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INPUT MODIFICATIONS BY INSTRUCTORS IN TRADITIONAL AND BUSINESS GERMAN COURSES

Abstract

Inspired by the debate on the efficacy of modified input (i.e., teacher talk), this study explored the use of input modifications in a traditional German course compared to a business German course. Overall, the business language instructor resorted to less simplification than the instructor of the traditional German course. In terms of general modifications, the business language instructor used frequent repetitions of context-specific vocabulary and expressions, while focusing on students' comprehension of subject matter within the context of the acquisition of language specific to business and economics thematic areas. The instructor of the traditional German course used frequent simplification of the target language and a heavier focus on students' comprehension of "cultural studies" subject matter (often literature or history). The simplifications were not made in an attempt to teach vocabulary and expressions peculiar to the thematic focus.

Literature Review

In second/foreign language (L2) classrooms, teachers often observe that their students would succeed better in understanding their message if the teachers themselves were to simplify, rephrase, and restructure their own L2 use. Much research conducted with traditional, higher education adult language courses, especially in the eighties and nineties, has focused on the linguistic adjustments made by language instructors when addressing their students (e.g., Bingham, Wesche, and Ready; Chaudron; Ellis; Hallett; Henzl; Long; Long and Porter; Young). Modifications are usually made in an attempt to make the L2 more comprehensible. The study of teachers' traditional L2 classroom discourse has served to reveal and define such speech modifications, which have generally been termed *teacher talk* in foreign/second language contexts. While most research on simplified input, or *teacher talk*, has focused on traditional L2 courses at higher educational levels, no notable research has considered an instructor's language use and modifications in adult language courses where the L2 is taught for specific purposes, such as business language courses.

Because business language courses generally focus on language specific to business communication through content instruction, the L2 use by the instructor may differ from mainstream FL courses. The present study reports on a qualitative analysis of the input provided to the FL learner in a third-year university-level German language course focused on business and economics themes compared to a third-year traditional German language course focused more broadly on "German cultural studies."

Perhaps the most influential hypothesis supporting the use of simplified input in L2 learning environments is Krashen's ("Fundamental Pedagogical Principle"; *Inquiries and Insights*) theory of comprehensible input. At its core, this theory states that learners only develop language if they are exposed to input that is slightly beyond their current language ability level (so-called i+1 system). Gass, however, questioned how "we can know whether specific input is indeed at the i+1 level or at the i+23 level" (100) as "the determination can only come by viewing the learners as they interact with the input" (101). Although teachers don't exactly know the current interlanguage level of their students, they usually have an impression of that level and usually attempt to adapt their language to make it comprehensible to their students. Input becomes comprehensible through speech modifications such as shorter sentences, lower syntactic complexity, and avoidance of low frequency lexical items. Krashen argued that *teacher talk* and interlanguage are sources of input that allow the learner to understand new forms of language. Reasonably, we should then ask whether this theory would apply to language courses for specific purposes, where, for instance, language specific for business purposes is essential to meet the needs of adult learners who aim to learn a foreign language for use in their specific fields, such as business, technology, and academic learning.

Many teachers and researchers believe that L2 learners, even at advanced levels, have difficulty processing the linguistic features inherent to authentic[1], spoken language (e.g., Young). The processing difficulties may have a negative effect on the students' language confidence (Rivers). The question is to what extent non-modified, thematic-specific language is prevalent in *language for specific purposes* (LSP) courses, and to what extent the instructors' language might be modified in order to avoid potential processing difficulties by learners.

[1] In this research report, we define authentic language use as language use that is not modified in order to accommodate the learners' proficiency level. Authentic language is typically used by/when addressing native/ highly proficient speakers.

