing”. The history teacher even expressed his certainty that Sasha could become a prominent scholar in the future – “not only does he know a lot but he also does research on his own”. Sasha, according to the history teacher, did additional independent research for nearly all the school subjects. For example, Sasha created the “Illustrated Dictionary of Ancient Mythology” - a project he made for the history class, inspired by his creative work in my classroom (Figures 7.14 – 7.15).



Figures 7.14 – 7.15. Sasha’s project for his History class

The Math teacher shared her fascination with Sasha's artistic talent and said that Sasha was "gifted in so many ways". At the same time, the same teacher noted that Sasha would only raise his hand in class when no one else knew the answer. He himself confirmed in his interview that he never raised his hand if he "was not certain that his answer was correct". These observations confirm Sasha's *introversion* and *fear of making a mistake* – the two traits negatively affecting a person's WTC.

Self-confidence

Sasha's avoidance to volunteer a response to teachers' questions when he was not completely sure of the correctness of his answer suggests his lack of self-confidence. The EFL teacher also underlined that he was often "full of doubts". At the same time, he acted quite confidently in the experimental classroom and did not hesitate to share his opinion. For example, he once shared his shrewd observation that the English word "nobody" was "about the body", whereas its Russian equivalent "ni dushi" meant literally "no soul" and was "about the soul". Sasha seemed a shy and quiet child but he was well respected by both his classmates and teachers. These considerations allowed me to rate Sasha's self-confidence of the personality level as *medium*.

L2 confidence

The EFL teacher noted that Sasha had a speech impediment, which was often a challenge for him, especially when he tried to speak in L2. I noticed this impediment during the second part of the project, when Sasha began to regularly speak in the L2 in class. It manifested itself when Sasha was eager to say something. It was not a stutter; rather, he seemed to be out of breath at the onset of his utterance and would make a pause. However, once he would start

speaking, he could continue without pauses. That speech impediment probably contributed to Sasha's reticence in the first half of the project and his overall quietness.

The EFL teacher commented that Sasha lacked confidence in speaking in L2 and often seemed "to have doubts about saying something in English". I also noticed Sasha's tendency to make long pauses before starting an utterance, as if he was in doubt, but these pauses could be the result of his speech impediment.

However, Sasha gained L2 confidence in the second part of the semester, which was manifested by his growing L2 output (see Table 7.5) and his tendency to construct longer and more sophisticated L2 sentences. It was clear that the flow he experienced in the creative classroom raised Sasha's L2 confidence and his speech impediment ceased to stop him from oral L2 production.

Sasha also showed a considerable progress in the development of his L2 pragmatic skills as he began using English to ask for something ("Please, my brown pencil", Lesson 18); ask questions ("You are a blue boy?" Lesson 15); and argue with an interlocutor ("Don't speak English!").

These observations allowed me to conclude that *Sasha's L2 confidence was low at the beginning of the project and grew to a high level by the end of the study.*

Motivation to study L2

All the interviewed teachers agreed that Sasha was highly motivated to learn in general and he did not do it for the sake of good grades but for the sake of learning itself. "He just enjoys learning, he has a natural urge for it", said the Math teacher about Sasha. The EFL teacher agreed that Sasha obviously enjoyed learning English. Sasha himself shared that he had not liked

English lessons in the previous grade, as he “could not understand anything” and had bad grades then. His attitude to L2 studies had very much improved by the end of the project.

As opposed to Grisha, who had a high instrumental motivation to learning English in anticipation of speaking to English native speakers, Sasha repeated on a few occasions in class that, being Russian people, “we should speak in Russian”. He even had an argument with Grisha about that matter, when Grisha wrote “Don’t speak Russian!” on the board and Sasha immediately wrote in response – “Don’t speak English!” All in all, initially, Sasha was not highly motivated to study English. However, over the course of the semester, his motivation had grown – he even shared in his interview that he wanted to write more picturebooks in English. These observational data allowed me to rate Sasha’s motivation to learn English as *medium*.

Fear of making a mistake (L2 anxiety)

As mentioned above, Sasha rarely volunteered an answer in his regular classes, preferring to raise his hand only when he was sure that his answer was correct. “Fear” was the first word he used when asked to describe his regular EFL class. “I am afraid that I will make a mistake and the teacher will give me a lower grade or that somebody will laugh”, he commented on his fear to speak in the regular class.

Sasha began showing a high L2 WTC around Lesson 15, including several instances when he would initiate and maintain spontaneous conversations in L2 with his classmates (see Chapter 6, Lesson 15). Such unexpected improvement in Sasha’s L2 WTC can be attributed to the cathartic impact of the creative flow, which helped Sasha to gain *L2 confidence* and become oblivious to his previous *L2 anxiety*.

As Sasha’s L2 confidence grew, he became more aware of his L2 mistakes and began to correct them: “We hit... oh, they hit Willy”; “He run... he is running” (Lesson 16); “She

has...mystery smile...a mysterious smile” (Lesson 18). The fact that Sasha corrected his own mistakes shows that he had come to terms with the occurrence of mistakes in L2 learning and was no longer avoiding speaking in English for fear of making mistakes.

According to the observational data, Sasha’s *L2 anxiety was high at the beginning and low at the end of the project.*

Feelings about the learning environment

Student attitudes to the language teacher and the course greatly affect their motivation and L2 WTC (Dörnyei, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002). Sasha’s attitude towards the learning environment changed over the project. In the beginning of the project, he thought “it would be another boring class and we would not even really draw there”. However, by the end of the project his feelings towards the project completely changed. Sasha described his perception of the project in the following way: “I felt as if we were working in a creative office of some magazine, as if we were making books for real, as professionals do”. Answering the question “What did you like about the project?” he immediately replied “you”, meaning that the teacher-researcher became a role-model for him both as an artist and as an L2 speaker.

The feelings of *security and excitement* (Kang, 2005) that Sasha experienced in my classroom due to the picturebook creation process became one of the major factors positively influencing his L2 WTC. Sasha’s feeling of security can be seen in the following fragment of his interview: “We are never afraid to speak in your class because we know that, if we make a mistake, you’ll just correct us and that will be fine”. Sasha’s excitement about the creative project was shown by the fact that he began working on a new picturebook at home and regularly shared his artistic achievements with me.

These observations suggest that Sasha's *feelings toward the learning environment evolved from neutral to very positive* over the course of the project.

Artistic ability and imagination

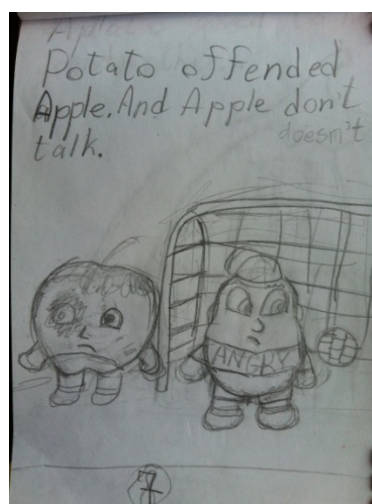
Sasha was the most able and avid artist in the class and he was constantly in the state of flow during the creative activities. He eventually created not just one but three picturebooks – the one he was drawing in class; another one which he made at home in just two days; and the third one - a beautiful, colorful dictionary of mythological characters he created for his history class. Sasha's excellent drawing skills (for his age) can be seen in the picturebook he created during my project entitled LONELY (Figures 7.16 – 7.21). The coherent and logically complete story of an obnoxious Potato-Boy, who treated his friends inconsiderately and rudely and was eventually abandoned by everyone, shows Sasha's excellent imagination and a natural gift for story-telling. His book became a source of inspiration for other students in the class – for example, Kolya borrowed Sasha's idea and wrote his book about a Super Tomato.





Figures 7.16 – 7.21. Sasha's picturebook "Lonely", first part.

Sasha was working on this picturebook in class with perfect abandon, which thoroughly reflected Csikszentmihalyi's definition of Flow (see Chapter 2). Sasha's creative process was exemplary because he did everything in the right order – first, he came up with a story plot and his main character; then, he drew all his visual images in pencil; after that, he wrote the captions, which explained and complemented the images; and finally, he colored the pages to make them more aesthetically appealing. Even though he did not color all the pages, Sasha's picturebook produces an impression of a completed work of art (Figures 7.22 – 7.27).





Figures 7.22 – 7.27. Sasha’s picturebook “Lonely” – second part.

Even though Sasha made a few grammar mistakes in the captions for his first picturebook, the making of captions was a good writing practice for him, which provided him with an opportunity to practice L2 writing in a context that was meaningful and important to him. By comparing the captions of his first picturebook to those of his second one, we can see how his grammar improved. For example, he wrote an incorrect Past Simple form “goed” in the first book (see Figure 7.24) and the correct form “went” in the second. In the second book, Sasha uses a wider variety of verb tenses, including the Future Simple, and makes fewer mistakes, even though he worked on the second book independently, at home.



Figures 7.28 – 7.29. Sasha’s second picturebook.

Sasha's outstanding creative output and his growing L2 WTC show how beneficial such creative after-school L2 projects can be for children with good imagination and love of drawing.

Summary

Personality-level variables – permanent features	
<i>Personality</i>	Introvert
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	Medium
<i>Motivation to L2 learning</i>	Medium
<i>Artistic ability</i>	Very high
Situational-level variables – these being transient factors, I am providing here the estimated values for the beginning and the end of the project.	
<i>L2 self-confidence</i>	Low to High
<i>L2 anxiety</i>	High to Low
<i>Feelings towards L2 learning environment</i>	Neutral to Very Positive
<i>Flow</i>	95-100% High
<i>L2 WTC</i>	Progressed from Low to Very High

Table 7.7. Summary of Sasha's L2 WTC factors.

The analysis showed that Sasha's personality level factors did not predict a high L2 WTC. His introversion, lack of self-confidence, and medium level of motivation towards L2 learning were the reasons for his low L2 WTC in the beginning of the project. However, his growing excitement about the project, his interest towards drawing, and the flow he experienced during the creative process resulted in the improvement of his L2 WTC. A shy and reticent student in the beginning of the project, Sasha became quite a confident L2 speaker by the end of the semester.

In Grisha's case, both Personality-level and Situational variables caused his high WTC. Sasha's case demonstrated how an L2 learner with unfavorable personality-level WTC antecedents (introversion, low self-confidence, and insufficient motivation) can develop his L2 WTC thanks to the situational factors (positive feelings towards the learning environment of the

project, growing L2 confidence, reduced L2 anxiety). The growth of Sasha's situational L2 WTC was the result of his flow, caused by creative activities, and his interest in drawing.

Sasha's example suggests that Situational L2 WTC factors can play a more important role than Personality-level factors, quite in accordance with McIntyre's Pyramid Model (see Chapter 2). Sasha's case shows how beneficial such creative L2 programs can be for children with good artistic potential and for children with introverted personalities and speech impediments, for whom L2 learning can often be a challenge.

DIMA

L2 performance in the project

Even though Dima was not the most active English speaker in the class, or the best artist in the class, he showed a lot of interest towards my project – he was invariably and equally enthusiastic about reading and discussing picturebooks, and creating them. He was rather shy in the beginning of the project when asked a question in English. He would only volunteer to speak in the L2 if he was sure he knew the correct answer. That is why most of his L2 output in my class until Lesson 9 was in the form of single-word utterances. In the previous chapters, it was established that Dima began to be in flow approximately in the middle of the project, around Lessons 8 and 9. At the same point in the project, his oral L2 output began to increase. This can be seen in the growing number of L2 utterances he produced per lesson (Table 7.8).

Dima did not produce unsolicited L2 phrases for the most part of the project, always waiting to be asked by the teacher. However, at the very end of the project, he finally came up with a few unsolicited L2 remarks. For example, at Lesson 20, he corrected another participant (“Turned into stone!”) and then made a joke (“Turned into girl!”).

Dima also progressed in terms of the complexity of his L2 sentences. At Lesson 6 he said a two-word sentences “We play”; at Lesson 8 he said a longer sentence “he start... to play football”; at Lesson 18 he produced a long, complex sentence (10 words), and he said it quickly and confidently: “Kolya’s book about Spiderman...and the first book about Super-Tomato”.

	All L2 Utterances	Single Word L2 Utterances	Multiple Word L2 Utterances (solicited)	Unsolicited L2 Utterances
Lesson 4	2	2	0	0
Lesson 6	5	2	3	0
Lesson 7	8	7	1	0
Lesson 8	10	4	6	0
Lesson 9	23	14	9	0
Lesson 10	19	12	7	0
Lesson 11	8	5	3	0
Lesson 12	10	7	3	0
Lesson 13	9	6	2	1
Lesson 14	9	8	1	0
Lesson 15	8	7	1	0
Lesson 16	6	4	2	0
Lesson 17	5	4	1	0
Lesson 18	16	7	9	0
Lesson 19	28	21	6	1
Lesson 20	30	15	12	3

Table 7.8. Dima’s L2 WTC progress reflected in his growing L2 output.

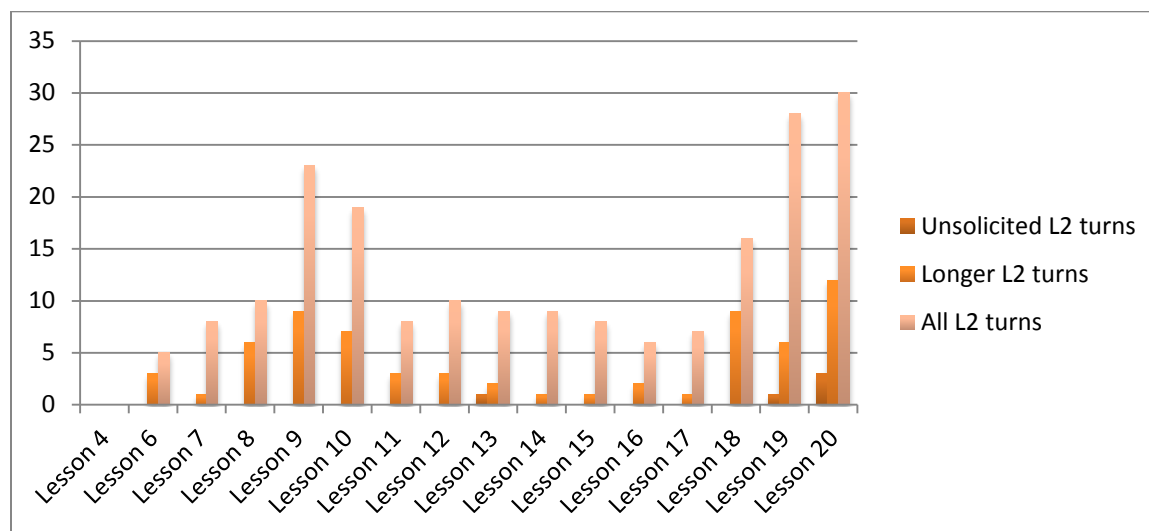


Figure 7.30. Dima’s fluctuating L2 production.

We can see in Table 7.8 and in the diagram (Figure 7.30) that Dima’s L2 WTC increased in the middle of the project (Lesson 9 -10); then it decreased again (Lessons 11 – 17); and finally, it increased again during the last three class meetings.

Dima’s MLU values also show a similar fluctuation in his L2 production, as can be seen in Table 7.9. His MLU increased from the initial 1 to 1.86 at Lesson 8; then it decreased to 1.58 at Lesson 15; and finally it rose to 2.56 at the end of the project. The following analysis is an attempt to explain such fluctuating dynamics of Dima’s L2 WTC.

Lesson	2	8	15	18	20
# of words	5	39	19	41	67
# of utterances	5	21	12	16	30
MLU	1	1.86	1.58	2.56	2.23

Table 7.9. Progress in Dima’s MLU throughout the semester.

Personality vignette

Dima was described by the teachers as a bright, hard-working, honest, and friendly boy – “he always smiles, he is everyone’s friend”, the Math teacher said about him. He was also very responsible and reliable - “you can always count on him”, added the Math teacher. The teachers pointed out that Dima was among the most intelligent students in the class (along with Sasha and Grisha), but it was his diligence and hard work that made him so good.

All of the teachers agreed that Dima was a “100 percent extrovert” and a very sociable and communicative boy - “he loves everyone in class and everyone loves him”. Dima was friends with every boy in his class but with Sasha they seemed inseparable. Throughout the project, Dima was invariably cheerful and respectful to others.

Self-confidence

The school teachers emphasized Dima's self-confidence and leadership potential, referring to him as "the class captain". An excellent young athlete, Dima was the best soccer and basketball player in his class, which contributed to his *outstanding confidence*.

Motivation to study L2

The EFL teacher stated that Dima was a diligent student in general but that his motivation to study English was limited to just receiving good grades. She thought Dima "was only working for grades" and was not genuinely interested in learning English. In his interview, Dima did not speak of his plans or desire to communicate with English speakers in the future, he just said that it was "very interesting" to learn English in my class. His genuine interest towards the creative afterschool class was manifested in the fact that he did not miss a single lesson of the project, even though students did not receive any grades there. These observational data allowed me to rate Dima's level of motivation to L2 learning as *medium*.

L2 confidence

Stating that Dima was always focused and attentive in her class, the EFL teacher did not notice any particular gift for learning foreign languages in Dima. According to her, Dima always prepared his homework but she could not say that his English had improved much over the semester. His final English grade was 4 (equivalent to B) and, in general, Dima's L2 competence was of a medium level for his grade and age.

According to the participant himself, the students "very rarely, practically never" spoke English in their regular EFL class, and most of their learning time was dedicated to reading, writing, and translating. The rarity of opportunities to practice speaking in English negatively

influenced Dima's L2 confidence and resulted in communication apprehension. The word "FEAR!" was immediately used by Dima when I asked him to describe his regular EFL class.

However, Dima stated that he started feeling more confident speaking in English after participating in my project. He shared in the interview that he, Sasha, and Grisha even began to speak in English outside of the class - "we speak English with one another, as if we spoke in a code and no one can understand us, and say funny things and jokes when we walk home".

