

# Creating a Literary Quote and Picture Task

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This paper reports on a lesson task and follow-up activities piloted in an L2 reading class using literary quotes to motivate learners. The aim of the task was to increase engagement by encouraging self-regulation and self-efficacy. Participants used literary quotes paired with their own photographs and wrote short written responses using a model provided by the teacher. Initial results of the project indicate that students can develop detailed, emotionally driven perceptions using personal experiences in their writing and that they responded positively to the autonomous aspects of the task design. Although this pilot project is only reported on briefly here, it is suggested that self-regulation, self-efficacy, and engagement with reading can increase by using such tasks with L2 readers, warranting further investigation. Additional research into the development of materials that encourage emotionally driven perceptions for use in language learning contexts is recommended as a result.

この研究論文は、第2言語学習のリーディングクラスにおいて試験的に行われている文学的な言葉の引用を使用した教材作りのプロジェクトの報告をするものである。この目的は、学生が自らの力で効率的に教材に取り組むことと、その結果をシェアすることにより、課題への関わりをより深めることにある。学生の参加者は引用した文学的な言葉と写真とをペアにして教師に与えられた模範解答を参考にしながら、短い文章を書いた。当初の結果からは、学生は、自分の経験を細部にわたって思いのままに書き出したことによって、上達することが見られた。それを考慮に入れても、読む学習に対して自分からやる気を出すこと、効率よくしようとすること、課題への深く関わろうとすることは、この教材を使うことにより高まることが望める可能性がある。よってこの研究には、更なる研究を行う価値があると考えられる。

**F.** **SCOTT FITZGERALD** once wrote that “The purpose of a work of fiction is to appeal to the lingering after-effects in the reader’s mind” (quoted in Burke, 2011, p. 1). That is to say, we read not only to gain understanding of the words on the page, but in order to keep the reading with us as a resource to call upon later, for the mind to be engaged and stimulated by reading. This idea of making reading authentic, real, and engaging and thus improving theory of mind (Kidd & Castano, 2013) is an additional goal of reading fiction. A greater understanding of the visual aspects of reading (see Deheane, 2009, for a very detailed overview) leads to a natural combination of images and words in reading tasks. Thus, a homework task and group show-and-tell discussion activity was designed with these points in mind to create *visual artifacts* containing photographs and words. The term artifact, taken to mean an object or thing that has been made or designed, was selected as a term that emphasized creation of something new, while also introducing the idea that adding a picture to a quote is quite individual and up to the individual’s choice.

In the first section of this paper, some background to the creation of the task will be outlined with reference to motivation and the notions of self-regulation and self-efficacy. Next, a brief introduction to the notion of *transportation metaphor theory* (Gerrig, 1993) is given, in order to focus on the relationship between the reading experience and feelings of engagement and involvement in being transported by this experience. In the second section of the paper, the task design is outlined and a model answer created by the author is explained. Finally, some written responses from students are briefly introduced. Suggestions for adapting the materials for different learning contexts are suggested at the end.

## Motivation and the L2 Reading Classroom

Reading teachers concerned with motivation in the classroom are likely to be aware of the close relationship between several factors determining reading success. Students who are more motivated through an enjoyment of reading also display greater autonomy and higher levels of challenge and involvement (for a summary of research see Grabe, 2009, pp. 175-193). Simply put, “students who are more intrinsically motivated are more engaged readers” (p. 185). Related to intrinsic motivation are the two key concepts of self-regulation and self-efficacy. If learners experience control over the processes and tasks that result in successful outcomes (self-regulation) while also feeling positive about the learning environment (self-efficacy), then a positive correlation influences motivation. For L2 readers in particular, the challenges of reading can negatively affect motivation, however. Just as Hemingway suggested that fiction stays in the mind long after being read, equally important is that L2 classroom activities themselves are memorable and retained long after the lesson has finished in order to sustain their effectiveness.