In general, supporters of *teacher talk* in the L2 classroom argue that simplified input exhibits many of the linguistic strategies used in first language acquisition, such as *caretaker talk*. In an early study of *teacher talk* in the classroom, Henzl found that, while retaining grammaticality, teachers often manipulate their grammar (e.g., less subordination and shorter sentences) and lexis (e.g., the use of synonyms, paraphrases, and fewer idioms). A few years later, Chaudron conducted a series of studies examining how comprehension is affected by the modification of spoken discourse. One of his main findings was that the repetition of simple nouns helped L2 learners to recall and recognize those nouns. Chaudron attributed this finding to saliency (i.e., the noticeability of particular words and expressions in the input) as a supportive input feature. The repetition of field-specific vocabulary and expressions in order to enhance their saliency to the learners might be a desirable tactic by LSP instructors in teaching language. Thus, the present study considers this particular type of language modification.

While Chaudron's studies isolated specific features of simplification, Long ("Native Speaker/ Non-Native Speaker") investigated the effects of global teacher talk on learners' comprehension of oral input in two traditional adult language courses. He used two propositionally identical versions of an academic lecture: one containing unadjusted speech in the L2, and the other containing discourse adjusted for learners via simplifications such as rephrasing and restatements, slower rate of delivery, and less complex syntax. Two randomly formed groups of learners listened to either version and then completed a multiple choice test on the content of the lecture. The average comprehension score for the group that listened to the '*teacher talk* version' was found to be higher. Such findings helped to usher in *teacher talk* as a common L2 pedagogical method in the eighties and early nineties.

Despite such evidence indicating that simplification is effective in L2 teaching, simplification of oral and written input in the L2 classroom has also been criticized. Some linguists find particular fault with the language features used in simplified input. Long and Ross, for example, later argued that the removal of complex linguistic forms in favor of more simplified and frequent forms inevitably denies learners the opportunity to learn the natural forms of language (see also White). Meisel went even further, arguing that simplifying vocabulary and syntax can actually complicate a message. Other critics hypothesized that simplified input may not allow learners to advance to higher proficiency levels or to acquire less frequent but more selective, context-appropriate words (Honeyfield). Ellis pointed out that it is doubtful

whether simplification actually eases the burden on the learner in acquiring language skills, citing research findings that seem to be divided over the positive and negative effects of simplification. According to Ellis's overall view, no studies clearly support the notion that pedagogically simplified input facilitates language comprehension—an issue that is being addressed by the present study.

Larsen-Freeman stated that in the past decade there has been a pedagogical trend away from simplified language use toward an emphasis on authentic language use in the L2 classroom, so that students can be introduced to natural examples of language within real contexts. Freeman and Goodman argued that L2 learners need to be introduced to enriched context, such as found in authentic texts, so that learners are exposed to language in its entirety. In a similar vein, Kuo argued that the nature of the relationship between context or domain and the learning and use of language is highly worthy of investigation in LSP frameworks.

Cummins's theory of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is another pedagogical theory which suggests that teachers should embed language in meaningful contexts rather than simplifying language. In sum, support for unmodified, authentic language use in the L2 classroom centers on the idea that L2 learners are at a disadvantage when the L2 they are exposed to is both abridged and simplified. This argument might especially apply to LSP learners who pursue language study in specific disciplines.

Since the eighties and nineties, there has been very little research on language modification in the L2 classroom, and no prominent study has explored L2 use by instructors in business language courses, where the primary focus is on teaching language specific for business communication through content instruction. The primary aim of this exploratory study was to explore and compare, where possible, the underlying features of L2 oral input provided by the instructor in both traditional German and business German courses.

METHOD

Teaching Context and Procedures

Two courses at Michigan State University were selected as the site for data collection. One of these courses was a third-year business German course and the other was a traditional third-year German course. Each class had a different teacher and different L2 students, and all students were present in each of the three lessons that were video recorded—from beginning to end—over a two-week period. The camera was positioned in the back of the