These observations suggest that Dima's participation in the project *raised his L2 confidence from medium to high level*, which allowed him to become a more willing L2 speaker, even outside of his L2 classroom.

Fear of making a mistake (L2 anxiety)

When asked to describe his regular EFL class, Dima said "Oh, we are afraid to make a mistake there". However, speaking about my class, he said: "and in your class we feel that we can always try and even if it's wrong, you'll just correct us, and it's okay". This statement shows that Dima's L2 anxiety, high in the regular class, tended to disappear in the afterschool class.

The video-recordings show that initially Dima was reluctant to speak up in my class. He seemed to be more willing to wait for someone else to respond to my questions. He admitted later in the interview that it was important for him to be certain that the L2 sentence he was about to say was correct. In the video-recordings, Dima appears to be carefully listening to his friends' attempts to speak in English and on a few occasions he corrected them. This suggests that Dima was aware of the grammar mistakes of his classmates, as well as his own, and tried to avoid making mistakes. As a consequence, his fear of making a mistake made him avoid speaking in English when he was not directly called on. The teacher journal shows that it was only in the

final part of the project, that Dima began trying to produce an English utterance without knowing exactly how to finish it. For example, at the final lesson he suddenly addressed me with a long phrase, which he slowly, with many pauses, constructed on his own: “He...no, you...help me...draw...Captain America?” It was a polite request to help him and he was constructing this request word after word. This example suggests that Dima was gradually overcoming his fear of making a mistake while speaking in the L2 by the end of the project.

These observations allowed me to rate Dima’s initial *L2 anxiety as high, which changed to medium* by the end of the project.

Feelings about the learning environment

Dima had a highly positive attitude towards the experimental afterschool class and he did not miss a single lesson of the project. In the interview, Dima noted that he was often bored in his regular EFL class and was usually waiting for the final bell to ring at the end of each lesson. When I asked if he was sometimes waiting for the final bell to ring in my class, he replied “NO, NEVER - we always wait for this class to start, we wait for it all week long!” Dima’s excitement about the project was also visible in the way he described it - he said that he felt as if he was “a writer of a book but at the same time an artist who makes illustrations”.

It must be noted that the participants were not excited about the project from the very beginning. Dima shared that he and his friends “thought this class would be like other classes - it would be as boring”. Soon, their attitude to the class changed and Dima described the project as “Very, very interesting”. “Uvlecheniye” was the Russian word he used to describe the project in one word. When I asked him to explain this Russian word for American people, he said: “When it is very interesting and you don’t notice anything else”.

According to these observational data, Dima's attitude to the learning environment progressed *from neutral to very positive* over the semester.

Artistic ability and imagination

Being an excellent soccer player and a big fan of this sport, Dima chose "The Life of Cristiano Ronaldo" to be the topic of his picturebook. He began working on his picturebook with much enthusiasm but his poor drawing skills and, especially, his lack of confidence in them, "slowed" him down and decreased his level of flow. This could be the reason for the fluctuation in Dima's L2 WTC that I pointed out above (see p. 259).



Figures 7.31 – 7.33. Fragments of Dima's picturebook about Cristiano Ronaldo.

If we compare Dima's L2 output with that of Grisha and Sasha, we can see that the L2 WTC of the latter students dramatically increased around Lesson 15 (three quarters into the project), whereas Dima's L2 production, on the contrary, slightly decreased. The difference in the students' L2 WTC can be explained by the different intensity of the students' flow. Sasha and Grisha were fully absorbed in the creation of their picturebooks and felt in control of their creative process. Dima, on the contrary, was often unsure about what he would draw on the next page and how he would draw it. His low confidence in his drawing skills made him heavily rely

on Sasha's and my assistance. The pictures of his book display his mediocre drawing skills and his lack of confidence in his artistic abilities (see Figures 7.31 – 7.33).

Summary

Personality-level variables – permanent features	
<i>Personality</i>	Extraverted
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	High
<i>Motivation to L2 learning</i>	Medium
<i>Artistic ability</i>	Low
Situational-level variables – these being transient factors, I am providing here the estimated values for the beginning and the end of the project.	
<i>L2 self-confidence</i>	Medium to High
<i>L2 anxiety</i>	High to Medium
<i>Feelings towards L2 learning environment</i>	Neutral to Very Positive
<i>Flow</i>	80-85% High
<i>L2 WTC</i>	From Low to High

Table 7.10. Summary of Dima's L2 WTC factors.

The conducted analysis explains the fluctuating dynamics of Dima's L2 WTC (see Table and Diagram). After the period of initial reticence (Lessons 1 – 7), caused by Dima's shyness and high fear of making a mistake, he became more willing to speak in English at Lessons 8 – 10. The increase of his L2 WTC at that point is explained by his growing flow caused by his immersion in the creative activities of the project. The decline in Dima's L2 WTC in Lessons 11 – 17 can be explained, on the one hand, by his continuing fear of making a mistake. On the other hand, that decrease in L2 WTC could be explained by Dima's decrease in his flow intensity, caused by his poor drawing skills, dependence on his friend's help, and as a consequence, low sense of control. Finally, during Lessons 18 – 20, Dima's growing L2 confidence, combined with his excitement about the successful completion of his picturebook, allowed him to again improve his L2 WTC.

Even though Dima did not benefit from the project in terms of L2 WTC in the same measure as Sasha and Grisha, his L2 output had still increased over the semester and he even began using the L2 for spontaneous conversations. In terms of Personality-level variables, his extroversion and general confidence made a good foundation for his L2 WTC. However, his fear of making a mistake, did not allow his L2 WTC to grow further.

Dima’s case showed that in such or similar creative L2 projects some students require more scaffolding provided to them by their teachers, both in terms of drawing and L2 speaking, but, if provided such help, they can succeed.

ALESHA

L2 performance in the project

Among the study participants Alesha produced the least amount of L2 output in the project. His L2 WTC was very low for most of the project, which can be seen in the number of L2 utterances he produced (Table 7.11).

	All L2 Utterances	Single Word L2 Utterances	Multiple Word L2 Utterances (solicited)	Unsolicited L2 Utterances
Lesson 2	1	1	0	0
Lesson 4	0	0	0	0
Lesson 5	1	1	0	0
Lesson 7	4	4	0	0
Lesson 10	8	5	3	0
Lesson 12	3	2	1	0
Lesson 13	4	4	0	0
Lesson 14	11	7	3	1
Lesson 16	0	0	0	0
Lesson 17	14	14	0	0
Lesson 18	3	3	0	0
Lesson 19	4	3	1	0

Table 7.11. Alesha’s L2 WTC progress reflected in his growing L2 output.

However, as we can see in the table, Alesha still made some gains in his L2 production per lesson. His output, which was limited to single-word utterances mostly, increased to 11 at

Lesson 14 and 14 at Lesson 17. He was especially active in naming objects in the pictures of the books we discussed in the final quarter of the project. The lack of longer utterances in Alesha's L2 output was definitely caused by his low L2 competence. It is noteworthy that, in Alesha's case too, low creative engagement and interest (flow) resulted in zero progress in L2 WTC, whereas higher engagement in creative work and the feeling of flow associated with it brought about positive changes in L2 WTC.

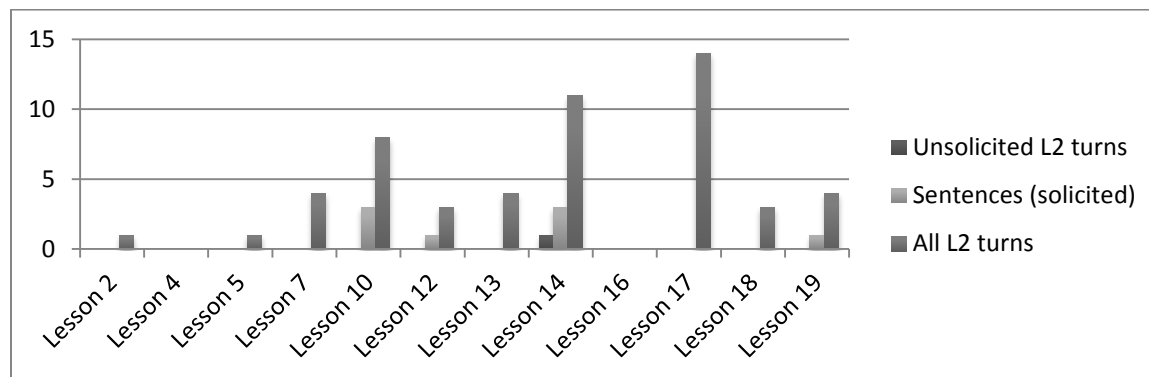


Figure 7.34. The dynamics of Alesha's L2 production.

Alesha's L2 proficiency in terms of MLU progressed very little throughout the semester, as can be seen in Table 7.12. Still, it increased from 1 in the first half of the semester to 1.56 and 1.75 at certain lessons of the second half. The higher MLU values for the middle of the project (1.56 and 1.75 at lessons 10 and 12, respectively) correspond with the previous observation that Alesha started producing more L2 output in the middle of the project, when he finally began creating his picturebook and was in flow. Again, it shows the correspondence between creativity, flow, and L2 WTC. Overall, Alesha did not gain much in terms of his L2 WTC in the course of the project. In the following segment, I analyze the reasons for such insignificant gains in Alesha's WTC.

Lesson	2	8	10	12	19
# of words	2	1	14	7	5
# of utterances	2	1	9	4	4

MLU	1	1	1.56	1.75	1.25
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Table 7.12. Progress in Alesha’s MLU throughout the semester.

Personality vignette

The teachers I interviewed emphasized that Alesha was a “new student”, who had transferred from another school and joined this class just that school year. Either that fact or Alesha’s psychological characteristics did not allow him to fit in well within the class. He tried to be friends with his classmates and they tolerated him, but it was obvious that he was a bit of an outsider.

The Math teacher posited that Alesha was more introverted than extroverted and “did not have real friends” at school. The EFL teacher said that it was hard to tell if Alesha was extraverted or introverted as his “true colors were not clear”. All the teachers evaluated his overall cognitive abilities at a low level. The Math teacher stated also that Alesha was lazy and “kind of immature”.

Self-confidence

All the teachers converged in the observation that Alesha had problems fitting in in his new class. The Math teacher shared her opinion that Alesha was “dishonest and nobody in the class liked him”. It was obvious that he tried hard to be Grisha’s friend (as Grisha was the “most popular” boy in the class) but the latter mostly tolerated him. It was obvious that Alesha was the *least confident* boy in the class, who did not have friends and often felt uncomfortable among his classmates. Alesha’s low self-confidence was a predictor of his low L2 WTC.

Motivation to study L2

Alesha’s general motivation to study was low, which was underlined by all the interviewed teachers, and so was his motivation to learn English. Neither during the lessons nor in his interview did he say anything that would indicate his interest to L2 learning. The EFL

teacher maintained that Alesha was not interested in learning English and just tried to do what other kids did in class in order to fit in.

L2 confidence

Alesha's grade in the EFL class was 3 (equivalent of C) and he generally was one of the least able students in his class. He was the only participant of my project who, according to the EFL teacher, did not make any progress in his English over the semester. She was of a very low opinion of Alesha's potential to learn the L2. Alesha never raised his hand in the regular EFL class, both due to his poor knowledge of English and his low self-confidence. As the EFL teacher noted in the interview, Alesha had previously studied English at a different school, where English was not taught at a proper level. All these factors resulted in Alesha's very low L2 confidence in the first half of the project (until Lesson 9). However, at Lesson 10, when all students of the group were in flow, Alesha seemed to be more engaged too, and started producing one-word L2 utterances during the discussion of a picturebook. From that point on, Alesha regularly produced at least a few L2 utterances per lesson and as many as 14 at Lesson 17. This suggests that his L2 confidence grew from very low to low over the course of the project.

Fear of making a mistake (L2 anxiety)

The EFL teacher thought that fear of making a mistake was the main reasons why Alesha never volunteered a reply in L2 in her class. The teacher said that Alesha was generally a timid boy and he would look "almost frightened" when asked a question in English.

Feelings about the learning environment

Alesha missed quite a few lessons of my class due to an illness. This, along with his poor drawing skills, lack of imagination, and low self-esteem, did not allow Alesha to be fully

engaged in the picturebook creation process. It was obvious that he tried to imitate what other study participants were doing in the project, and even pretended that he was equally enthusiastic about it. He spent a few lessons just thinking about a possible plot for his picturebook and asking everyone for advice. When a few topics were suggested to him, he kept changing them. As a result, he was not in the state of flow but, on the contrary, in the state of apathy. So, initially, he was not excited about the project but kept participating in it in order to “keep up” with the other boys. However, when he finally started working on his picturebook, his attitude changed - he began smiling, sharing his new drawings with others, and raising his hand to volunteer a response in L2 to my questions. These observations suggest that his attitude to the learning environment of the experimental class *changed from neutral to positive*.

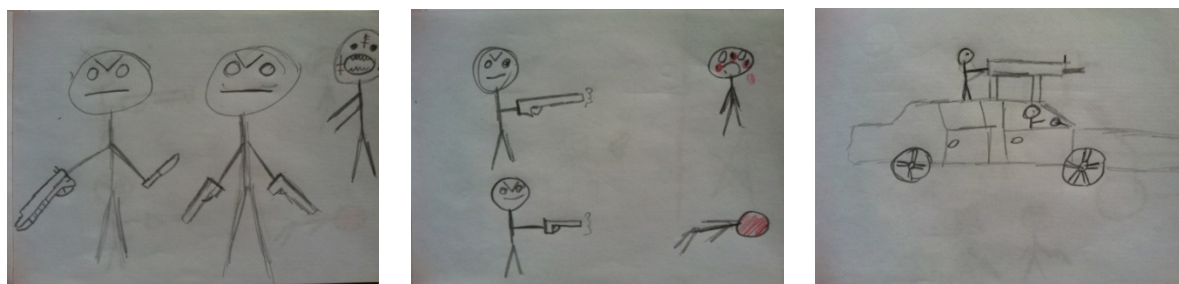
Artistic ability and imagination



Figure 7.35. Alesha’s “Tank”.

During the first nine lessons Alesha almost never completed a drawing during the creative sessions, stating that he “could not draw”. For a long time, the only visual image he drew in his sketchbook was a small tank (Figure 7.35). The teacher actually had to ask Alesha what subject he was interested in and modeled drawing a tank for him on the board. Alesha’s poor imagination did not allow him to come up with a plot idea for his picturebook, and this did not allow him to be in flow during the first 12 lessons (as shown in Chapter 4).

However, at Lesson 13, Alesha was finally hooked with a plot idea (suggested by Sasha) and started making his picturebook about some belligerent people with guns and armored vehicles. Since Alesha was constantly lamenting about his poor drawing skills, I suggested he draw people with little circles for heads and sticks for bodies and limbs. Alesha liked the idea and drew enthusiastically three lessons in a row, showing the signs of flow (see Chapter 4). I kept praising his creative endeavors, especially the concise, “comic-book” quality of his pictures. After that, Alesha was transformed – he was drawing new pages of his wordless picturebook (Figures 7.36 – 7.38) at every lesson and his participation in picturebook discussions in English became more active than before – as can be seen by his L2 output at Lessons 14 and 17 (Table 7.11).



Figures 7.36 -7.38. Fragments of Alesha’s wordless picturebook.

Summary

Personality-level variables – permanent features	
<i>Personality</i>	Introvert; “immature” (Math teacher interview)
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	Low
<i>Motivation to L2 learning</i>	Low
<i>Artistic ability</i>	Low
Situational-level variables – these being transient factors, I am providing here the estimated values for the beginning and the end of the project.	
<i>L2 confidence</i>	Very Low to Low
<i>L2 anxiety</i>	High to Medium
<i>Feelings towards L2 learning environment</i>	Neutral to Positive
Flow	55-65% Low

<i>L2 WTC</i>	Very Low to Low
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Table 7.13. Summary of Alesha’s L2 WTC factors.

Alesha was the least successful participant of this project, which confirmed my initial presupposition that such an arts-based teaching approach would be more beneficial for students with a good imagination and at least basic drawing skills. Alesha’s low motivation to L2 learning, his introversion, and his low confidence of the personality level did not allow him to substantially benefit from the project in terms of fostering his L2 WTC.

However, his case also demonstrated that, even when the child was far from being “artistically savvy”, lagged behind other students in terms of L2 competence, and whose L2 self-confidence was very low, he could still show a certain increase in his L2 WTC. This happened as soon as Alesha experienced flow while participating in a creative activity. In retrospect, I feel that had I given more individual support and scaffolding for Alesha, he could have benefited more from the project.

Alesha’s case also demonstrated that even children with problems of social adaptation and suffering from low self-esteem can benefit, at least to some extent, from an arts-based L2 teaching project like the one implemented in my study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I attempted to answer research question **2b. How can we explain the dynamics of change in L2 WTC for individual students?** by analyzing personality-level and state-level factors contributing to L2 WTC of four selected study participants and matching them to the L2 WTC gains resulting from their participation in the picturebook creation project.

The following table summarizes the student data (all study participants) pertaining to their personality-level and state-level L2 WTC factors, including the intensity of their flow

experiences in the project (established in Chapter 4), and shows the progress in their L2 WTC in the course of the study.

Students	Grisha	Sasha	Dima	Leva	Kolya	Alesha	Nikita
Personality-level variables – permanent features							
<i>Personality</i>	Extrovert	Introvert	Extrovert	Introvert	Extrovert	Introvert	Extrovert
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	Very high	Medium	High	High	High	Low	High
<i>Motivation to L2</i>	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
<i>Artistic ability</i>	Medium	Very high	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low
State-level variables – these being transient factors, I am providing here the estimated values for the beginning and the end of the project.							
	Grisha	Sasha	Dima	Leva	Kolya	Alesha	Nikita
<i>L2 confidence</i>	Medium to Very high	Medium to High	Medium to High	Low to Medium	Medium to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium
<i>L2 anxiety</i>	Medium to Low	High to Low	High to Medium	Medium to Medium	Low to Low	High to Medium	Medium to Medium
<i>Feelings towards L2 learning environment</i>	Medium to Very Positive	Medium to Very Positive	Medium to Very Positive	Low to Positive	Medium to Positive	Medium to Positive	Low to Positive
Flow	95-100% High	95-100% High	80-85% High	70-75% Medium	70-75% Medium	55-65% Low	55-65% Low
L2 WTC progress	Medium to Very High	Medium to Very High	Medium to High	Very Low to Low	Low to Medium	Very Low to Low	Low to Medium

Table 7.14. Summary of the participants' personality-level and state-level factors.