Teachers of L2 reading can encourage motivation in their students in a number of ways. A summary of research into this area by Grabe (2009) reveals three major themes of (a) task success, (b) autonomy, and (c) relationship-building, which should be considered

highly valuable in the development of reading motivation:

Teachers must gauge student abilities and ensure that students regularly experience success. Teachers also need to encourage some degree of student autonomy and choice. . . . as part of their learning. Finally, they need to support students in a range of collaborative activities that build student-student and student-teacher relationships. These factors promote student motivation and lead to reading improvement. (Grabe, 2009, p. 191)

In the quote and picture task described in this paper, these three elements (task success, autonomy, and relationship-building) are brought together through the task design, inclusion of self-selected literary quotes and photographs, and classroom implementation.

## Transportation Metaphor Theory

In the world of literary stylistics (see Stockwell, 2009, and Burke, 2011, for recent work in this field) and also in cognitive psychology, *transportation metaphor theory* (Gerrig, 1993) is well established. However, this may not be a concept that has transferred to literature about L2 reading. This makes it of particular interest to teachers in the L2 field. In fact, transportation metaphor theory inspired the original lesson idea described in this paper. The metaphorical concept of reading as a vehicle or transport to take the reader away (to a fictional world, time, or place) is strongly correlated with reading engagement (Gerrig & Rapp, 2004). Generally, when readers of fiction describe their experiences, they report being fully engaged in their reading. When this happens, a common theme emerging from their narratives is that of being transported by the book to the fictional location of events inside the story (Burke, 2011). Or, as Emily Dickinson (1842-1886/1894) once wrote, “There is no frigate like a book/To take us lands away.” In my opinion, harnessing the connection between reading as transport and reading as an engag-

ing activity has the potential to be of significant benefit to students and the notion warrants further investigation.

When reading, then, it seems that the reader is engaged and taken away, like a traveler. Stockwell (2009) noted that it is possible to imagine talking about being really “taken” with the characters, or being unsure about “where the plot is going,” perhaps even mentioning that the plot “gets a bit lost” and that in the middle a story might “lose its way,” or that overall in the exciting moments the characters “got carried away at the end of the book” (p. 81). These are all examples of reader responses that signal use of the idea of the transportation metaphor. The reader may be the actual traveler or may be the person who is carried off on the journey. Stockwell goes further to suggest the conceptual metaphor *READING IS A JOURNEY*, in which the journey is connected to the logical development of the idea *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Teachers who seek to encourage engagement in the learning process may also invoke this connection when talking about the language learning *journey*, or referring to learning *pathways* or *routes* to fluency; they are therefore utilizing the same connotation. Thus, when reading combines with reader engagement through transportation to the fictional world, it is argued that task success, student autonomy, and relationship-building can be fostered.

As can be seen from the student examples below, there is some evidence to suggest not only that the lingering after-effects of reading these texts appear to be in evidence, but that there is some self-awareness of this effect. This is significant in that the *READING IS A JOURNEY* metaphor may be something that becomes more embedded in the reader’s mind through sustained engagement with reading and thus assists with the positive effects of reading long after the book has been read. In more general terms also, a greater understanding of how metaphor functions in language use and how it can be harnessed in L2 classrooms is gradually beginning to be revealed through careful investigation, which is an area of growing interest and research (see Birdsell, 2014, for a summary of how this has influenced L2 teaching contexts over the past 30 years).

## Participants and Context

Students in a private university in suburban Tokyo completed the first 15-week semester of the academic year in an English proficiency reading class, which met for 90 minutes twice a week. The course was equally balanced between intensive reading and extensive reading. In the extensive reading section, graded readers at the learner’s chosen difficulty level were selected by students individually. Through experience of teaching this course in previous years, the author observed that while some students could progress steadily over a 15-week semester, not all students were able to do this. Some varying motivation levels are experienced in L1 and L2 reading settings (Dörnyei, 2005) and are part of the natural cycle of engagement and motivation. In order to encourage those struggling with motivation and also to spur on those who were finding the reading activities difficult, a number of motivational homework tasks were created to augment reading activities, which included the following:

- Reading history letter
- Quote and picture task (Visual artifact task)
- Reading logs (ongoing)
- Individual reading interview
- Group and individual reading presentation

These additional tasks were completed outside of class time and were allocated 20% of the grade for the extensive reading portion of the course, in which task completion to an agreed standard (as indicated by sample answers and text length, for example) was given full credit. The number of pages, words, and books making up the total reading goal itself was the other 80% of the course for the extensive reading grading. All tasks aimed at fostering reader engagement through task success, autonomy, and relationship-building.