classroom in such a way that it did not capture the students' images, only their backs, while the teachers' images were fully captured. The focus in the business language classroom was on (1) business fairs (*Messewesen*) and their current crisis, as well as (2) Advertising and Marketing using the example of German breweries and "Tag des Deutschen Bieres." In the traditional German course, the instructor covered the topics of (1) German commercials and (2) the privatization of companies in the former German Democratic Republic/East Germany. The fact that the traditional class happened to be covering two business-related themes during the video-taping was merely a coincidence, but it did create a situation that highlighted differences in the way language was used to facilitate understanding in the two courses. The video-recorded class sessions were then transcribed for language use analysis. After the video recording sessions, questionnaires were completed by teachers and students. The teacher questionnaire elicited information on the teachers' teaching methodologies and their beliefs about language use in the FL classroom. The student questionnaire elicited information on the students' preferences regarding modified versus unmodified target language (TL) use by their instructor.

Participants

The traditional German course consisted of 12 students and the business German course consisted of 9 students. The students in both language classes were native speakers of English. Their ages ranged from 19 years to 24 years, with an average of 21 years. All of the German learners reported that English was their native language, except for one learner whose native language was Gujarati. Two students indicated that they were heritage speakers of German. The instructors were full professors who have taught German for more than twenty years and thus had extensive teaching experience.

Analysis of the Data

The analysis was based on the recurring patterns of *teacher talk* features within these two classrooms. Note that the same set of reasons and methods were used for analyzing both courses in order to describe the differences in the use of modified input accurately. The first step in the inductive qualitative analysis of the transcripts was to identify each *teacher talk* episode (i.e., unit of analysis) in each videotaped class session. An episode consisted of language use by the teacher that included obvious features of language modification. In the transcripts, every episode was segmented (marked by a pair of slashes <//>) whenever the action of modification could be identified, regardless of

whether the modification was related to grammar items, vocabulary, or stylistic expressions. The modifications were then investigated for recurring themes. Specifically, to identify themes, the modification episodes were examined for the most salient features by giving a title to every episode. To enhance the inter-rater reliability in the analysis, two independent raters, the researcher and a trained rater, identified modification episodes and salient features in one-third of the data set (i.e., transcripts of three course sessions). For the identification of modification episodes, the reliability coefficient was 0.91.

RESULTS

The findings for the traditional FL course are presented first, followed by the findings for the business language course. In the traditional German course, the *teacher talk* analysis revealed that about 90% of the episodes were identified as modification episodes, regardless of whether the modifications were associated with sentence structures (e.g., shorter sentences), vocabulary, or explanations of expressions. The modification episodes identified in the business German course were classified into four major themes: (a) Explanation of technical vocabulary, (b) Clarifications of core messages, (c) Repetition of relevant information and business-specific terminology in particular, and (d) Prompting in order to have students use appropriate language. Regarding the traditional German course, four major themes emerged from the analysis of the modification episodes: (a) Enumeration of simple vocabulary and cognates, (b) Use of high frequency words, (c) Incomplete/reduced syntax, and (d) Repetition of sentence structures. Episodes that reflect the above-named themes are highlighted in the following examples. Example 1 shows an excerpt from a teaching unit where the instructor of the traditional German course was working with an advertisement for champagne called "Rotkäppchen."

Example 1.

> So, also wenn man an Rotkäppchen denkt, //also den Namen//, //also wenn man den Namen hört//, dann ist das meistens //unschuldig, jung, naiv, schön, trinkt Milch// und so weiter. Ja, so //ich finde das als als Name für Sekt//; //das ist sehr ironisch//. //Und eigentlich macht's Spaß ja?// //Och, wir trinken Rotkäppchen.// (+) Also wenn man Sekt trinkt, //dann ist man meistens unschuldig?// (-) Nein, nicht unbedingt. (students are laughing) Naha, Das ist immer schon so, vielleicht hat man einen Termin mit einem Mädchen oder einem gut aussehenden Mann //und dann trinken sie Sekt miteinander//, //dann sind sie nicht mehr unschuldig//. //Sind die Menschen jung?// //Meistens nein//. //Schön?// Eh, //das könnte sein//. //Aber sie trinken// (unverständlich). Also //das

> ist irgendwie ironisch//, ja, //mit diesem Namen//. Und ehm, tja, wenn man so eine Verabredung hat, also finde ich dass das irgendwie lustig ist Rotkäppchen zu trinken, ja, das ist, ja, //das macht Spaß//, //das ist irgendwie lustig, nicht so ernst und so weiter//, und es ist möglich, dass die Firma großen Erfolg hat wegen des Namens. Das ist möglich.