It was established that the study participants benefited from the project in terms of fostering their L2 WTC in varying degrees. The difference in the dynamics of change of individual students' WTC was caused by both personality-level (personality type, self-confidence, motivation to study the L2) and state-level factors (L2 confidence, L2 anxiety, attitude to the learning environment). Artistic ability and imagination also played an important role in fostering students' WTC. The participants whose WTC increased the most during the project were either extroverted, self-confident students, with a high motivation to study the L2 (Grisha) or the students with high artistic ability and imagination (Sasha). Students who were introverted, less confident as artists, and had a lower motivation for L2 studies (Dima, Nikita,

and Kolya) did not benefit as much but their L2 WTC still increased considerably. Finally, students with low confidence in their artistic ability and low psychological confidence in general were the least successful in terms of their L2 WTC gains (Leva and Alesha).

Flow experienced by students in the creative classroom was one of the most important determinants of their gains in L2 WTC. Students with more intense flow (Sasha and Grisha) showed a higher increase of their WTC, whereas the ones with only occasional flow experiences (Alesha) made very modest gains in WTC.

Therefore, the best predictors of a successful implementation of such and similar arts-based creative approaches in L2 learning are students' personality-level self-confidence, extroversion, imagination, and general love of drawing (or other arts). Such a creative approach can be particularly beneficial for outgoing, imaginative children and children with artistic talents. Children without such talents and introverted children, including children with psychological challenges and low self-confidence also benefit from such an approach to L2 learning, albeit to a lesser degree. However, they will require more scaffolding and individual attention on the teacher's part.

The next (and last) chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to the discussion of pedagogic implications and limitations of the study, including a critical analysis of the arts-based L2 teaching approach, implemented in the study.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Having completed my study both in terms of my experimental teaching and analyzing the accumulated data, I recapitulate my findings. Then, I restate the relevance of my study and discuss the implications of the findings both for the theory of L2 acquisition and practical L2 pedagogy. Further, I critically evaluate the strengths and short-comings of the implemented arts-based approach, suggest possible improvements, and provide recommendations for other creatively-minded L2 teachers. Finally, I address the limitations of the study and suggest further avenues for research in this area of L2 pedagogy.

Synthesis of findings

The case study conducted on the basis of an afterschool arts-based EFL project yielded the following findings.

Research Question 1: How can the activity of picturebook creation foster Flow in an EFL classroom?

1a. Can *flow* occur during the activity of picturebook creation in an EFL classroom?

The experimental after-school teaching project, in which seven Russian EFL elementary school students, under my guidance, were creating their own picturebooks and discussing popular picturebooks in English, demonstrated that L2 learners of this age can be introduced into the state of flow with the help of picturebook creation activities and that flow transfers from the creative part into the discussion part of the lessons. A series of 20 arts-based EFL lessons have been designed for this project and implemented as an elective after-school class in a 5th grade

classroom of a Russian secondary school. The participants began experiencing flow starting from Lesson 6. Initially students experienced flow only during the process of picturebook creation (Lessons 6 – 8) but gradually, starting from Lesson 8, individual students (Grisha, Sasha, and Dima) also began to experience flow during English speaking activities, such as picturebook discussions. The intensity of flow continued to steadily grow, with more participants (Kolya, Leva, Nikita) experiencing flow both during the creative and speaking activities. Eventually, by the end of the project (Lessons 15 – 20), all the study participants were experiencing flow, which grew in intensity and reached its peak in the final lessons.

At the same time, the analysis showed that not all the participants were susceptible to flow caused by arts-based creative activities in the same degree. Three participants (out of the initial 10) stopped attending the project after Lesson 4. The possible reasons could be poor drawing and English skills and low interest to drawing. Among the seven remaining participants, three students (Sasha, Grisha, and Dima) manifested the highest degree of flow. Their classroom behavior consistently showed all the signs of flow, as described in the previous research (Egbert, 2003; Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), including the merging of action and awareness, loss of self-consciousness, high concentration, interest and enjoyment, and distorted perception of time. Two others (Kolya and Leva) experienced flow of a moderate intensity, consistently manifesting some, but not all, signs of flow. The remaining two students (Nikita and Alesha) occasionally showed some signs of flow, which suggests that their flow happened but rarely and was of the low level of intensity.

It was established that students with better artistic skills and more vivid imagination (Sasha), as well as more extraverted students (Grisha and Dima) were more susceptible to flow in a creative L2 classroom where learning activities centered around picturebook creation.

Consistent with previous research (Egbert, 2003; Schmidt & Savage, 1992), it was established that the feeling of control over class activities was almost as important for flow as the balance between skill and challenge. However, even the students with mediocre drawing abilities (Dima, Kolya, Leva) experienced flow due to the creative activities, which suggests that such arts-based projects can be beneficial practically for all students.

1b. If yes, what are the dynamics of flow in such a context?

The data collected in a semester long afterschool teaching project was analyzed with the help of deductive content analysis and showed that flow started in the class at an early stage of the project (Lesson 5) and continued to grow throughout the project, with more students getting involved in flow as the study progressed. At first, it was only Grisha, Sasha, and Dima showing signs of flow. Later, they were joined by Kolya and Leva, who gradually became engrossed in the project's activities. Finally, Nikita and Alesha also began experiencing flow in the project.

It was established that students began experiencing flow when they actually began creating their picturebooks. Before that, when they were copying down individual images after the teacher's models, they were not in flow. The signs of flow appeared immediately after the actual work on students' picturebooks began. This can be explained by the feeling of agency, or control (Schmidt & Savage, 1992), that the students achieved as they became authors of their picturebooks. The link between the students' success in the creative process and their flow was established in each student's case. Even Alesha, the least skillful and willing artist in the group, began to show evidence of flow when he finally became engaged in the picturebook creation process.

The analysis of multiple sources of data suggested that the participants' flow was sustained over the whole course of the study and continued to grow in intensity up to its final

lesson. However, the study also showed that for students with poor imagination and drawing skills (Leva, Alesha), it takes longer to experience flow in such creative activities.

Also, it has been found that some students (Sasha, Grisha, and Dima) experienced flow both in the artistic and discussion phases of the project lessons. However, other students showed evidence of flow in one of the two domains: Leva, and Alesha – in the creative phase; and Kolya and Nikita – in the discussion phase. In accordance with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) postulate of the balance between challenge and skill, it can be deduced that Leva and Alesha reached the sufficient skill level to meet the challenge of the picturebook creation, but the challenge of picturebook discussion was too high for their current level of L2 skills. On the contrary, Kolya and Nikita's L2 skills and L2 confidence allowed them to experience flow in the discussion phase, but their poor artistic skills hindered their flow in the creative phase.

It was also found that the flow of the group informal leaders (Grisha, Sasha, Dima) was conducive to flow of the rest of the group, as the latter tried to emulate the behavior of the former. Along the same lines, the flow of the teacher/researcher, who was participating both in the discussion and creative activities together with his students as a “more proficient collaborator”, was also conducive to the participants' flow. These findings suggest that flow is “contagious” and has the tendency to spread among all the group members, once the group leaders are in flow.

1c. Which factors do the dynamics of flow depend on?

As it was stated above, students began experiencing flow after Lesson 6, when they commenced working independently on their own picturebooks. This can be explained by a few factors. First of all, picturebook creation is a multidimensional and complex activity (Salisbury & Styles, 2012), as opposed to unidimensional drawing of images after the teacher, which was

practiced during the first five lessons. Thus, it provided a higher challenge for students, which is a necessary condition of flow (in accordance with Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow, see Chapter 2, p. 38). It included composing the picturebook plot, drawing images, coloring them, composing and writing textual captions, and binding the picturebooks. Second, the creative activities of the project made the use of productive L2 skills (speaking and writing) meaningful for students, as they were using the L2 not as part of textbook drills, but as a communication tool, which was used to mediate the various challenges of the picturebook creation process and enable the classroom interactions between the students and teacher. The composing of textual captions also added authenticity to the students' use of L2 writing. This finding was consistent with the previous research (Shernoff et al., 2003), which suggested that the possibility of flow was highest when students perceived learning activities as challenging and relevant. And third, because the students felt in control over their creative process, the afterschool classroom became different in students' perception from the regular school classes – it became for them an independent community of creators, in which students could exercise their agency and express their creative selves through their picturebooks.

Also, consistent with the previous research of flow (Egbert, 2003, p. 514), it was found that the introduction of new artistic tools (notepads, colored pencils, the paper trimmer) and new creative activities (sharing plot ideas, coloring of images, writing of captions, drawing the book front cover images, and binding the picturebooks' final versions) were conducive to flow. In the same vein, the introduction of new picturebooks for oral group discussions was also found to be conducive to flow. It was found that flow in discussion activities could be achieved better when the students and teacher were seated close to each other, in a semi-circle, with the teacher performing the role of a more proficient interlocutor, rather than a teacher “per se”. This finding

was consistent with the previous observation (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) that egalitarian relationships between students and teachers have the potential to lead students into flow (see Chapter 2, p. 47).

Additionally, as the students' reaction to the picturebooks utilized in class discussions suggested, picturebooks representing a whole series of related stories and featuring the same characters and recurrent themes, are more conducive to student flow in picturebook discussion activities than picturebooks which have no sequels. Thus, the participants showed especially high levels of engagement when discussing picturebooks by A. Browne, as they were all featuring the adventures of the same character, "Willy the Chimp".

Research Question 2: In which ways does the creation of picturebooks in L2 influence elementary school L2 learners' L2 WTC?

2a. What are the dynamics of L2 WTC changes in an L2 classroom where L2 learning is centered around the process of picturebook creation?

The analysis of study data showed that all the participants' L2 WTC increased over the course of the semester. Similar to flow that was experienced by participants in a differing measure, each student's WTC increased to a different degree. An important study finding was that each student's L2 WTC was growing in a parallel pattern to their flow – so that the peaks of students' L2 WTC coincided, or closely followed, the peaks of their flow experiences. Thus, Sasha, Grisha, and Dima began experiencing flow after Lesson 6, as they began working on their picturebooks. In all the three cases, the students' L2 WTC increased during Lessons 8 – 10 (see Chapter 7). When the students were finishing their picturebooks, using new tools and materials, their flow increased and so did their L2 WTC (Lessons 15 – 20). The same was true about other participants, including the least successful one (Alesha). As soon as he finally became involved

in the creative process (as discussed in Chapter 7), his L2 WTC began to grow, though to a lesser degree, due to his low L2 competence.

The parallelism in the progression of student flow and L2 WTC can be best illustrated by the teacher/researcher' sketches, representing the students' engagement at various stages of the project (Figure 8.1). The first sketch in this series depicts the participants as they were still in the "pre-flow", "reticent" stage. The second reflects the point at which students had already begun experiencing flow during creative activities but were still too shy to interact in the L2. Then, the transformation occurs with the participants and we can see them constructing L2 sentences to describe an image (Lesson 10); engaged in a jocular polyphonic conversation as a group (Lesson 15); simultaneously interacting in the L2 with the teacher (Lesson 18); and eagerly volunteering a response to the teacher's question during a picturebook discussion (Lesson 20).



LESSON 5



LESSON 7



LESSON 10



LESSON 15



LESSON 18



LESSON 20

Figure 8.1. The parallel progression of students' flow and L2 WTC.

To sum up, the analysis of data suggests that the more deeply engrossed the students became in flow, caused by the consecutive stages of the picturebook creation process, the higher L2 WTC they tended to display, which was manifested both in their overall L2 production in the afterschool classroom, and in their spontaneous use of English for interpersonal communication.

2b. How can we explain the dynamics of change in L2 WTC for individual students in such a context?

Similar to the findings pertaining to flow, the study showed that the participants did not benefit equally from the creative project in terms of their L2 WTC. It was established that flow played a very important role in the increase of students' L2 WTC as those students who experienced more intense flow (Grisha and Sasha) also showed the highest gains in L2 WTC. Those students who experienced flow of a lower level (e.g., Kolya, Leva, and Alesha) still displayed a gradual increase of their L2 WTC. This phenomenon can be theoretically explained by the propensity of flow to decrease the subjects' self-consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 2007) and, consequently, alleviate their communication apprehension and fear of making a mistake.

Consistent with the previous studies of L2 WTC (Cao, 2009; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998), it has been found that both personality factors and situational variables were accountable for changes in students' L2 WTC. More self-confident and extroverted students showed higher L2 WTC – e.g., Grisha displayed the highest WTC in the group, while Dima, even though he was less in flow during the creative activities, showed gains in L2 WTC due to his outgoing and communicable personality. However, such situational factors as situational confidence, feelings of security, excitement, and responsibility, and the positive attitude towards the learning environment, which were directly influenced by the students' flow, proved to be even more important than personality traits. Even obvious introverts,

such as Sasha and Leva, showed gains in their L2 WTC due to their involvement in the project activities. Grisha's highest L2 WTC in the group was caused by the combination of his personality traits and the situational variables, which were influenced by the constant flow he experienced in the afterschool classroom.

To summarize, it has been found that the proposed method of creative L2 teaching was particularly suitable both for students with good drawing skills and rich imagination (e.g., Sasha), and for self-confident, extroverted students (e.g., Grisha and Dima). However, even students with low self-confidence and poor artistic skills (e.g., Alesha) can also benefit from such an arts-based approach to L2 teaching, albeit to a lesser degree.

Implications for theory

The findings of this dissertation study, while limited in their scope, suggest implications for three theoretical domains: creativity and socio-cultural theory (SCT); theory of flow; and theory of L2 acquisition.

Creativity and SCT. The findings of RQ1 confirmed Vygotsky's (1978) views on the role of "mundane" creativity and the "cathartic" properties of creativity in children's learning (see Chapter 2, p. 20). First, it was found that all the participants, albeit to a different degree, experienced flow during the creative activities, which included the composition of the picturebook plot, drawing and coloring images, creating textual captions, and binding the picturebook. Even those participants who were not prepared to be engaged in creative activities in the beginning of the project (e.g., Leva, Alesha), eventually revealed their creative potential. In accordance with Vygotsky's notion of "mundane" creativity, this finding confirms that all students of this age are inherently creative. Their creative potential can be easily accessible for

them (e.g., the cases of Sasha and Grisha), or their creativity can be latent and require the teacher's mediation to reveal itself (e.g., the cases of Leva, Kolya, and Alesha).

Second, the study confirmed Vygotsky's (2004) notion on reproductive and creative activities (see Chapter 2, p. 22) and the higher value of creative activities over reproductive ones in learning. According to the conducted data analysis, the participants began to experience flow only when they commenced to actually create their picturebooks, whereas the reproduction of the teacher's pictures during the first five lessons was not conducive to flow.

Third, the study findings illustrated Vygotsky's (2004) notion of creative "catharsis" (see Chapter 2, p. 23), at the center of which lies "the law of the emotional reality of imagination" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 19). During the study, the students' emotions, which were usually suppressed during their regular EFL class, were released in the process of creating their picturebook characters and the events of their stories, and this creative process liberated the student-authors from their anxieties and insecurities. As revealed by the student interviews, the participants' L2 oral production in their regular EFL class was inhibited by their fear of making a mistake. Their participation in the creative process of the experimental project alleviated the effects of this inhibition. As discussed in Chapter 2, "people are liberated through an explosion of emotions" (Lindqvist, 2003, p. 247) and thus, "creative catharsis" has the power to transform people – "catharsis occurs when the creative juxtaposition of conflicting emotions implodes to produce something novel that has not existed before" (Marjanovic-Shane et al., 2010, p. 228). This "creative transformation" arguably occurred during the study, when the initially shy and reticent students gradually began to reveal their imaginative, creative, fearless identities as they became involved in the picturebook creation. Their initial fear of making a mistake, which precluded them from demonstrating a high L2 WTC during the first six lessons of the project,

gradually disappeared as a result of the “cathartic transformation” they experienced while becoming authors of their own picturebooks. Because the fear of making a mistake (L2 anxiety) is one of the major predictors of low L2 WTC (Dörnyei, 2005; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), its disappearance was conducive to higher L2 WTC among the study participants, as soon as they became involved in the process of creation.

The study findings were also consistent with Vygotsky’s (2004) construct of ZPD (see Chapter 2, p. 37). It was found that with the help of simple mediating activities (e.g., by pointing at images of the picturebook and corresponding L2 words written on the board) the teacher can facilitate students’ comprehension of the picturebook plot and foster student flow during the picturebook discussion. Consistent with the construct of ZPD, it was found that more proficient peers can also play the role of mediators, as demonstrated by Sasha’s case, whose assistance played a crucial role in facilitating the other participants’ creative process.

Theory of flow and L2 WTC. The findings of RQ1 add to the long line of empirical work on flow in learning and confirm Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990, 2007) claim that a high challenge of an activity, requiring a sufficiently high level of skill, is more conducive to flow than a low challenge. The data analysis showed that the participants began experiencing flow only after they had faced a higher challenge of creating their own picturebooks, as opposed to the lessons where they were involved in “low challenge” reproduction activities.

The study findings also suggest a close relationship between creativity, flow, and L2 WTC in the context of L2 learning. The gradual transformation of the students from passive and quiet “imitators” into eager, enthusiastic creators and cheerful, avid L2 communicators in the course of the study suggests that the students’ attitude to communication in L2 had undergone a positive change under the influence of the creative flow. It was observed by the regular EFL

teacher that the students' attitude towards English learning had changed over the semester. Using Vygotsky's (2004) terminology, it can be said that their overall attitude to L2 learning was *cathartically purified by the explosion of their creative imagination*. Since motivation towards L2 learning and attitude towards learning environment are major predictors of high L2 WTC (Clément, 1986; Dörnyei, 2005), students' participation in "flow-rich" creative activities of the project eventually resulted in the increase of their L2 WTC. Thus, students' creative flow endowed them with a new sense of confidence, agency, and appreciation of the value and excitement of L2 learning. This "intersection" of *creative catharsis*, flow, and L2 learning can become the basis for more experimental studies on creativity and flow in L2 education and suggest new arts-infused approaches to L2 teaching.