## Quote and Picture Task Outline and Example

At the midpoint of the semester, the students completed the quote and picture task using guidelines (see Appendix A) and an example created by the teacher (see Appendix B). The quote and picture task had a number of explicitly stated aims and was designed to develop self-regulated learning and promote self-efficacy through use of modeling and scaffolding. First, task completion was clearly stated and signposted. A short essay format was selected as it is familiar to students. In this respect, the task's design was conducive to encouraging successful task completion. The explanation of the task took 20 minutes and students were given 1 week to write the short written response for homework. The written task was considered easy enough for students to complete using the model answer and the task sheet instructions closely together, which scaffolded the task and provided language support throughout the process.

In addition to the task sheet, the author provided a number of slides with examples from Google Image searches, which showed pictures along with quotations. The process of selecting quotations was as follows:

1. Look through the list of books read this semester.
2. Select an author whose work may have been famous, well known, or influential.
3. Look in the book for a direct quote from that author OR select a quote online from that author.
4. Take a photo that works to illuminate some meaning from the quote and explain it in a short written essay.

Some limitations on quote selection were necessary to focus students on current reading. One of these was that students were required to choose quotes from famous writers they had read during the semester. The model answer (see Appendix B) used a quote from a poet, as the instructor had been reading a book of poetry recently. An online reading log shared with the instructor using a Google sheets format was used to crosscheck the readings with the

quotes chosen. Thus an additional, unwritten aim of the activity was to monitor reading and comprehension of extensive reading book choices for the semester and through this task to share choices of reading. One student requested permission to use quotes from the Harry Potter series. The request was denied, with the justification that a narrower selection of quotes only from books read in the current semester would be more useful for suggesting new reading to the class. Students accepted this constraint and used the books they had read. (Depending on the goals of the activity, a teacher using this activity may wish to adapt this requirement. For example, if the goal is to develop interpretation of meaning and discussion or speaking skills rather than literary reading, a more flexible approach to the quotation and explanation may be preferred.) Another constraint was to require that all pictures be taken by students themselves rather than downloaded from the Internet. This constraint was added to encourage students to think more carefully about the picture they submitted.

In the show-and-tell part of the activity, students brought their written responses to the class along with their artifacts. This aspect of the task had the best rewards regarding self-efficacy, as students particularly appreciated opportunities to share their work with others and gave feedback that the sharing was most enjoyable and rewarding for them.

## Student Responses

Student photographs, being personal in nature, are not included here for reasons of privacy. A number of students gave permission for their written responses to be included in this report; the names used are pseudonyms. With each quote, the explanation that follows gives a preliminary interpretation of reader engagement. If the aim of the task was to encourage literary reading suggestions, and a subaim was to raise awareness of the lingering after-effects of reading, then these quotes may provide evidence for this.

*Quote 1, from the Moomin stories by Tove Jansson*

I've read the stories and watched the animation several times since my childhood. In the stories, the Moomins live like humans though they live in a fictional world. All of them make me think about my life deeply and reconsider myself. In this quote, "It's fun when one's friends get exactly what suits them," Jansson might want us not to envy our friends. I used a picture of my friends who watched fishes individually at the aquarium. The thing is that they found the beautiful or awesome things for each of them. This is important for me because I often envy my friends who have well-matched things for him/her. . . . I think this quote tells us that never mind, we can find out what really suits us someday. (Mika)

Mika was revisiting books that she was already familiar with in Japanese from childhood readings and was reading for the first time in English during the semester. In this quote, Mika frames her understanding of the fictional world of Moominland by describing a message beyond the stories themselves. In general, this may be interpreted as evidence for understanding meanings that relate not only to the books themselves but also to the world outside them. By writing this comment and sharing this with the class, Mika may have additionally been displaying positive reader engagement, which was an aim of this task. By describing the places where we all look for motivation—from beauty, individual choice, and appreciation for the mystery of the future—Mika also reconsidered her own self. In this sense, the book and setting of Moominland transported her to a place of self-contemplation, also raising possible interpretations on perspective and resonance when reading.