The instructor modified his language use to make it more comprehensible by enumerating adjectives and by using cognates, for example, "dann ist das meistens jung, naiv, schön, trinkt Milch und so weiter." He also used simple, shorter sentences as in "das ist sehr ironisch, das könnte sein" or "das ist möglich." Another common feature was the use of sentences or expressions that students were likely to comprehend such as "Und eigentlich macht's Spaß, ja?" Furthermore, the simple sentence structure was often repeated: "und dann trinken sie Sekt miteinander, dann sind sie nicht mehr unschuldig." In some instances the sentence was repeated as in "und es ist möglich, [. . .] Das ist möglich." Whenever the instructor used a more complex syntax such as, "wenn man so eine Verabredung hat, also finde ich dass das irgendwie lustig ist Rotkäppchen zu trinken," he would then repeat the core message in the subsequent, shorter and abbreviated sentences: "das macht Spaß [. . .] das ist irgendwie lustig."

Example 2.

> Also das ist wichtig hier, also wir werden das ehm, am Montag weiter besprechen. Aber damals in der DDR, also //die größeren, die größeren Firmen wurden eh vom Staat kontrolliert//.(+) Ok? Und, eh, die die hießen damals VEB, eh Volkseigenbetriebe. //Also, sie gehörten, sie gehörten dem Volk der DDR, das heißt, der Regierung damals//. // Also das war alles so verstaatlicht, das war alles also typisch in einem sozialistischem Land//. //Also diese großen Firmen wurden von der Regierung kontrolliert//. //Also und gehörten eigentlich der DDR, also dem Volk//. //Und 1990 gab es keine DDR mehr.// Also, was passiert wenn wenn tausende von Firmen, //die ehm vom vom Land eigentlich, eh dem Land gehörten.// Und dann kam es zu dieser Zwischenlösung, eine Übergangszeit wo es diese Treuhand gab. //Und das war eine große Institution in Berlin und diese Institution, diese Treuhand, hat plötzlich alle diese DDR Firmen kontrolliert.// Und eh, eh sie mussten die Entscheidungen treffen. Und diese Treuhand war dafür verantwortlich, dass es weniger Arbeiter gab. //Sie sagen, ok, so, das ist nicht mehr rentabel, also wir bekommen nicht sehr viel Geld.//

The transcript above highlights the modified patterns that serve to help the students comprehend the core content of the monologue. The sentences were

repeated with slight alterations, for example, "die größeren Firmen wurden vom Staat kontrolliert" and "Also die großen Firmen wurden vom Staat kontrolliert." Furthermore, the entire monologue featured a very explanatory tone as if addressing a group of younger learners instead of adult learners, for example, "Also, sie gehörten, sie gehörten dem Volk der DDR, das heißt, der Regierung damals. Also das war alles so verstaatlicht, das war alles also typisch in einem sozialistischen Land. Also diese großen Firmen wurden von der Regierung kontrolliert. Also und gehörten eigentlich der DDR, also dem Volk. Und 1990 gab es keine DDR mehr."

Example 3.

Teacher:	//Ja, ein Verlust ist nur eine.// also wie Kevin das Wort jetzt eh benutzt hat, //ist eine Situation//,
Student:	Oh.
Teacher	//in der eine Firma mehr Geld ver, verliert als zurückgewinnt.// Ok? //Also das ist negativ.// (+) Alright, das nächste?
Student:	Ehm Als Regierungskraft bezeichnet net man eine Person die all die Macht hat?
Teacher:	Ja, die die ganze Macht hat. Ja, Vorsicht, also ehm, ja, wenn man auf Englisch also all of the benutzen möchte, //also auf Deutsch ist das meistens mit ganz//. Ja, //zum Beispiel den ganzen Tag, "all day," den ganzen Monat, "all month," und so weiter//.