Implications for L2 pedagogy

The successful implementation of the picturebook project discussed in the dissertation suggests that similar arts-based afterschool L2 programs can be beneficial in L2 education, be it foreign, second, or heritage language learning. Picturebook creation is one of the wide range of possible creative tools to make L2 learning more meaningful, engaging, and, ultimately, fruitful. Creative L2 teachers can integrate those arts in their classrooms, in which they personally feel most capable. The artistic constituents of such projects can include dance, music, singing, creating poetry, short story writing, sculpting, origami, depending on the individual strengths of teachers and their students' age and preferences. Hopefully, the integration of various arts in L2 teaching will eventually move from the rank of afterschool, elective programs into the mainstream L2 classrooms. Ideally, L2 teachers should be offered specially designed preparation programs, in which they would develop their existing artistic talents. As Cahnmann-Taylor and Zhang (2017) suggest, new ways should be discovered "to train and mentor TESOL teachers as

creative teacher-artists themselves, practiced in the aesthetics of language choice and use” (p. 4).

As the present study demonstrated, such programs do not only make L2 learning more motivating, engaging, and meaningful, they also bring about real tangible improvements in learners’ L2 skills. Besides raising students’ L2 WTC, which is “the most immediate determinant of L2 use” (Clément et al., 2003, p. 191), certain improvements were noticed by the researcher and the regular EFL teacher in the participants’ use of English grammar, and in their speaking and writing skills. For example, the EFL teacher noted in her interview that the overall English competence of all the study participants (except for Alesha) increased as a result of the project. However, since the students’ acquisition of L2 vocabulary, grammar, and writing were not in the focus of this study, their development among the participants was not specifically analyzed.

The most important achievement of this project was arguably the fact that the students began using English spontaneously, in their interpersonal communication within the project’s “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and even outside of school, as some students stated in their interviews. According to the CLT research, (as discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 68-71), language is learned through interactive meaningful communication (Swain & Lapkin, 2002) and language learning is mediated by language use (Swain, 2005). Thus, the implementation of the arts-infused L2 project helped to create an environment, in which language learning was mediated through meaningful and interactive language use.

However, it must be stressed that this project was an after-school one, in which teaching was not regulated by the curricular mandates. The question still remains about the feasibility of integrating such projects in mainstream L2 education. Most L2 teachers both in Russia and the U.S. do not have the freedom to alter their curriculum and replace the L2 learning activities mandated by the curricular requirements and matriculation exams with arts-based activities. It

must also be noted that all the project participants volunteered to attend the project and the positive results of their participation (in terms of flow and L2 WTC) could partly be due to their general desire to create and learn the L2 at the same time. What would L2 teachers do in a regular class, attended by a much higher number of students, many of whom might not be interested in composing picturebooks? It is possible that many students in mainstream EFL classes will not experience flow in similar conditions.

A possible solution would be to give students a choice of available creative activities – e.g., some students can choose to create actual paper picturebooks, whereas those who are not interested or skilled enough in drawing can choose to create comic books or graphic novels using computers and internet images. In both cases, the focus can be not so much on creating images but rather on writing coherent and grammatically correct L2 textual captions, which can lead to positive outcomes in learning English grammar and writing. This, in its turn, can ultimately benefit students in terms of preparing them for the matriculation exams. According to the Russian Educational Standard (2012), schools with no special FL track courses are mandated to teach from three to four (depending on the school principal's decision) L2 lessons per week. It can be feasible to dedicate one of the four L2 lessons to an arts-infused L2 project, similar to the one described in this dissertation. This would allow schools to provide students with the regular L2 instruction (vocabulary, grammar, writing, and other language skills) and at the same time raise students' motivation to studying the L2 with the help of the project. As discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 27 – 32), attempts to implement such arts-based projects have already been made in selected schools around the world (Anderson & Chang, 2013; Baker, 2013; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013), and their further implementation depends of the creativity and enthusiasm of L2 teachers. This also raises the necessity of developing L2 teachers' creative potential and

artistic skills within the framework of further professional development of L2 educators. The broader implementation of the Project-based (Lorimer, 2011; Baker, 2013) and Task-based approaches (Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 1998) to L2 teaching in Russian schools could provide space for arts-infused L2 activities. Professional teachers workshops dedicated to sharing the processes and results of such projects could provide guidance to beginning L2 educators on how to use creativity in their classrooms.

Relevance of the study

The present study is relevant for both Russian L2 educational context and its American counterpart. As discussed in Chapter 1, “the development of communicative competence in a foreign language” has been proclaimed the main goal of secondary school FL education in Russia (Russian Federal State Educational Standard, 2012). However, not many Russian secondary schools graduates have adequate conversational skills in English or any other foreign language (Superjob, 2014, also see Chapter 1, p. 6). The arts-infused L2 teaching project implemented in the present study was designed first and foremost to improve L2 learners’ willingness to speak in L2, as meaningful communication in L2 is a necessary basis for fostering L2 speaking skills (Ellis, 2005). The positive results of the after-school project suggest that such and similar arts-based L2 projects can be beneficial in the context of Russian primary and secondary education. By fostering student motivation and interest towards L2 learning, such arts-infused afterschool projects could lend support to the mainstream L2 education, which is bound by curricular demands and the obligation to teach students for compulsory state exams. As discussed above, it does not appear feasible at the present moment to incorporate such projects within the framework of mainstream Russian L2 education. However, such projects can be designed and offered to students on the basis of after-school, elective, extra-curricular activities.

Similar curricular demands, such as the obligation to train students for the SAT and other tests, bind L2 teachers in the U.S. public schools. Teaching for tests hardly leaves any space for creativity in the classroom and leads to the “pervasive boredom of schooling” (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), with student perceptions of school ranging “from boredom to anger” (Gilman & Anderman, 2006). The implementation of similar arts-based approaches to teaching foreign, second, and heritage languages with the help of afterschool creative L2 projects could help American L2 educators to reveal their students’ hidden artistic talents, transform L2 learning into a *flow-rich* experience, liberate students from L2 anxiety or apathy towards L2 learning, and create such communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where L2 learners can use the L2 for meaningful interpersonal communication and hone their language skills. It would help students to stop seeing themselves as passive participants in a mass, anonymous educational system (Larson & Richards, 1991) and develop the sense of their own agency through becoming authors, creators, and highly motivated L2 learners.

Critical reflections on the implemented arts-based approach

In this section I discuss strengths and limitations of the implemented project with regards to how it addressed the Russian State Standards for Foreign Language Education (2012) and the “Five C’s” of the United States National Standards of Foreign Languages (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

According to the Russian Standards, the main goals of foreign language learning in secondary schools are (1) developing communicative competence in a foreign language “as an instrument of cross-cultural communication” (p. 11); (2) gaining knowledge of the socio-cultural context in the countries of the studied language and the ability to identify similarities and differences between the home culture and that of the countries of the studied language; (3)

achieving a threshold level of competence in the FL that would enable learners to communicate in oral and written forms with native and non-native FL speakers; and (4) developing the ability to use the FL as a tool to obtain information from FL sources for self-education. The first three of these goals correspond to the Five C's of the ACTFL Standards.

The Five C's comprise the domains of *communication, comparisons, communities, connections, and cultures* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The communication domain coincides with Goal 1 of the Russian Standards (above) and presupposes the development of three main abilities: to converse in FL (interpersonal), to understand spoken and written information in FL (interpretive), and to present spoken and written information in FL (presentational). All three aspects of the communication domain were addressed in my project, albeit to a different extent: (1) the students did converse with the teacher and peers during the weekly discussions of picturebooks and spontaneous conversations on topics of their own choosing during creative activities; (2) the students did practice understanding spoken and written texts in terms of interpreting the picturebooks under discussion and the teacher's and peers' oral utterances both during the discussions and in the spontaneous interactions within the "creative community of practice"; (3) the students practiced presenting their own picturebooks at the end of the project. However, the last aspect was not addressed properly as only three participants had presented their creations before their peers, as the other participants had not entirely completed their picturebooks by the end of the project. Another drawback was that the presentation activity was done only once during the semester. Had more presentation activities been employed in the project, in which students could have presented their current achievements or their favorite picturebook, the project would have benefited them more in terms of developing their presentation skills.

The domain of connections presupposes establishing links with other disciplines and reinforcing students' knowledge in other academic areas. The connection between FL teaching and Visual Arts has been successfully achieved in the project as students had an opportunity to improve their drawing skills and many of them commented that the arts became more meaningful for them. In terms of connections with the Arts, one student especially benefited from the project, namely Sasha. He further improved his good drawing skills and received the inspiration to apply to a special Arts program for the following academic year. The Math teacher commented in her interview on the "amazing quality" of Sasha's paintings that he had presented at the school's annual charity fair.

The aspect of communities is similar to Goals 2 and 3 of the Russian Standards, mentioned above (p. 288), and presupposes FL learners' participation in multilingual communities at home and abroad and using FL outside of school. This aspect of FL teaching was also addressed in the study as the project became the *community of practice* for the participants, where they could practice speaking English outside of their regular FL classroom and use English for interpersonal communication. Also, as it was shown in students' interviews, the project helped to develop in the participants the interest for interaction with English speakers – as many students expressed the desire to talk with American people and ask them questions. Almost all students (except only for Alesha) said that they tried to speak in English to each other outside of the classroom. Kolya and Leva said that they "spoke in English while helping in the altar" (as they served as altar boys at a local church). Dima, Sasha, and Grisha shared that they spoke in English while walking home from school. The English teacher shared in her interview that the study participants had begun greeting her in English in the school recreation area, during breaks, which they had not done before the project.

The domain of comparisons, which presupposes that L2 learners should draw comparisons between their native and target languages and cultures in order to better understand them, was not fully addressed in the project. I did not specifically address the topic of cultural knowledge in the project, which could have been done more explicitly on the basis of the English and American picturebooks we discussed. The selection of picturebooks for classroom discussions was guided mostly by their relative accessibility for the students' L2 competence level and their visual attractiveness. However, if other picturebooks had been chosen for classroom discussions, they could have provided more information on specific cultural products, practices, and perspectives of the American or British people. Instead, cultural and language comparisons were drawn primarily implicitly – e.g., the differences were discussed between the usage of words ‘soccer’ and ‘football’ in American and British variants of the English language. The differences between the usage of English and Russian prepositions were addressed in the project - specifically, the usage of the English “*in the picture*” as opposed to the Russian construction “*na kartine*” (“*on the picture*”). However, the drawing of more explicit comparisons between Russian grammar and English grammar could have been beneficial for students.

Finally, the dimension of cultures, corresponding to Goal 2 of the Russian Standards (see above) and defined as gaining understanding of L2 cultures and relationships between cultural products, practices, and perspectives, was mostly neglected in the project. It could have been addressed more properly by selecting picturebooks for classroom discussion with more specific cultural emphasis – for example, the picturebook by A. Browne (2001), *Voices in the Park*. To sum up, the project properly addressed most of the major goals and aspects of school L2 education according to the Russian Standards and American “Five C’s”, but not all of them.

Another weakness of the presented project consisted in the lack of needs analysis that could have been undertaken prior to the project's implementation. I relied mostly on my previous experience of working at the site of the experiment and my knowledge of the school students' level of English competence and my cursory assessment of their English skills at the "promotion" lesson before the study began. I knew that the fifth-grade students had already been exposed to such grammar topics as Present Simple, Present Progressive, and Past Simple, but lacked the knowledge of how well they had learned these tenses. Thus, it was established only in the course of the project that the students were aware of the rules of forming sentences in these tenses but were unable to use them in oral and written speech. For example, the use of negative sentences presented the highest challenge for the students. A properly conducted needs analysis would have enabled me to specifically focus on certain L2 structures (e.g., negative sentences in the Present Simple) the students particularly needed help with.

The teacher-researcher's post-project critical reflections also revealed certain pedagogical issues of the creative project and made me think on what could have been done differently in order to improve the quality of the project under discussion or what should have been altered if the project had been part of a mainstream EFL class.

First, the analysis of lesson transcripts shows that the teacher did not insist on students' producing complete sentences, when they only produced single-word L2 utterances in the beginning of the project. I did not explicitly push the participants to produce full sentences due to the following considerations. Since the focus of RQ2 was on the dynamics of L2 WTC in relation to student flow, my primary goal was to see if the students would be naturally driven by their flow, rather than by the teacher's demands, to producing more and longer utterances, as that would provide evidence of their growing L2 WTC. For this reason, I deliberately chose the role

of a more proficient L2 interlocutor, who initiates L2 interactions with the students, provides them with examples of correct L2 utterances, and encourages them to speak in the L2, rather than a teacher “per se”, who mandates his students to produce certain types of utterances. This teaching decision was based on one of the core tenets of CLT, according to which L2 teaching is “based on a view of language as communication” (Savignon, 2005, p. 639). As the data analysis revealed, most participants (except for Alesha) began producing increasingly longer and more sophisticated sentences as the study progressed, following their teacher’s example rather than his demands. However, in a mainstream L2 classroom with a higher number of students, not all the students could be susceptible to this kind of communicative, “implicit” teaching. In the mainstream educational setting, students can be led to produce longer and more sophisticated L2 sentences (as opposed to one-word replies) with the help of the following mediating activity. The teacher can model a sentence by writing it in on the board and have the students repeat it a few times, both in chorus and individually. Looking back at my study, I have to admit that the implementation of such mediating activities would have allowed more students to eventually benefit from the project in terms of their L2 grammar.

Two other core tenets of CLT, namely the view of L2 use “as serving the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual functions” and the essential requirement for L2 learners to “use language for a variety of purposes, in all phases of learning”, were used as the theoretical ground for my project. The participants were mandated and encouraged to use only English in all the phases of project lessons, including picturebook discussion sessions and various kinds of creative activities (composing the plot, drawing images, coloring them, writing captions, using the paper trimmer, binding the picturebooks, and sharing the results with the peers). The activities of the project were designed in such a way that would encourage the students to use the L2 for various

language functions within each lesson: the ideational function in the reading and discussions of picturebooks; the interpersonal function in the teacher-to-student, student-to-teacher, and student-to-student classroom interactions during the picturebook discussion and creation activities (e.g, when students exchanged colored pencils using polite requests or helped each other with developing picturebook plots); and textual function in composing the textual picturebook captions, whose purpose was to explain, complement, and/or enhance the meaning of the visual images.

In accordance with the CLT tenets, the focus of the picturebook discussion sessions was on meaning rather than on form. In the discussion activities, the students were trying to describe (with the help of teacher's questions and prompts) the events of the picturebook plots on the basis of the visual images and textual captions. As stressed by Savignon (2005), "communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar" (p. 640). The proponents of CLT (Canale & Swain, 1980) do not suggest that grammar is unimportant, rather they seek to "situate grammatical competence within a more broadly defined communicative competence" (Savignon, p. 640). That is why there were no "grammar drills" in my after-school classroom, rather I deliberately used one grammar structure per lesson, e.g. Present Simple or Present Continuous (see the Lesson Plans in Appendix C), modeling sentences to describe the picturebook images using this structure and having students form their utterances accordingly. Trying to liberate my participants of L2 communication apprehension, which they (according to their interviews) felt in their regular EFL classroom, I encouraged and praised all their attempts to speak in the L2. Especially during the first half of the project, when their L2 confidence was still low, I did not correct all their grammar mistakes, praising even their incorrect utterances. During the second half of the project, when the students became much more self-confident and their oral L2

production significantly increased, I began correcting their grammar mistakes and asking them to repeat the correct forms.

Corrective feedback has been found to be generally beneficial to L2 acquisition (Lyster, 2004; Oliver & Mackey, 2003; Philp, 2003) even though some L2 researchers question the necessity of error correction in L2 learning (Krashen, 1981; Truscott, 2007), claiming that L2 acquisition depends solely on positive evidence. Taking into account my goal of fostering students' L2 WTC, an integral part of which was lowering their L2 anxiety, I deliberately tried to reduce my explicit corrections of students' grammatical and lexical errors to a minimum. As the students commented in their interviews, "fear of making a mistake" was one of the main reasons for their reticence in their regular EFL class. In order not to exacerbate this fear, I mostly corrected them when there was a "trend" among the students of making the same mistake repeatedly (e.g., dropping the "ing" ending when using the Present Progressive) or when a particular student repeated the same mistake over and over again (e.g., Grisha's saying "Freddy" instead of "afraid of", as in "the player is freddy the bear"). I also tried to make error corrections in a cheerful and respectful fashion, using prompts and recasts, and asking them to repeat the correct form. Here is an example of a prompt: "Dima: *Willy is run to the stadium*" – I: *Dima, do you remember Present Progressive? What do we add at the end of the verb? Willy is... - Dima: **RUNNING!***" Following is an example of a recast: "Grisha: *Tractor player is freddy the bear!* – I: *Yes, but, Grisha, the Tractor player is **AFRAID** of the bear – **AFRAID** - can you repeat, please?* Grisha: *Yes, he is **AFRAID** of the bear!*" As a rule, after such explicit corrections, students did not repeat the same mistakes, which confirmed the instructional value of explicit corrective feedback.

The more students were willing to speak in the L2 in the experimental class, the more mistakes they were making. In order not to ruin the flow of our L2 discussions by immediate corrections (which would be counterproductive in terms of my study's objectives to foster the students' L2 WTC), I often used delayed error correction. For example, I would allow the students to finish describing a certain image of a picturebook and then return to a specific grammar form, which they had been consistently using incorrectly: "I: *Do you remember the Past Simple? Is it WALK or WALKED?* – Students (in chorus): *WALKED!* - I: *Yes, correct, it's "walked". And here, in this picture – what did he do?* – Students (in chorus): *He WALKED and JUGGLED*". Such corrections did not interrupt the flow of our discussions and enabled the students to use the correct forms not only during the discussion of the following pages of the same book but also during the following lessons.

However, the transcripts of video-recordings show how many students' mistakes were left "unattended". The students' L2 accuracy could have been further improved had I reviewed the video-recording of each lesson after its completion and offered the students a brief corrective feedback at the following class meeting.

In accordance with the "emergentist" theories (Krashen, 1981), which view L2 skills naturally developing on the basis of "meaning-focused communication, aided, perhaps, by some focus of form" (Ellis, 2005, p. 214), I included brief focus on form (FonF) digressions during the picturebook discussion phase in the second half of the project. For example, during one such discussion, I asked the students how the Past Simple was formed and had them search for verbs in this tense in the picturebook captions. The inclusion of "focus of form" instruction (Long, 1988) in our discussions made the participants more aware of the grammatical accuracy of their L2 output and brought about their peer and self-corrections (see Examples 4 and 12, Chapter 6)

in the final part of the project. Eventually, the students' English utterances became generally more grammatically correct in the final part of the project (see Examples 6, 7, 9, 14, 15, Chapter 6). Critically reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the implemented arts-based L2 project, I have to admit that more attention to form from the very beginning of the project could have resulted in the students' better grammatical accuracy. If such a project was implemented in a mainstream L2 classroom, much more attention to form during the discussion phase would be necessary.

Another weakness of my study was the fact that, even though communication involves both oral and written domains (Savignon, 2005), I predominantly focused on the students' L2 speaking skills, while mostly neglecting the development of their L2 writing. This drawback is especially poignant for me as a teacher-researcher since the picturebook creation process provides an excellent opportunity to focus on students' writing. During the process of writing textual captions for student-created picturebooks, L2 learners can be explicitly taught the correct word order of L2 sentences. They can be taught how to write complex sentences and sentences with direct and reported speech. The analysis showed that, in some student cases, their writing skills did improve over the course of the study (e.g., Sasha's case, Chapter 7), but a more focused attention to composing the texts for the picturebooks, including the use of multiple drafts⁷, could have led to positive writing outcomes in more students' cases.

Recommendations for creative teachers

Based on the study findings and my critical reflections of the strengths of the implemented arts-based approach, I am presenting the following list of recommendations which

⁷ I did not introduce more writing activities knowing how much writing the students had to do in their regular classes and how tired they generally were (at their 11 years of age) of writing exercises.

could help other creative L2 teachers achieve student flow in their afterschool L2 classrooms and, consequently, heighten their students' L2 WTC:

1. The challenge level of the creative activities should be well-matched to students' level of L2 and artistic skills. The level of challenge should be sufficiently high to attract students' interest but it should not much exceed the current level of their skills, in order to be within their ZPD (Vygotsky, 2004). This recommendation is consistent with what Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 2007) maintains about flow and what Vygotsky (2004) posited about ZPD. The level of students' artistic skills must be carefully assessed prior to the beginning of the project, so that the teacher could design creative activities of a suitable level of difficulty. An L2 needs assessment should be conducted prior to the beginning of the project that would enable the teacher to focus the language learning activities on specific L2 aspects (including grammar topics, and speaking and writing elements of students' communicative competence).
2. It should be noted that a multilayered creative process, which includes multiple creative sessions on the same artifact (such as a picturebook or a comic book), the use of various artistic or craft tools, and the implementation of different techniques and processes, is more conducive to flow than random, individual creative sessions. The current study has established that a multifaceted process of picturebook creation, which involves composing a plot, drawing and coloring visual images, writing textual captions, possibly typing captions, printing them out, and gluing them to the pages, binding the pages and the book covers with the help of paper trimmer, provides better opportunities for engaging students in creative flow than drawing an individual picture, reproducing the teacher's sketch. Arts-infused L2 learning is more beneficial

for students when it is implemented on the basis of arts-based projects (Baker, 2013; Hanauer, 2012; Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013) spanning a considerable period of time (e.g., a semester).

3. The teacher should be a model for his or her students. The teachers designing and implementing such arts-based projects should be able to draw, if the project is based on visual arts, or sing, if the arts component is music. At the same time, such projects do not require teachers to be professional artists – even amateur level skills would do. It is the teacher’s enthusiasm about the creative process that is of key importance. In the current study, I shared my own unpublished picturebook, which certainly has many flaws, with the students in order to show them that it was possible to create a picturebook without having it printed by a major publishing house. During the course of the study, I also regularly made sketches of the participants and shared them with the students, which helped to create the atmosphere of a “creative workshop” in the project classroom. Due to my artistic skills, I was able to show the students how to draw various images step by step (see Appendix D), and help them draw more complex subjects (for example a figure of a bear for Grisha’s picturebook) by drafting a rough outline of the figure they could elaborate on. The teacher should be able to play the part of that “more proficient adult or peer” who, according to Vygotsky (2004), is necessary to mediate students’ learning within their ZPD.
4. The creative process should include the continuous introduction of new artistic tools and techniques, as well as discussion topics. In my study, the new picturebooks I was regularly bringing for our class discussions and the new artistic utensils (colored pencils, the paper trimmer) never failed to excite students’ curiosity and interest,

which were necessary for them stay in the state of flow throughout the project. The introduction of new tools and creative activities is based on the principle of raising the level of challenge in order to remain in flow, described by flow researchers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; 1997).

5. Another important recommendation is that, in such creative projects, teachers must share at least partial control over the creative activities with students. It was found by Schmidt & Savage (1992) that the feeling of control could be even more important for student motivation and flow than high challenge of a creative task. The findings of the current study also suggest that the students' control, or agency, boosts student flow.
6. Teachers should set clear goals at the beginning of each lesson and provide immediate feedback to students (Shernoff, et al, 2003). The goals should be achievable and the teacher should provide an example of how to achieve them. The current study showed that, when the teacher provides immediate feedback to students engaged in a creation of their artifact, the students feel that their efforts are noticed and appreciated and it contributes to their flow.
7. Fostering the atmosphere of "creative community of practice" and creative egalitarianism is conducive to student flow. According to the study findings, when the students were allowed to choose where and with whom to sit, it contributed to their flow. It was also found that the teacher can add to student flow by positioning himself in the midst of students during the creative and discussion activities (e.g., sitting in a circle, together with the students) rather than occupying the traditional teacher's position in front of the class. By allowing the students to stand up from their desks

and freely move around the classroom (in order to share their “work in progress” or view their classmates’ artifacts), the teacher can create the atmosphere of a “creative community of practice” in his classroom, which was stressed in student interviews. Such “egalitarianism” is also conducive to higher student L2 WTC. When students feel their agency in the classroom, their feelings of “security, responsibility, and excitement” grow, which results in the increase of their L2 WTC (Kang, 2005). The proponents of CLT also point out that, besides the traditional role of “models”, teachers should be “communicators” (Savignon, 2005; Ellis, 2005). This role can be best performed by teachers when their class is transformed into an “egalitarian community of practice” rather than a traditional “teacher-fronted” classroom.

8. L2 material should be introduced and practiced implicitly. In picturebook discussions and L2 conversations occurring during the creative phase, the focus should be on meaning, not on grammar, but “focus-on-form” digressions can and should be made, as students tend to “notice” grammar better when it is meaningful for them (Ellis, 2005). No explicit teaching of grammar should take place in arts-based afterschool projects, as all the necessary grammar instruction can be done during the regular L2 hours mandated by the school curriculum. Arts-based afterschool L2 projects, where students and teacher “communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing” (Savignon, 2005, p. 639) can provide an ideal ground for implementing the core elements of CLT instruction.
9. The teacher should be careful about correcting students’ mistakes as frequent corrections can breed L2 communication apprehension among the students. An arts-based L2 project should be a place where students can feel liberated from any

anxieties, whereas rigorous error correction often breeds the fear of making a mistake and lowers L2 WTC (as the participants stated about their mainstream EFL class).

Error corrections should be done in an arts-based L2 classroom in a respectful, encouraging way, and only in such cases when students repeatedly make the same error. As the teachers in such projects need to foster the flow of discussion activities, avoiding interruptions of L2 learners' speaking attempts, delayed error correction is preferable as it does not interrupt the conversational flow.

10. Finally, there should be some attractive and unconventional sign, preferably designed and created by the teacher (e.g., the "Harry Potter" poster utilized in my study) to remind the students to stick exclusively to speaking in the L2 in the creative classroom. The sign, or object, should have an obvious connection to the L2 and be relevant to students to excite their curiosity. Students who have volunteered for participation in the project need to be reminded that the creative classroom is their 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where they need to be fully immersed in the L2. A sign that is liked by all students, placed in front of them at a specific moment of each lesson, will also contribute to creating the atmosphere of an "L2 community of practice" where students can imagine themselves immersed in an L2 speaking community (as Grisha did in my study) and hone their L2 communication skills.

Strengths and limitations of the study

The most evident strengths of this study were my familiarity with the research site and my experience in teaching both the Visual Arts and EFL. As I stated in Chapter 1, I have a BA degree in teaching Visual Arts and I have worked as an Arts teacher for two years in two Russian

schools, a public secondary school and a specialized art school. As an EFL educator, I hold two Master's degrees in L2 teaching (from a Russian university and an American one) and I have worked as a language teacher for 13 years in various universities both in Russia and in the USA, and for 5 years in Russian public schools, including two years at the research site, prior to the beginning of the study. Being personally acquainted with the teachers and the principal of the research site school helped my case study in many ways, as they were always supportive and understanding.

Another strength of this study stems from the ability of case studies to “examine, in-depth, a ‘case’ within its ‘real life’ context” (Yin, 2014, p. 111), which allowed me to examine the particular case of the arts-infused project based on picturebook creation in all its uniqueness. The fact that I examined the case with the help of multiple data collection methods (journaling, video-recording, interviewing, visual sketching, questionnaire) also contributes to the strengths of the study. My position as a teacher/researcher, who designed the lesson plans, conducted the lessons, gathered data, and analyzed it, allowed me to have an insider's (emic) perspective on the study, which helped me to better perceive the cause/effect relationships between the creative activities implemented in the project and the students' flow and L2 WTC.

Particularization of a case study can be beneficial as atypical cases can be even more informative than typical ones (Stake, 2006) but such specific studies can hardly be recognized as ground for any generalized claims. However, as I have stated above, my study was exploratory in nature and grounded in a specific instructional context. Therefore, generalizability of the results was not a specific goal of this study, which to some extent shared certain characteristics of

classroom action research⁸. According to Sagor (2000), generalizability of action research studies in education may be very limited because they are usually conducted in “a unique setting with a comparatively small sample” (p.157). Nevertheless, such studies “do offer valid and reliable reports of what occurred inside one unique setting” (Sagor, 2000, p. 158). Even though generalizability of such studies is limited, educators can still extract from them what is relevant for their particular settings.

Notwithstanding the positive results of the study, it had its limitations. The most salient limitation was the small sample of participants – it was a particular group of seven Russian fifth-grade students, who volunteered to participate in the study. No randomized selection of participants was undertaken and there was no control group, so the conducted study cannot be defined as an experiment “per se”. Treating this study as an exploratory one, I was not looking for a larger sample of participants and did not attempt to design a “true” experiment. For the exploratory investigation of the effects of the picturebook creation project in an afterschool L2 classroom, such limited sample could be sufficient. However, in order to garner more reliable and generalizable results and provide more substantiated evidence of the benefits of such an approach in L2 education, further research is needed. It should include a larger number of participants, probably children representing different age, grade and socio-economic groups. It should employ experimental and control groups, the selection of participants into which should be randomized.

Future avenues for research

The study presented in this dissertation analyzed the effects of creative flow on pre-adolescent Russian EFL learners’ L2 WTC in an afterschool project based on picturebook

⁸ My study could have qualified as action research “per se”, had I been incorporating an arts-based approach in my mainstream L2 classroom, in which I would have had to combine the rigorous curricular demands with the “arts-infused” L2 learning.

creation. The positive outcomes of the creation of an “L2 community of practice” centered around the processes of picturebook creation and discussion, described in this dissertation, call for possible replications of such after school projects in the U.S. and other countries around the world. In the U.S., where foreign language learning in public education starts in Middle School (Grades 7 – 8), such after school projects could provide valuable support for mainstream FL educators facing the challenge of teaching a foreign language “from scratch” to mostly monolingual American adolescents, who are at this age almost beyond the “sensitive period” of L2 acquisition (Long, 1990). If American children were exposed to foreign languages in Elementary School, when they are still within their “sensitive period”, with the help of such “flow-rich” afterschool arts-based projects, they would enter their mainstream L2 classrooms in Middle School with at least basic knowledge of an L2. In the same vein, similar afterschool arts-based ESL projects could help ESL learners to successfully integrate into their mainstream academic courses.

Taking into account the limitations of the current study (p. 303), a more thorough investigation of the benefits of picturebook creation in L2 learning, including an experimental and control groups and a larger sample of participants of the same age and L2 proficiency, can be conducted. As L2 writing was mostly left out of the focus of the current study, the future study could analyze the effects of picturebook creation activities on the development of students’ L2 writing skills.

Another possible avenue for future research in this area can be a different arts-based educational context. Analyzing flow and L2 WTC in L2 classrooms where L2 learning is infused with components of different artistic genres (e.g., in projects based on L2 poetry writing, song

writing, or comic book creation) and at different age and proficiency levels can contribute more insights into the relationships between creativity, flow, and L2 WTC.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 21), Vygotsky (2004) noted that children's interest in drawing decreases around the age of puberty. At the same time, their interest towards creative writing increases at this age. Thus, studying adolescent L2 learners' flow and L2 WTC in an afterschool L2 creative writing project could shed light on the benefits of creative writing for the L2 WTC of high school students. A series of such studies targeting the effects of arts-infused projects, based on various artistic genres, in different age groups of school children could ultimately allow researchers and educators to create a comprehensive system of arts-based afterschool L2 education for K - 12 school grades.

Finally, it is necessary to analyze the feasibility and educational value of incorporating such arts-based projects into mainstream L2 classes of public schools. Is an arts-based component going to increase student motivation to L2 studies, liberate students and teachers from the routine of never-ending grammar drills, and ultimately lead to students' higher L2 competence, or is it going to dilute the L2 curriculum, put an additional strain on L2 educators, and not bring about the desirable results? A series of classroom action research studies investigating the incorporation of various arts in mainstream L2 classrooms could help to answer this question.

Coda

Having answered my research questions, I feel that the readers of this dissertation might still have another question, not properly answered in the main body of this research. So why did I draw my study participants, both in the classroom, "from life", and at home, drawing my inspiration from video-recordings? Why was it important for my study and what impact did it

have on my students and on me as a researcher? Why did I choose to use my sketches and not just photos or still images of video-recordings in my study?

First of all, by drawing sketches of the participants in the classroom, I managed to create an atmosphere of an “artistic workshop”, which became a crucial antecedent of students’ flow. As the study demonstrated, flow is “contagious” and the participants were “infected” by my creative flow, as they tried to emulate me as an artist and L2 speaker.

Second, whenever I brought to the classroom my sketches of them that I had created at home, the students were inspired both by the quality of my art and by the realization that they, too, can become part of the heretofore “unknown world” – the world of art, scholarly research, and the English language. The presence of an adult, speaking in a foreign language, drawing pictures along with the students in their classroom, and treating them as his equals, had a profound impact on the students, as it was an “otherworldly” experience for them - something they had not experienced before and could hardly imagine possible.

On the other hand, drawing images of the participants had a profound effect on me as a teacher/researcher as well. That was the point where my arts-based pedagogy became fused with elements of Arts-Based Research. The making of my drawings connected me to my students on a deeper level as it allowed me to perceive in a more subtle way their changing attitudes towards the project, the growing vigor of their artistic endeavor, their increasing motivation to learn English, and even their unique personalities, which helped me in the analysis of their L2 WTC. While drawing the participants, I could feel Grisha’s kind-hearted swagger and the openness of his soul; Sasha’s artistic ardor and avidity for learning; Dima’s unwavering loyalty to his friends and curiosity about the project; Alesha’s desperate desire to emulate the class leaders and succeed, just like them, in the challenging business of picturebook creation.

In a mysterious way, the making of my drawings made me very close to the study participants on the emotional and psychological levels, and it was reciprocated by the trust and loyalty the students felt towards me, which resulted in their flow and ever-growing confidence in speaking English. Even though the project only lasted a semester and I saw my students for just 45 minutes per week (plus an occasional half-hour of the “after-after-school” soccer or basketball game we enjoyed together), it felt as if we had known each other for years. In a sense, the connection I established with my students through the drawing of their images was akin to that mysterious bond that can be felt by a person praying for his or her friends or loved ones. Hence the last recommendation I want to make for other creative L2 teachers – draw your students’ images, write poems about them, for them, and with them, or use any other art media in order to better connect to your students and transform your classroom into a creative workshop.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interviews

Student Interview Guide

The interview was taken in May 2016, in the participants' usual classroom and took approximately 15 minutes per student. The interview focused on the participant's attitude and motivation to studying English, his attitude to the after-school program, and his willingness to speak in English in the experimental study and in their regular EFL classroom. The interview was designed as a semi-structured one and any digressions from the following list of questions was welcome.

Date of the interview _____

Student's name _____

Interview questions:

1. Do you want to visit an English speaking country? Which one? Which cities?
2. Why do you want to visit this country?
3. Do you want to have a friend in that country?
4. Do you want to watch movies in English or read books in English?
5. Have you seen American or British people? Have you talked with them?
6. Have you talked to foreigners in English? Did you like it?
7. Do you want to speak English perfectly? Why?
8. Do you want to study English at the university? Do you want to study abroad?
9. Do you want to work abroad in the future?
10. Do you think everyone in the world should be able to speak English?
11. Do you think it will be important for your future job?