The content of example 3 could also be typical content for a business German course; however, the instructor of the traditional German course didn't aim for the students to acquire specific business-related vocabulary or expressions, but rather for the students to understand the content of his message. "Ja, ein Verlust ist nur eine, [. . .] ist eine Situation, [. . .] in der eine Firma mehr Geld ver, verliert als zurückgewinnt. Ok? Also das ist negativ." By contrast, in the business language classroom, the instructor has to provide input that not only helps the students to understand the meaning of the messages, but also to acquire the new business-specific vocabulary.

Later in example 3 the instructor explains the correct use of the German term *ganz*, for example, "also auf Deutsch ist das meistens mit ganz. Ja, zum Beispiel den ganzen Tag, 'all day,' den ganzen Monat, 'all month,' und so weiter." While the instructor reinforces the correct use of *ganz*, he doesn't emphasize the use of business-related terms such as *Verlust*.

In the business German course, the *teacher talk* analysis revealed that only about 50% of the episodes were identified as modification episodes, again, regardless of the linguistic features targeted by the modifications. Similar to the traditional German course results, four major themes emerged from the analysis of the modification episodes; however, the themes differed from those identified regarding the traditional German course. Recall that for the business German course, the following recurring themes emerged: (a) Explanation of technical vocabulary, (b) Clarifications of core messages, (c) Repetition of relevant information and business-specific terminology, and (d) Prompting in order to have students use appropriate language. Episodes that reflect the aforementioned themes are highlighted in the following, typical examples.

Example 4.

Teacher:	Grüß dich! Hallo! Ok. Ehm. Gut, wir sprachen das letzte Mal von der Krise (-) //von der Krise im Messewesen.//
Student:	Ja.
Teacher	Und ihr habt dann dem Hörtext zugehört und einige Vorschläge in dem Hörtext darüber was gemacht werden sollte, //damit die Krise überwunden werden könnte//. Ja, Ok? Und was habt ihr gehört?
Student:	Kundenorientierte Messen?
Teacher:	//Kundenorientierte, kunderorientierte Messen.//
Student:	Machen.
Teacher:	//Machen. Machen, schaffen?//
Student:	Veranstalten.
Teacher:	//Veranstalten. Gut!// Sehr schön. //Veranstalten. Ok?// Ja. //Und kundenorientiert ist das Gegenteil von produkorientiert.// Ja und wer kann das erklären? (+) Keiner kann das erklären?

Example 4 shows how the instructor modifies her language use in order to reinforce the acquisition and use of specific terms by the students. For example, the instructor used the expression *die Krise im Messewesen* as opposed to *die Messekrise* and she further emphasized and prompted for the expression of *kundenorientierte Messen veranstalten*. The term *kundenorientiert* is then contrasted with the term *produktorientiert*. The next example is taken from a teaching unit on advertising, using German beer breweries as one example.

Example 5.