12. Do your parents speak English? Do they want you to learn English and speak it well?
13. What do you like in your regular English classes?
14. What is your favorite subject?
15. What do you prefer in your English lessons – writing, speaking, reading, doing exercises?
Translating?
16. Do you say more English words in this class or in your regular class?
17. Do you sometimes speak in English to your teacher/classmates in this class? In your regular class? When the teacher has not asked you a question?
18. Do you often raise your hand in your English class?
19. Do you always raise your hand when you know the answer?
20. Does it happen to you that you know the answer but you don't raise your hand? Why?
21. Do you speak in class because you want to get a good grade? Is it important for you to get a good grade?
22. Do you sometimes raise your hand even when you don't know what to say? Just because you want to say something in English?
23. Are you afraid of making mistakes in English? In your regular class? In this class?
24. What is more interesting for you – to study English and draw and discuss picturebooks or to study English using your textbook and workbook?

Teacher's Interview Guide

Date _____

Name and last name _____

Position _____

Questions:

1. Do you think the participants' attitude towards studying English has changed over the semester?
2. What can you say about the participants' motivation to studying English?
3. Do they prefer reading, speaking, writing, or translating assignments?
4. What do you think about the participants' progress in studying English?
5. As compared to the other students in the class, do the study participants show a higher or lower willingness to speak in English and perform other L2 learning tasks?
6. Do they often raise their hands in class?
7. Do you think the participants show high or low willingness to communicate in English due to their high or low English competency or their personality traits?
8. Are they more enthusiastic about some of the learning activities? What are these activities?
9. Do they sometimes look bored or puzzled with some activities? What are these activities?
10. Doing what activities do they look the most confident?
11. Are they afraid of making mistakes?
12. Do they like to work in small groups?
13. Do they sometimes try to speak to you in English – for example, asking questions or sharing something?

14. Do they sometimes try to speak to each other in English, when it is not an assignment?

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

The questionnaire and the grading system were translated into Russian and all explanations were done in Russian. Before the students began filling in the questionnaire, it was carefully explained to them that they were to evaluate each statement about the program in question using the following grading system (from 1 to 7):

(1) strongly disagree; (2) disagree; (3) not sure; (4) maybe; (5) yes rather than no; (6) agree; (7) strongly agree.

1. This activity excited my curiosity.
2. This activity was interesting in itself.
3. I felt that I had no control over what was happening during this activity.
4. When engaged in this activity I was aware of distractions.
5. This activity was exciting for me.
6. This activity was fun.
7. I would do this activity again.
8. This activity allowed me to control what I was doing.
9. When involved in this activity, I felt totally absorbed in what I was doing.
10. This activity bored me.
11. While doing this activity, I could make my own decisions about what to draw and what to say.
12. When doing this task I thought about other things.

13. This activity aroused my imagination.

14. I would do this activity even if it was not required.

APPENDIX C

LESSON PLANS

Lesson 1

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
Greetings and Introductions. “What do you like to do?”	<i>I like to...</i> <i>My favorite sport is...</i> <i>I can play...</i> Copula “is” and modal verb “can”	<i>Favorite, head, tail, legs, body, pencil, draw</i>	Drawing a lion after the teacher’s example	Paper, graphite pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson included (1) introducing students to a creative drawing activity in collaboration with an adult; (2) teaching students how to draw an animal starting from a rough outline and gradually adding details to the drawing; and (3) checking the level of students’ drawing abilities and motivation towards drawing.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) practicing introductions in L2; (2) checking the students’ ability to understand simple questions and respond to them; (3) practicing vocabulary denoting parts of an animal’s body while drawing an animal.

Activities

1. Students introduce themselves following the teacher’s model “My name is...”
2. Teacher asks the students simple questions about their favorite activities and games (“Do you like to draw?” “Can you play basketball?” “What is your favorite sport?”) and models, if necessary, the correct answers.

3. Teacher draws a lion on the blackboard and students draw lions after the teacher's example in their notebooks. Teacher names parts of the lion's body and students repeat them in chorus.
4. Teacher writes the words denoting body parts next to the image and students follow his example in their notebooks.
5. Teacher provides feedback to students on their drawings and helps students complete them.
6. Teacher points at the parts of the lion's body and students name them in English.

Lesson 2

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy and Hugh</i> Does he have friends?	<i>Willy is lonely</i> <i>He doesn't have friends</i> <i>Willy meets Hugh</i> <i>They go to the zoo</i> Present Simple	<i>spider, gorilla,</i> <i>lonely, friends,</i> <i>zoo, unicorn,</i> <i>fairy-tale,</i> <i>picturebook</i>	Drawing a fairy- tale creature (ogre and/or unicorn) with the teacher	Paper, graphite pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson included (1) teaching students how to draw a familiar figure, starting from a rough outline and gradually adding details to the drawing.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) practicing saying L2 sentences to describe pictures; (2) practicing using English verbs in Present Simple (which has been learned by students previously in their regular class); (3) practicing using the L2 vocabulary from the picturebook.

Activities

1. Students view the picturebook images (*Willy and Hugh* by A. Browne) and read the picturebook captions after the teacher;

2. Students describe the pictures using simple sentences after the teacher's example (*This is Willy; He is lonely; He walks in the park; They meet; Willy reads a book; Hugh laughs*);
3. Students answer teacher's questions about the picturebook's plot using the key words written on the board (*spider, gorilla, lonely, friends, zoo, read, run, meet, happy, sad*) and Present Simple (*he doesn't have friends; they go to the zoo; Willy says "I'm sorry"*)
4. Students draw fairy-tale creatures in their notebooks after the teacher's example.
5. Students answer the teacher's questions saying what they are drawing and naming body parts they are drawing (e.g., *This is a unicorn; I am drawing its legs*).

Lesson 3

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy and Hugh</i> What movies do you like?	<i>Willy reads... He is afraid of... Can I help you? My favorite movie</i> Present Simple	<i>lonely, angry, afraid of, run, walk, laugh, friendship, library, spider</i>	Drawing a movie character after the teacher – dinosaur and/or pirate or princess	Paper, graphite pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) learning how to draw a person.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) practicing saying L2 sentences using Present Simple to describe pictures; (2) practicing using the L2 vocabulary from the picturebook.

Activities

1. Students name characters, objects, and actions do describe the images of the picturebook using the L2 words learned at the previous lesson;
2. Students answer the teacher's questions about the story plot using Present Simple;
3. Students draw a dinosaur and a pirate using the consecutive drawing steps after the teacher's example.

4. Students use Present Continuous after the teacher's model to describe what they are drawing (*I am drawing a pirate; I am drawing his head; I am drawing his legs*).

Lesson 4

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Hook</i> Do you like animals? What computer games do you like?	<i>My favorite animal</i> <i>This is a chicken</i> <i>This is an eagle</i> <i>I like Kill Zone...</i> Present Simple	<i>egg, mountain,</i> <i>chicken, fly,</i> <i>boy, tree, eagle,</i> <i>penguin, bird,</i> <i>ostrich</i>	Drawing animals – birds: eagle; ostrich, penguin with a baby penguin	Paper, graphite pencils, colored pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) Learning how to draw a bird in flight and a stationary bird.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) Practicing using vocabulary while describing pictures; (3) practicing using Present Simple to describe images.

Activities:

1. Students read and translate the words written on the board;
2. Students find the words written on the board in the picturebook (*Hook* by E. Young) and name the objects in the images;
3. Students practice saying simple sentences in Present Simple to describe the pictures;
4. Students draw birds after the teacher's example – eagle, ostrich, and penguin. Students learn how to start a drawing with a tentative outline and then add details.
5. Students answer the teacher's questions about their favorite games, films, and books in Present Simple while drawing the birds.

Lesson 5

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
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<i>Willy the Wizard</i> What sports do you like? Do you watch sports on TV?	<i>I like football... He likes hockey He likes to play... He doesn't have boots</i> Present Simple	<i>Boots, ice-hockey, skating, skiing, goalkeeper, player, stranger</i>	Drawing people – athletes. Students draw a soccer player, a hockey player or a figure-skater after the teacher	Paper, graphite pencils, colored pencils
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The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) Learning how to draw a human figure in motion; (2) learning how to start a drawing with a tentative outline and then add details;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (3) practicing the vocabulary related to sports; (4) practicing answering questions in Present Simple, using both affirmative and negative answers.

Activities:

1. Students read the picturebook together with the teacher;
2. Students describe the images of the picturebook using the words related to the topic of “sports” (written on the board);
3. Students describe the events of the story by saying simple sentences in Present Simple;
4. Students draw figures of athletes in motion after the teacher’s examples – starting with a rough outline and then adding details.
5. Students practice answering questions about sports while drawing (*What is your favorite sport? Who is your favorite soccer player? What is your favorite ice-hockey team?* etc).

Lesson 6

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Wizard</i> Do you have boots? What do	<i>I have boots I don't have boots I have a hockey stick Speak English!</i> Present Simple	<i>Shoot, pass, dribble, stick, ball, match, boots, score, opponent, team,</i>	Students begin drawing their picturebook characters and share the plot	Sketch-books, graphite pencils

you have?		<i>win</i>	ideas	
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The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students draw their characters;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) students practice using Present Simple describing images of the picturebook (*Willy the Wizard* by A. Browne); (3) students share their creative ideas by stating what or who their picturebooks are about.

Activities:

1. Students continue describing the plot of the picturebook by A. Browne using Present Simple;
2. Students answer the teacher’s questions about the plot of the book using affirmative and negative sentences in Present Simple;
3. Students start working on their own picturebooks – they draw the first sketches of their main characters.
4. Students answer the teacher’s questions about their protagonists (*Who is your main character? What/who is it you are drawing?*)
5. Students share their first sketches with each other and briefly describe their plot ideas.
6. “Speak English!” poster is introduced and the students are encouraged to speak only English in the classroom when the poster is up.

Lesson 7

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Wizard</i> What sport does he play? What does he do?	<i>He shoots</i> <i>He passes</i> <i>He scores</i> <i>He runs</i> Present Simple, 3 rd person Singular	<i>Score, win, lose, game, computer game, need for speed, shooting game</i>	Students continue to draw visual images for their picturebooks and write the first captions	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students draw the first images of their picturebooks, leaving space for captions; (2) students draw tentative sentences for the captions;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (3) students retell the plot of Willy the Wizard, practicing the vocabulary and grammar previously learned (Present Simple); (4) students practice to use 3rd person singular ending “s” correctly.

Activities:

1. Students answer the teacher’s questions about the images of the picturebook under discussion (*Who is this? What is his favorite sport? Does he like basketball? etc.*).
2. Students retell the plot of the picturebook looking at the images and using Present Simple.
3. Students draw the first images in their picturebooks, learning with the teacher’s help to place images in the middle of the page and leave some room for the captions either at the bottom or top of the page.
4. Students share their current results with each other and say a few words about the plots of their picturebooks.

Lesson 8

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Wizard</i> His boots are magic! Or is he magic?	<i>They don’t pass... He doesn’t have boots He has no boots</i> Present Simple, Negation	<i>Magic, boots, magician, wizard, goal, champion, fans, score, game</i>	Students continue drawing their own picturebooks, further developing their plots.	Sketch-books, graphite pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students continue to draw images of their picturebooks; (2) students further develop their picturebook plots.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (1) students practice describing pictures in Present Simple; (2) students practice using negative sentences in Present Simple; (3) students practice using the L2 vocabulary from the picturebook.

Activities

1. The teacher and students view the pictures of Willy the Wizard picturebook and describe the images using Present Simple;
2. The teacher asks questions and students respond to them;
3. Students work on their picturebooks, drawing images and explaining to the teacher what will happen next in their stories.
4. Students share their picturebooks with each other and explain what happens to their protagonists in simple sentences, using Present Simple.
5. Students are encouraged to speak in English while drawing their picturebooks.

Lesson 9

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Wizard</i> What is Willy doing?	<i>Willy is dribbling</i> <i>Willy is shooting</i> <i>He is passing</i> Present Progressive	<i>Dribbling,</i> <i>passing, running,</i> <i>shooting, waking</i> <i>up, washing,</i> <i>walking, sleeping</i>	Students draw visuals and write captions. Students share what their books are about.	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson included (1) students continue to draw images of their picturebooks; (2) students write captions for the pages already finished; (3) students share their current picturebook results with each other and explain their plots.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) practicing describing pictures in Present Progressive; (2) practicing using the L2 verbs from the picturebook.

Activities

1. The teacher and students go over the pictures of Willy the Wizard picturebook and describe them using Present Progressive;
2. The teacher and students briefly overview how Present Progressive is formed and when it is used;
3. The teacher asks questions about Willy in Present Progressive and students respond to them in the same tense;
4. Students continue working on their picturebooks, drawing images and writing captions for them.
5. Students share their current achievements with each other, showing the images of their picturebooks and saying a few sentences about the events of their picturebooks.

Lesson 10

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Dreamer</i> What is that? Describing unusual pictures	<i>This is a banana-ship</i> <i>That is a banana-monkey</i> Compound nouns Present Progressive	<i>Banana-plane,</i> <i>banana-boots,</i> <i>banana-king,</i> <i>banana-fish</i>	Student continue drawing their picturebooks and share how many pages they have done	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson included (1) students continue drawing images of their picturebooks; (2) students share the pages of their creations.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) describing pictures using compound nouns; (2) describing images using pronouns “this” and “that”.

Activities

1. The teacher and students describe and discuss the unusual images of *Willy the Dreamer* picturebook (by A. Browne) using pronouns “this” and “that” and compound nouns;

2. Students describe unusual images creating compound nouns (e.g., *banana-fish*).
3. Students continue working on their picturebooks, elaborating their images and writing captions;
4. Students answer the teacher’s questions about the creative process using the Present Progressive (e.g., T: What are you drawing? S: *I am drawing a dinosaur*).
5. Students share the finished pages of their picturebooks the teacher and answer his questions concerning the number of pages and the story plots.

Lesson 11

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>The Man Who Walked between the Towers</i> What did he do? Describing the pictures	<i>He walked between the towers</i> <i>He juggled balls</i> <i>He rode a unicycle</i> Past Simple	<i>Twin towers, unicycle, wire, torch, dream, Paris, New York City, rope, walk, juggle, ride, want</i>	Students continue drawing their picturebooks and write captions for the pictures.	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students continue drawing their picturebooks, adding details to the images and composing captions; (2) students and the teacher check the grammatical correctness of the sentences in the captions.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) students practice using the Past Simple describing the actions depicted in the images of the picturebook by M. Gerstein.

Activities:

1. The teacher and students describe the pictures of the picturebook using the Past Simple;
2. The teacher and students discuss how the Past Simple is formed (irregular verbs, suffix “-ed”, auxiliary verb “did”).
3. Students name the objects depicted in the images using the words written on the board.

4. Students continue drawing images of their picturebooks, adding details and describing what they are doing with the teacher's help.
5. Students write captions and check the grammar of their sentences with the teacher.

Lesson 12

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>The Man Who Walked between the Towers</i> What could he do?	<i>He could walk...</i> <i>He could juggle...</i> <i>He could ride a unicycle</i> Past Simple of <i>can</i>	<i>Unicycle, wire, torch, rope, walk, juggle, ride, want, police, arrow, bird, perform</i>	Students draw a soccer goalkeeper and/or a hockey one after the teacher	Paper, pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) “taking a detour” from picturebook creation and learning how to draw a person in motion (by this time, students realize their skills in drawing people need upgrading and learning how to draw a figure becomes more relevant for them).

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) practicing describing pictures and events depicted therein with the help of the Past Simple (both regular and irregular verbs); (3) practicing using modal verbs “can” and “could”.

Activities:

1. Students retell the events described in the images of the picturebook practicing using the Past Simple and the vocabulary introduced at the previous lesson;
2. Students practice using modal verbs “can” and “could” in sentences describing Philipp Petit's actions and skills;
3. Students draw a soccer and/or a hockey goalkeeper after the teacher's example, starting from a rough outline and gradually adding details;
4. Students describe what they are drawing at the moment, using the Present progressive and the words denoting body parts.

Lesson 13

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Champ</i> by A. Browne Describing pictures	<i>I am sorry...</i> <i>Excuse me...</i> <i>Can you help me?</i> Polite formulaic expressions	<i>Champion, punch, enemy, friends, scared, crying, kind, polite</i>	Students continue working on their picturebooks – drawing and writing captions	Sketch-books, graphite pencils, pens

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students finish drawing the images in black-and-white and write captions;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) students describe the images of the picturebook using the Present Simple and Present Progressive after the teacher’s example; (3) students learn how to use polite requests in classroom interactions.

Activities:

1. Students describe the events of the picturebook using two present tenses and comparing them;
2. Students finish the images of their picturebooks, adding details and captions;
3. Students repeat polite requests after the teacher and practice using them when asking one another for pencils, erasers, and other drawing utensils;
4. Students are encouraged to use only English for classroom interactions.

Lesson 14

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Champ</i> What does he like to do?	<i>He likes to read and listen to music.</i> <i>I like to read sometimes</i> Present Simple and Present Progressive	<i>Sofa, music, cinema, laugh, cry, park, walk</i>	Students continue working on picturebooks – start coloring them	Colored pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) beginning to color the images of students' picturebooks;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) practicing vocabulary items denoting colors and hues; (3) retelling the events of the picturebook using the present tenses; (4) practicing using polite requests.

Activities:

1. Students retell the plot of the picturebook using the images as prompts;
2. Students choose and exchange colored pencils, reading the colors written on them;
3. Students start coloring their picturebooks, describing what colors they are using;
4. Students exchange colored pencils, asking for the colors they need and practicing polite requests and polite responses (e.g. "Sasha, can you give me a red pencil, please?" – "Yes, here you are!" – "Thank you very much!" – "You are welcome!")

Lesson 15

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Wimp</i> What do you know about Willy?	<i>He is a monkey</i> <i>He lives in a house</i> <i>He plays football</i> Present Simple	<i>Wimp, weak, strong, package, diet, stronger, bigger, afraid</i>	Students finish drawing their visuals and color them	Colored pencils

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson included (1) students continue drawing and coloring the images of their picturebooks; (2) students share their creations with the peers.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) describing pictures using the Present Simple and the new vocabulary; (2) describing images using pronouns "this" and "that".