Teacher: Wie hat das angefangen in Deutschland mit Bier, wer hat Bier zuerst gebraut?
Student: Mann
Teacher: Die?
Teacher: Mön. . . .
Student: Mün. . . .
Teacher: Die Mönche.
Student: Mönche!
Teacher: München? Die heißen Mönche? Warum heißt München München? Die Mönche haben Bier gebraut und das war in dem Mittelalter. Nicht? Also 1516 hat der bayrische Herzog Wilhelm der IV in Ingolstadt das deutsche Reinheitsgebot verkündet. //Ein Gebot. Ein Gebot.// //Wir wissen was ein Verbot ist, nicht?// // Wenn etwas ver ver verboten wird dann darf man das nicht tun.// //Das ist ein Verbot; Gebot ist das Gegenteil davon.//
Students: Aha!
Teacher //So, das das muss gemacht werden.//
Students: muss?
Teacher: //Das ist ein Gebot; das muss gemacht werden. Ok?// Nach diesem ältesten Lebensmittelgesetz der Welt wird noch heute in Deutschland Bier gebraut. Bier darf nur aus Wasser, Hopfen und //Gerste, yeast//, bestehen. Die Hefe wurde damals noch nicht erwähnt. Wenn das kein Grund zum Feiern ist, sagen sie, darum lässt das ganze Land traditionsgemäß am 23. April sein liebstes alkoholhaltiges Getränk hochleben. //Was heißt das?// Was heißt hochleben?// //Kennt ihr hocheleben?//
Student: highlight?
Teacher: nein. //Hochleben.//
Students: laugh.
Teacher: Also!
Student: Wie hoch sollst du leben?
Teacher: //Hoch sollst du leben! Richtig.//
Student: oh!
Teacher: //Also du hast am letzten Mittwoch ein Interview gehabt, ok? Und ich sag ich ss . . . //
Student: hoch sollst du leben.
Teacher: //Ja, also, hoch, ja.// Oder ich ich, ehm wie gesagt, hier wurde ehm das das Bier, sein sein liebstes alkoholhaltiges

Getränk soll hochleben. //Du sollst hochleben, und du sollst viel Glück dabei haben. // //Also wenn man zum Beispiel um den Tisch sitzt ja? Und man möchte dabei . . . ,//

Students: [Prost]

Teacher: //Prost, ja, also das ist hochleben.// //Das ist hochleben, ja.// So.

Example 5 illustrates how the instructor explained specific vocabulary such as *das Gebot* and *hochleben*. Instead of providing the English equivalent or using simpler terms such as *das Gesetz* or *feiern*, the instructor elaborated on the specific terms and repeated them frequently. The following example shows how the business German instructor frequently made use of synonyms, which could be used interchangeably. The excerpt is taken from a teaching unit where the students had just engaged in a group work assignment where they were role-playing as trade fair organizers.

Example 6.

Teacher: Ok, kommen wir wieder zurück als Klasse und beantworten wir die Fragen dann zusammen. Ok, so die Organisat . . . Organisa . . . //Organisatoren, die Veranstalter.// Ok. So. //Die Veranstalter.// Was ist Ihre Hauptaufgabe als Veranstalter einer Messe. (+) //Die Veranstalter. //

Student1: Eh, dass sie keine freie Plätze haben für die Messe eh und dass sie . . .

Teacher: Ok. Ok. Ich seh das. Ok. (-) Keine freie Plätze? Eh, ich schreib' das nicht auf, weil das zu lange dauert. //Ok, keine freie Plätze bedeutet was?//

Student1 : eh, dass sie die, alle die Plätze eh voll sind

Teacher voll sind, ja!

Student 2: Voll mit verschiedenen Unternehmen

Teacher: //Voll mit verschiedenen Unternehmen, Ausstellern, ja, ja. //

Student 3: [Unverständlich].

Teacher //Und das bedeutet was?// //Also, Ihr seid, Ihr seid ausgerichtet worauf?// //Genau wie die Aussteller, worauf seid Ihr ausgerichtet im Großen und Ganzen?// //Wenn das alles voll ist dann kann man . . . //

Student 4: mehr Gewinn?

Teacher: //Ja! Dann kann man mehr **Gewinn** erzielen, richtig. // // Man kann also den. . . . (-)// Ich warte auf Alex, weil er immer dabei ist.

Student 4: Preis? Der Preis?

Teacher: //Weil man dann den **Gewinn** . . . maximieren kann, ja.// //Man ist, man ist immer dabei den **Gewinn** zu maximieren.// //Auch als Organis. . . . als Vernanstalter der Messe.// //Wenn alle Plätze voll sind dann hat man, dann ist das Erfolg ja,// //ja für Sie.// Ok. Was noch?

Furthermore, it became evident that the instructor only slightly modified her language in order to aid her students' comprehension, for example "Wenn das alles voll ist dann kann man . . ." instead of saying "Wenn die Messe ausgebucht ist." The use of expressions typical for the business genre were emphasized, for instance, "Dann kann man mehr Gewinn erzielen, richtig. Man kann also den. . . . [. . .] weil man dann den Gewinn . . . maximieren kann." The instructor aimed for students to comprehend and to use the expression *den Gewinn maximieren*. The instructor further concentrated on stylistic features and business-related lexis by using several synonyms for organizers, such as "die Veranstalter, die Aussteller, die Organisatoren." In doing so, the instructor provided the students with a range of terms they may encounter when talking about or visiting business fairs. The example also illustrates (highlighted) the frequent repetition of certain words, such as the term *Gewinn*, which may have served as a form of input enhancement to the students. The saliency of the term *Gewinn* was enhanced by its frequent repetition.

Example 7.

Teacher: So, ich führe dann ein heute den Lesetext 1 zu Kapitel 23 und das Thema is Produktmarketing auf fremden Märkten. Also wir haben ein bisschen von Märkten und von Messen gesprochen wo Produkte vermarktet werden. So, lesen wir das einmal gemeinsam durch.

Example 7 illustrates a similar pattern of authentic language use that guides students to the comprehension and use of specific terms such as *Produktmarketing auf fremden Märkten* and *vermarktet*.

Example 8.

Teacher: Die Ausstellungsfläche; das ist der Platz, den man für die Ausstellung braucht. Ok? Verstanden? Die immer billiger werdenden Preise kommen zu den Kostenproblemen der Unternehmen hinzu. Die Preise werden immer billiger, das ist ein Preisverfall. (+) So, den Platz, den sie für die Ausstellung brauchen, die Ausstellungsfläche.

The repetition of business-specific terms is, again, evident in the above example. The instructor repeated some sentences, for instance, "die immer billiger werdenden Preise" and "die Preise werden immer billiger" in order to explain the term *der Preisverfall*. In addition, she repeated the sentence that describes the meaning of *die Ausstellungsfläche* in order to make the term more transparent to the learners.

The present study also considered the input preferences by the learners in both courses. While students in both courses preferred that their instructor speak German, the students in the business German course voiced appreciation of authentic language use in terms of the vocabulary used. At the same time, students also favored a slower pace and pedagogical intonation patterns. Examples from two business language students illustrate this:

> "I usually understand everything she is saying in German without a problem, because she speaks relatively slow and often repeats what she is saying. But when we listen to other native speakers in videos or read texts from the news, I realize my problems. Although I understand the expressions, because we have already been introduced to them, I am not used to the fast pace."

> "Hearing the language spoken naturally improves my overall comprehension and accelerates the pace at which I learn the language."

One student of the traditional German course expressed appreciation of simplified L2 use when it comes to complex subject matters.

> "Sometimes we are going over very abstract or new things and it's difficult enough in English to understand the concept, so in German he tries to use words we understand, but it's still difficult."

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the underlying features of L2 oral input provided by the instructor in traditional German and business German courses at the third-year university level. One main finding of the analysis was that the instructor of the traditional German course modified his language use to a much higher extent (90%) than the instructor of the business German course, who altered her language use only half of the time (50%). In the remaining 50% of her language use, the instructor used natural examples of language within business-related contexts.

A plausible explanation for this finding is that the language use by the business language instructor is largely driven by practical needs; it reflects that

the course is being designed for learners aspiring to enter a business-related workplace. For business settings, students need to be equipped with exact terms that are provided in courses for such specific purposes. In other words, the business German instructor tried to prepare students for the demands they would likely face in real-life situations, thereby equipping them with linguistic skills most frequently used in business-related situations.