Activities:

1. Students read the words written on the board and translate them into their L1;

2. Students describe the images of the picturebook by A. Browne using the new vocabulary written on the board;
3. Students continue coloring their picturebooks, sharing the colored pencils;
4. Students answer the teacher’s questions concerning their picturebook plots;
5. With the help of questions, the teacher gets students engaged in informal conversations with their teacher and classmates about various topics: computer games, sports, movies and encourages them to use only the L2.

Lesson 16

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy the Wimp</i> Is Willy weak or strong?	He says “I’m sorry” They hit Willy Willy is dancing Present Simple and Progressive	<i>Weak, strong, hit, sorry, arm- chair, swimming pool</i>	Students color their visual images and begin making covers	Colored pencils, Fiskars paper trimmer

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) coloring picturebook images and beginning to work on picturebook covers – introducing the paper-cutting machine;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (2) students practice using the Present Progressive and Present Simple while describing the images of *Willy the Wimp* by A. Browne.

Activities:

1. Students read the captions of the picturebook by A. Browne and describe the images using the Present Progressive;
2. Students continue coloring their picturebooks and share their results with each other;
3. Students share colored pencils, practicing polite requests for pencils and for assistance with the coloring process;

- The teacher shows how to operate the paper-cutting device and the students take turns using it to cut paper for their picturebook covers.

Lesson 17

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy's Pictures</i> Describing pictures	<i>I know the word...</i> <i>I can see umbrella in the picture...</i> Descriptions of objects in pictures	<i>Umbrella, pencil, brush, painting, bread, soap, shower</i>	Students draw Willy and color the pictures. They cut and bend paper to make covers out of cardboard	Fiskars paper trimmer, Stapler, Cardboard, glue

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students learn to operate the paper-cutting machine, ruler, and glue; (2) students draw and color a picture of Willy, after the teacher's example;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (3) students use modal verb "can" to describe pictures; (4) students use the L2 while collaborating on making picturebook covers.

Activities:

- Students read the new vocabulary on the board stating which words they know and translating them into the L1;
- Students describe the images of the picturebook using the words from the board and practicing the construction "We can see....in this picture";
- Students take turns operating the cutting machine to cut cardboard;
- Students follow the teacher's example and draw a picture of Willy from the picturebook;
- Students color their images of Willy describing what colors they are using and asking each other for the colored pencils they need.

Lesson 18

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>Willy's Pictures</i> Describing pictures	<i>Please, give me a brown/red/pink/blue/green/orange/purple pencil</i> Polite requests	<i>Leather jacket, boat, hat, teeth, False teeth, fisherman</i>	Students finish picturebooks – they bind them, make covers, and draw pictures and titles on the front cover	Fiskars paper trimmer, Stapler, Cardboard, glue

The goals for the creative phase of the lesson included (1) students learn how to bind their picturebooks; (2) students learn how to make covers for their picturebooks, draw front cover pictures, and entitle the books.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson included (1) students describe images of the picturebook using the vocabulary written on the blackboard; (2) students practice using polite requests in L2.

Activities:

1. Students view the pictures of another book by A. Browne and name the objects depicted there using the vocabulary written on the board;
2. Students finish coloring their picturebooks using polite requests to share colored pencils;
3. Students take turns operating the cutting machine, cutting cardboard, bending it and making the covers for their picturebooks;
4. Students use the stapler to bind their picturebooks;
5. Students draw front cover images and invent titles for their picturebooks.

Lesson 19

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>The Tunnel</i>	<i>Kolya's book is about...</i>	<i>Brick wall,</i>	Students bind	Fiskars paper

What are your classmates books about?	<i>His book is about...</i> Descriptions of the main ideas of books	<i>window, smile, mysterious, forest, animals, crocodile</i>	picturebooks and color the cover pictures.	trimmer, Stapler, ruler, glue
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The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students complete their picturebooks, binding them and drawing the images and book titles on the front covers; (2) students use the paper-cutting device and stapler to put their picturebooks together, working collaboratively;

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (3) students describe the images of the picturebook by A. Browne; (4) students present their picturebooks to their peers, describing what their stories are about.

Activities:

1. Students describe the images of the picturebook and the events described there, using the vocabulary written on the board;
2. Students answer the teacher’s questions about the picturebook plot.
3. Students bind their picturebooks using the paper-cutting device, ruler, stapler, and glue.
4. Students draw the images and titles on the front covers of their picturebooks, finishing them;
5. Students answer the teacher’s questions about the contents of their picturebooks and their peer’s books.
6. Students enumerate the titles of the picturebooks created in the classroom and say who created which picturebook.

Lesson 20

Picturebook/ discussion topic	L2 grammar structures and speaking practice	Vocabulary focus	Creative phase activities	Tools and materials
<i>The Tunnel</i> Share your	<i>They are not friends</i> <i>My book is about...</i>	<i>Stone, scary, dark, bright,</i>	Students share their creations	Finished picture-

book. What is it about?	<i>My book is called...</i> Sharing book plots	<i>love, hate, hug</i>	with each other and their teacher	books
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The goals for the creative phase of the lesson: (1) students complete their picturebooks; (2) students presenting their picturebooks before the class and teacher.

The goals for the linguistic phase of the lesson: (1) students describe images of a new picturebook using the vocabulary written on the blackboard; (2) students describing their own picturebooks.

Activities

1. Students describe the images of *The Tunnel* picturebook (by A. Browne) in simple sentences, after the teacher's model ("In this picture we can see a boy and a girl. I think they are brother and sister");
2. Students answer the teacher's questions about the content of the picturebook, using the vocabulary written on the board;
3. Students present their finished picturebooks using the following model: "This is my picturebook. Its title is "X". My book is about... It has... pages."
4. Students make an exhibit of their picturebooks, invite their teachers and friends from other classes and share their picturebooks by showing the images of their picturebooks and describing the events depicted therein.

APPENDIX D

Sample practice session

Teacher (showing the picturebook cover to students): *Look everyone, who is this?*

Students: *Willy! This is Willy!*

T: *Yes, this is Willy! Let's draw Willy. Repeat after me: Let's draw Willy!*

Ss: *Let's draw Willy!*

T: *Do you have pencils? Ss: Yes! T: Are you ready? Ss: Yes! T: Who are we drawing? Ss: Willy!*

T: *Okay, let's draw Willy. Draw after me and repeat after me. I am drawing his HEAD. Repeat!*

Ss: *I am drawing his head.*

The teacher draws an oval on the board (Image 9.1) and asks: T: *What does it look like?*

S1: *Head! S2: An egg! T: Yes, it looks like an EGG! Draw an egg, like this. Sasha, what are you*

drawing? S: I am drawing an egg. T: Right. Now, I am drawing his BODY. Repeat- I am

drawing his BODY. Ss: I am drawing his body.

The teacher draws a rectangular form attached to the oval (Image 9.1) and the students

draw after him. T: *What are you drawing, guys? Ss: I am drawing his BODY. T: Good! Now,*

look – I am drawing his LEGS! Repeat! Ss: I am drawing his legs. T: Are you drawing his legs?

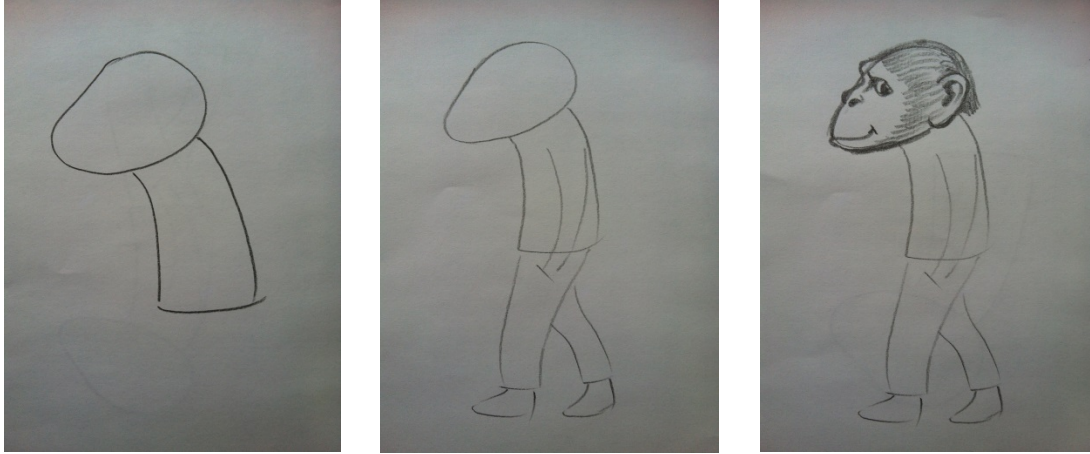
Ss: *Yes, I am drawing his legs! T: Are you drawing his HANDS? S1: No, his LEGS! T: What are*

you drawing, Grisha? G: I am drawing his LEGS! T: Great! And now – look – I am drawing his

FEET! Repeat! Ss: I am drawing his FEET! T: Alesha, what are you drawing? A: I am drawing

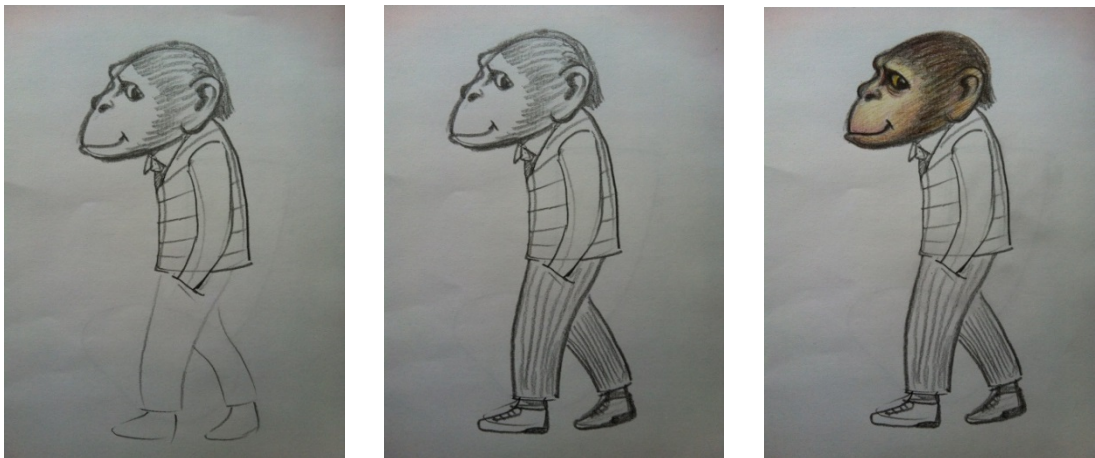
his feet! T: Are you drawing his FEET or his EYES? Ss: His FEET! T: And what is Willy

wearing on his feet? Ss: SHOES! T: Yes, very good! What color are his shoes? Ss: Brown shoes!



Initial steps of drawing Willy the Chimp (Browne, 2014).

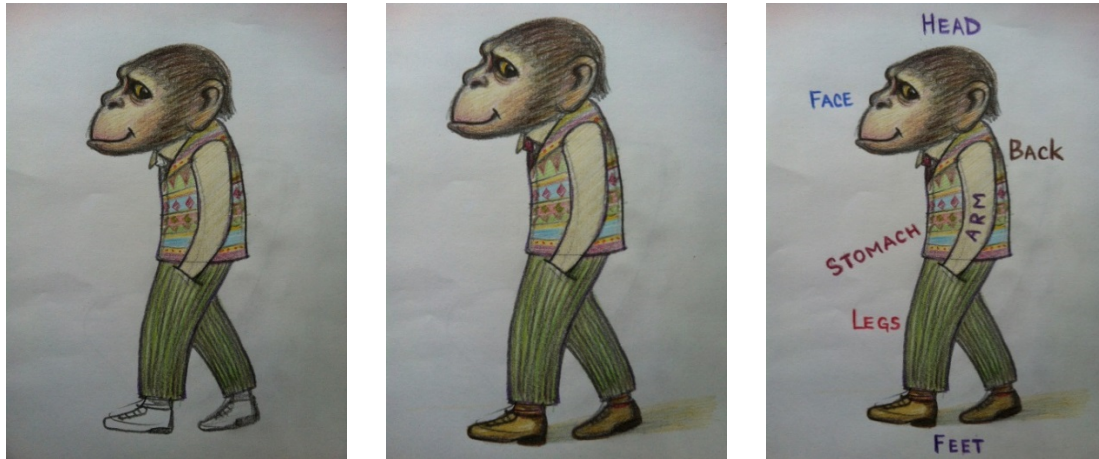
Teacher walks the students through the first steps and they advance from an egg-shape and a rectangle to the rough sketch of the head and body of an ape child, dressed as a human (Images 9.1-9.3). Then we begin to elaborate our drawing by drawing Willy's facial features and repeating the same L2 oral practicing routine as we draw his NOSE, EYES, EARS, MOUTH, and HAIR (Images 9.4-9.6). The teacher continues asking questions to students, eliciting their responses containing these words.



Consecutive steps of drawing Willy.

Then we refine the elements of Willy's clothing and footwear and we practice such words as SHOES, PANTS, SHIRT, TIE, SWEATER (Images 9.7 – 9.9). Again, I am commenting on

what I am drawing at the moment and the students keep repeating the L2 sentences after me while drawing these elements. I continue asking them multiple questions as we keep drawing.

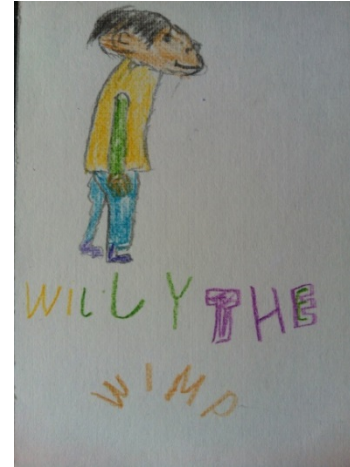
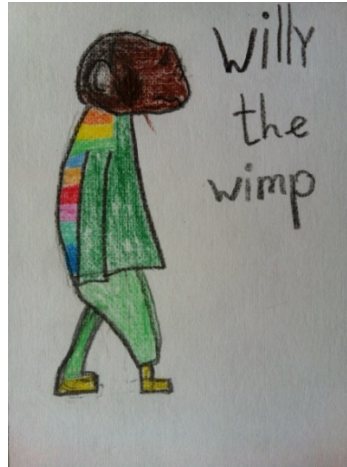


Final steps of drawing Willy (adding colors).

When the black and white drawings of Willy are finished, I write the names of the body parts next to the corresponding parts of Willy's image on the board and the students do the same in their notebooks: FEET, ARM, LEGS, HEAD, BACK, FACE, STOMACH (Images 9.7 – 9.9). Finally, I distribute the colored pencils and the students begin to color their drawings of Willy, while I ask them more questions. *T: What are you coloring, Dima? D: I am coloring his ARM. T: What are you coloring, Leva? L: I am coloring his FACE. T: What color is his sweater? S1: It's yellow and green - S2: and red, and blue - S3: and orange! Many colors!*

The students borrow colored pencils from each other and I remind them to ask each other politely and always respond to a request in L2. The students do that willingly – *Grisha: Sasha, give me red, please! Thank you very much! - Sasha: You are welcome!* Since we are using pencils of many different colors, we practice the names of colors students already know (RED, GREEN, BLUE, BLACK, YELLOW) and learn the color names that are new to them – PURPLE, VIOLET, OLIVE, OCHER, ORANGE, BROWN. The students have already heard some of them and now their knowledge is affirmed. We also read more rare words denoting

colors, written on the individual pencils - CRIMSON, SCARLET, LILAC, EMERALD, INDIGO, CERULEAN. The results of their creative work can be seen in Images 9.10 – 9.14.



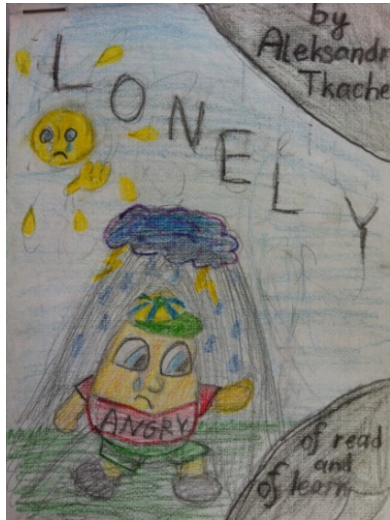
Students' representations of Willy.

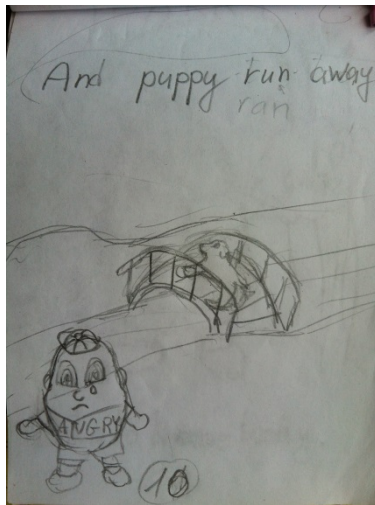
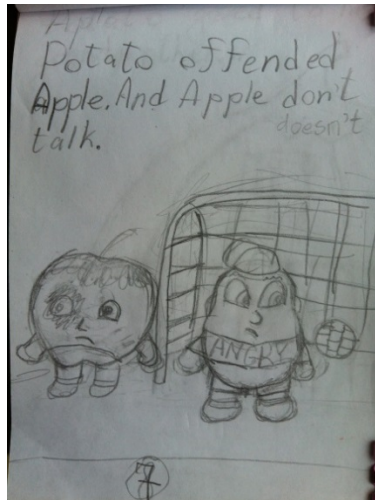
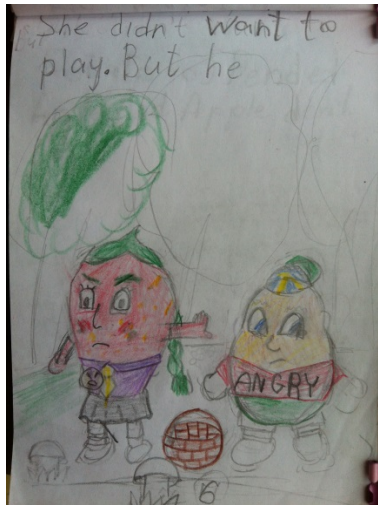
As a result of this drawing session, the students not only learned how to draw a colorful picture of Willy – they also practiced the L2 vocabulary (words denoting body parts, facial features, clothing items, and colors), L2 Grammar (Present Progressive Tense), speaking in L2 in chorus and individually, and learned and practiced how to make polite requests and respond to them.