A further reason for the limited modification of L2 input and the continued use of authentic language might lie in the nature of business language itself. Business language is less flexible; there are very specific vocabulary items and phrases that must be used in specific contexts, as illustrated in the examples provided in this article. For example, in the business world a young American employee might say "Gewinn bekommen" or "Gewinn kriegen," which would be understood by a native interlocutor, but the person might not be accepted as someone who has mastered the specific lexica of the business environment. The critical point is that the business language itself dictates that students be exposed to, and learn to use, highly specific vocabulary and phrases. Traditional German language courses are likely to rely more on non-technical and even creative language use, where great flexibility and creativity with the language is encouraged. In LSP contexts, that simply does not hold. In sum, the business German instructor's language use can be explained by the fact that the students may eventually work in a German business context as well as by the nature of the language itself.

The most common types of modification used by the business language instructor were repetitions of context-specific vocabulary and expressions (see example 8 as a reference). As mentioned earlier, the repetition of specific terms and expressions may make such expressions more noticeable to the learners, which may, in turn, lead to deeper processing and learning (Chaudron). Although intentionally made repetitions fall under the umbrella of modifications, they do not serve as simplifications of the target language. As such, this type of modification did not prevent the learners from exposure to context-appropriate expressions, which has been a major point of critique regarding modified language use (Honeyfield; Long and Ross; Meisel). The modifications by the language instructor were not made to ease the processing of the target language, but to facilitate and reinforce the acquisition of business-specific terms and expressions. As such, the input delivery by the business instructor is in agreement with the suggestions by several scholars in the field of language acquisition, who have advocated an emphasis on authentic, contextualized, non-simplified language use in language classrooms (e.g., Cummins; Freeman and Goodman, Larsen-Freeman).

Overall, the difference in language use between the business German and the traditional German instructors mirrors the divide between supporters of authentic language use and supporters of modified language use. The frequent simplifications that became apparent in the traditional German classroom are now commonly practiced by L2 instructors whose main aim is the comprehension of the target language and subject matter in German by their students, regardless of a need to learn highly specific terminology. Thus, in order to make the content accessible in the L2, the instructor relies on circumlocution *teacher talk* strategies more heavily. In contrast, by using non-modified language, the LSP instructor can tie more authentic language focus or contextualized language into the course, while continuing to focus on content. Almost by definition, LSP is language in context, and, as Bloor argued, acquisition develops through exposure to language in context.

LIMITATIONS

While the present study does shed some light on pertinent differences between the instructors' language use in business German and traditional German courses, it is obvious that there are limitations to the study. First and foremost, the results are not generalizable because only two instructors were compared. Follow-up studies need to be designed to add many more instructors to the investigation. Also, the present study did not consider differences in the use of gestures or intonation patterns, which likely play a role in speech modification targeted to the learner levels. Follow-up studies may compare the use of gesture and intonation patterns between instructors in business language and traditional German courses. Furthermore, this study did not address the effects of modified or authentic language use on the learners' actual language acquisition. Follow-up experimental research should therefore address whether modifications of instructional delivery advance business language comprehension in the long term. It would be useful to investigate the extent to which business language students would benefit from input that is made comprehensible compared to non-modified language use.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a broad picture of *teacher talk* in a traditional German course compared to a business German course. The results suggest that the *teacher talk* used in the business language course is less simplified than in the traditional language course. The language used by the instructor in the business language course showed repetitions of specific business-related terms in order to enhance their saliency, and a focus on students' comprehension

of business-related subject matter. The business language instructor did not resort to language simplifications. The *teacher talk* apparent in the traditional German course showed a heavier focus on students comprehension of "cultural studies" subject matter, without necessarily putting emphasis on specific terminology, hence the frequent simplification of the target language. To clarify, the major difference does not seem to lie in the complexity of the context, but rather in the nature of the target language areas, i.e., for business and economics or for more general understanding. However, even given that the business German topics may indeed be more complex than what is dealt with in the regular classes, the business language teacher cannot resort to simplified language, because the students need to acquire the highly specialized language.

In summary, the language used in the business German course reflects the concern with students' learning of business-specific vocabulary and expressions, and the exposure to authentic language. Additional research is needed that investigates business language students' acquisition of specific terms, and how the input provided by the instructor can enhance the acquisition processes.

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