APPENDIX E

STUDENT-CREATED PICTUREBOOKS

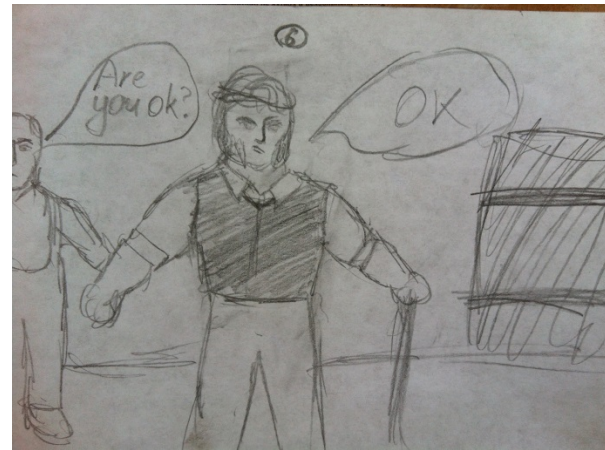
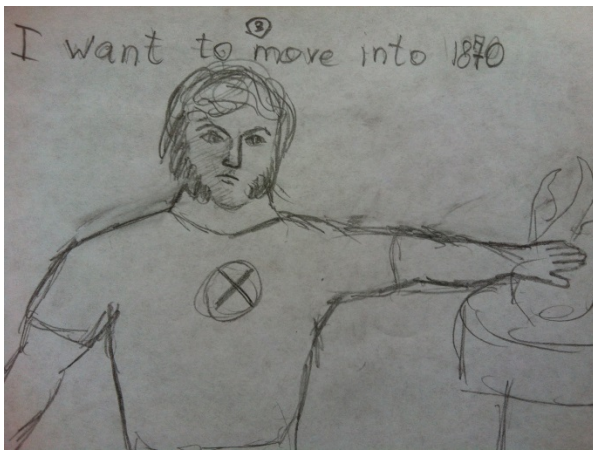
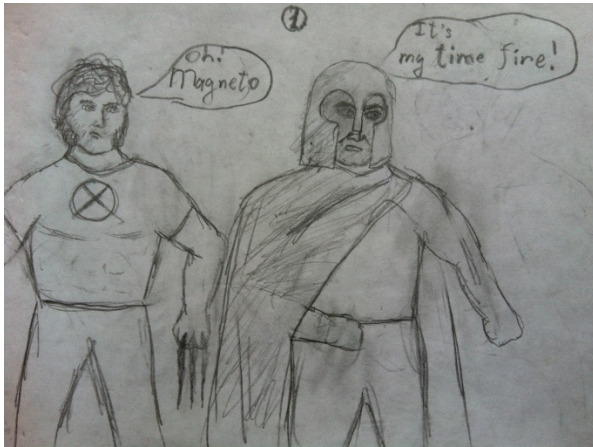
1. Sasha's picturebook "Lonely"

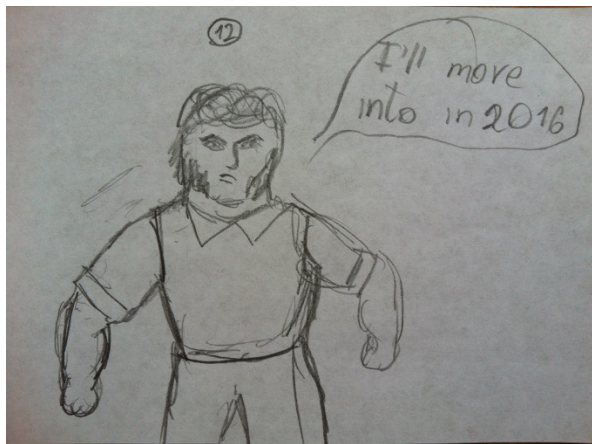
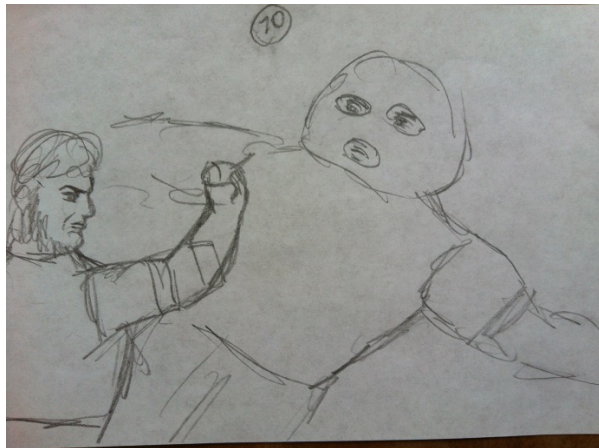
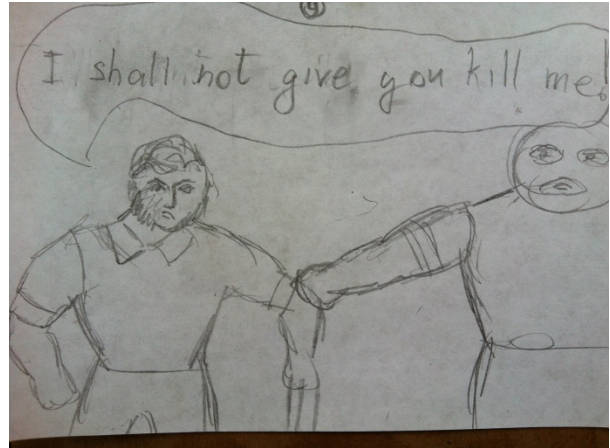




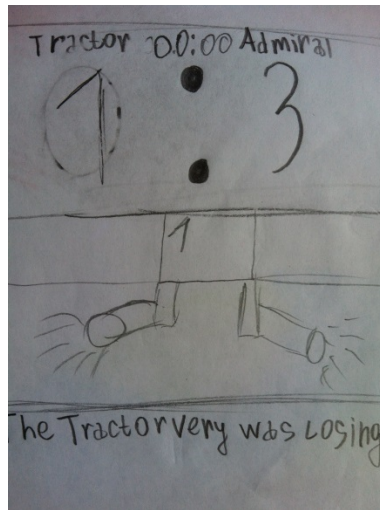
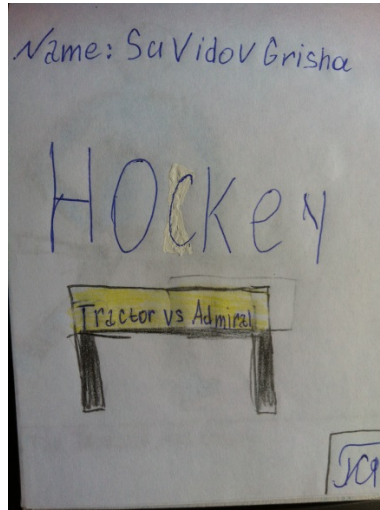
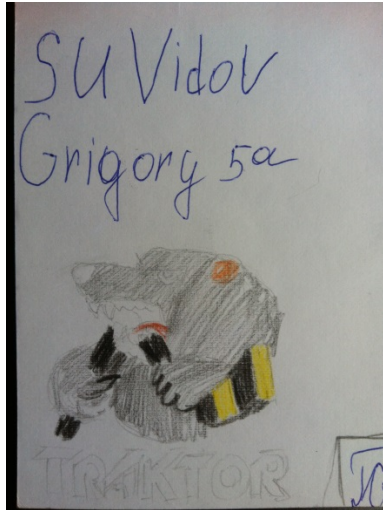
The End

2. Sasha's second picturebook "Magneto"





3. Grisha's picturebook "Hockey and Chelyabinsk Meteorite"





The bear go on the ice



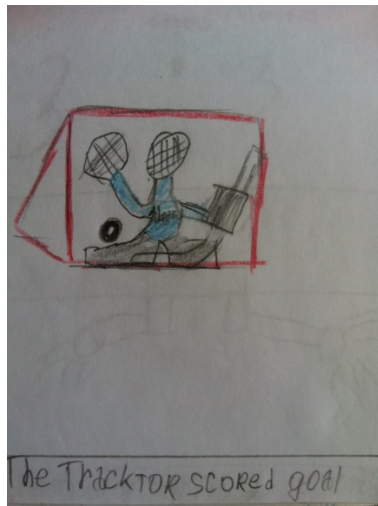
The player very Freddy



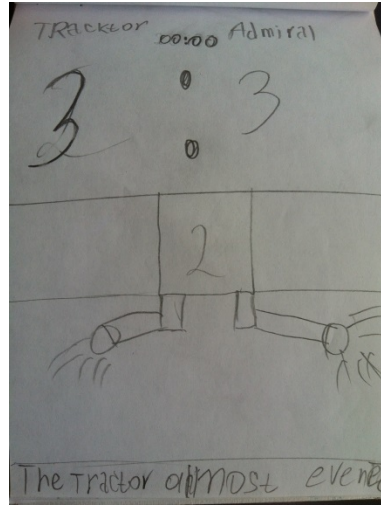
The admiral attack



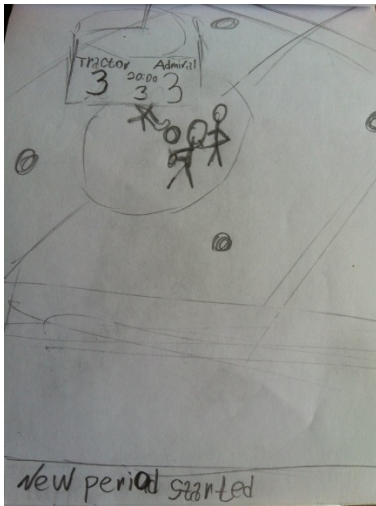
TRack of attack



he Tractor scored goal



The tractor almost even



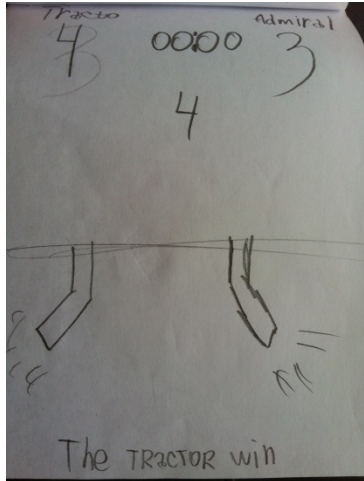
new period started



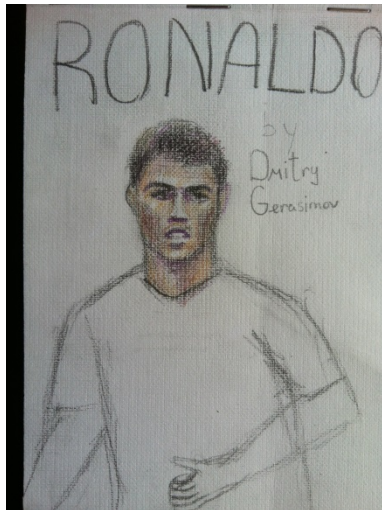
happy tractor player



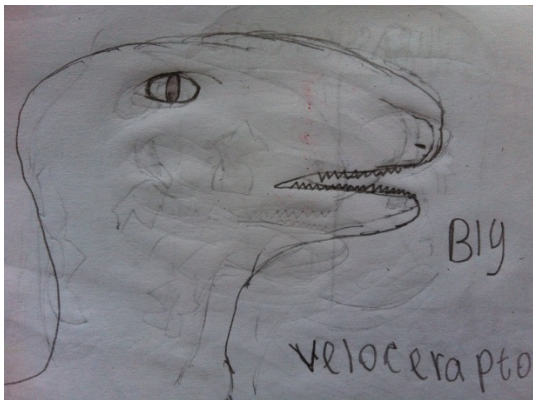
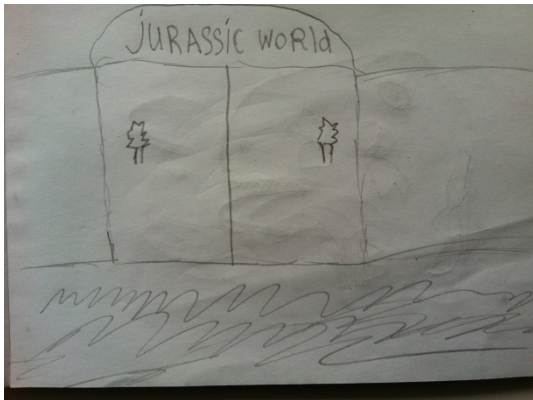
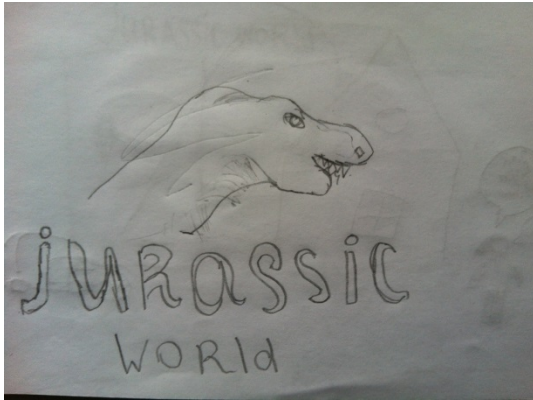
The tractor score goal

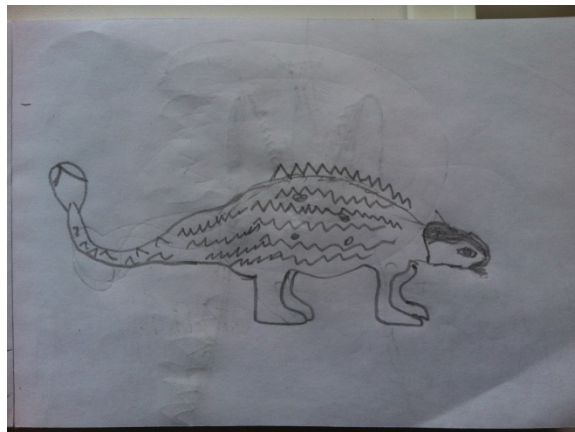


4. Dima's picturebook "Cristiano Ronaldo"

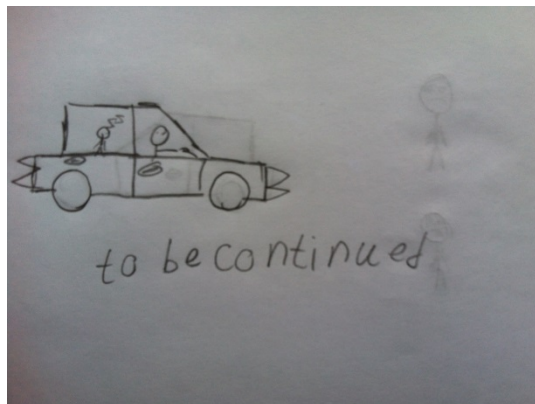
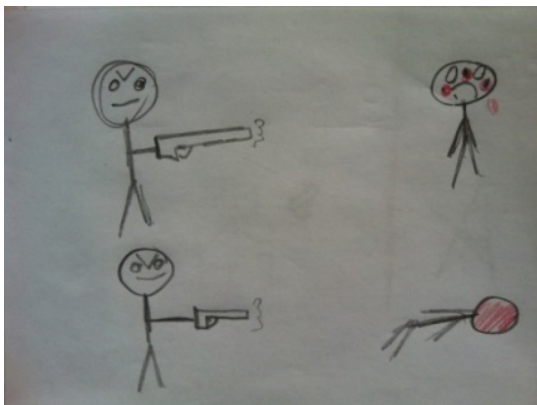
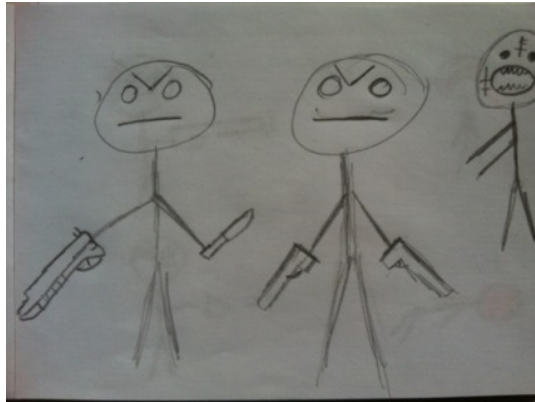


5. Leva's picturebook "Jurassic Park"

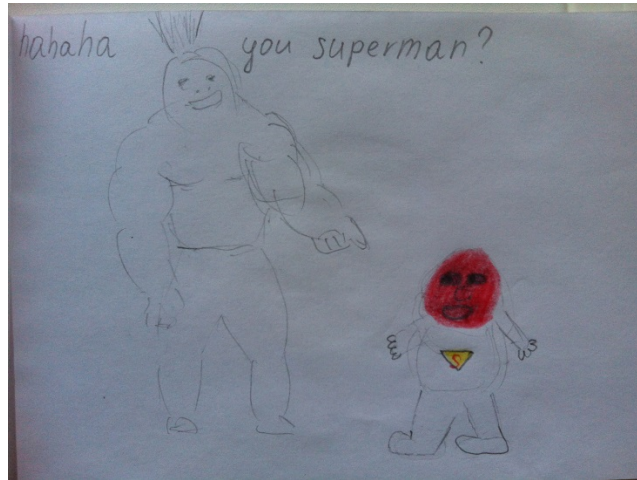




6. Alesha's "wordless" picturebook



7. Kolya's picturebook "Super Tomato" (unfinished)



8. Leva's second picturebook (unfinished)



9. Kolya's second picturebook (unfinished)



10. Nikita's picturebook (unfinished)