*Quote 2, from C. S. Lewis:*

In this quote "Someday you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again," Lewis is surprising the reader. Because almost everyone has the stereotype that fairy stories are read by children. At first, I also had this idea. However, stories have lessons. I just enjoyed reading stories when I was a child. But I find the morals through experiences. I can find a new lesson every time I read. There are hints to overcome difficulties. It is good for me because I can find and use lessons in my daily life to do something better than before. I used a photo of myself which was taken by my father. He can still remember the memory of this time. He tried to disturb my reading through putting a hat on my head by [but] I just didn't realize and kept reading. But now, I might find lessons in the story because I experienced a lot of things. Then, I think that this quote reminds us that experiments help us to find new things. (Meg)

In this essay, Meg wrote about a personal experience that has resonated with her since her early years as a reader. The telling of this narrative was itself a part of her reader's journey, and reflected on the differences between reading stories simply for pleasure as a child and then later for meaning and message as a young adult. Meg was taken back in time to her childhood by reading this quote, which also served to recall her father's memory of the event in the photo. This, it is argued, is aided by the lingering after-effect of reading. This helps to make this narrative an appealing, emotionally driven perception using a personal experience.

*Suggestions for Adapting the Materials*

This paper reported on a pilot project to use principles of reader engagement and literary quotes together in an L2 reading classroom. It is suggested that other teacher-researchers also explore ways to increase L2 readers' engagement through the use of literary quotes

in the language classroom. Modifications of the visual artifact task for a variety of different levels would be possible through adaptation of the task sheet itself. For example, by providing a list of quotes, the teacher could select target structures for classroom use. In a less advanced class, the quotes could be linked to a class text; with more advanced students, a less controlled writing task could be set with different parameters. Through the use of images, the quotes could be used in digital storytelling, poster design, role play, or other transformative formats. Once literary quotes begin to be discussed by students, the numerous ways to use them opens up a myriad of possibilities.

## Conclusion

Using the notion of lingering after-effect as a starting point to explore some aspects of reading engagement, the author sought to describe how readerly resonance has the potential to foster motivation in second language reading classrooms. Increased self-regulation and self-efficacy through autonomous activities to augment the language learning environment may be the reward for learners who become more engaged in reading by sharing their reading stories, enabled through selection and explanation of quotations that broaden understanding of the reflective aspects of the reading process. The potential for Gerrig's (1993) transportation metaphor theory was also introduced, in the hope that future investigations may further shed light on the possible uses of this concept in the development of L2 reading curricula.

While students and teachers in second language classrooms will continue to seek ways to develop motivation, it is hoped that teachers may expand their creative ideas for aiding reading engagement and success by using or adapting class tasks such as those discussed in this paper.

## Bio Data

**Tara Mclroy** is a co-coordinator of the Literature in Language Teaching SIG. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from Victoria University in Wellington, NZ, and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Birmingham, U.K.

This is an adaptation of a forum presentation given at the JALT2014 Conference. An abridged version of this paper also appears in the *JALT2014 Proceedings* as a contribution to the Literature in Language Teaching SIG Forum: Literature Across Borders (Mclroy et al., 2015).

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## Appendix A

### Student Task Sheet

#### Create a Visual Artifact with a Quote and Picture

##### Aims

1. To encourage literary reading
2. To use pictures to enhance meaning
3. To describe a picture
4. To use references

#### Part 1: Choose a Quote

In this activity you are going to use a literary quote from a poet or an author, and create a visual artifact, or picture with words, to share with the class. The aim of the activity is to help you become more interested in literary reading, and to encourage you to be more confident when talking about authors and quotes. Of course, you are given the choice on what to choose as your quote and the picture to go along with it. An example is given at the end of this task description.

The only thing that can restrict you is that you must choose a quote from a well-known writer. That is, you must know a book, short story, or poem that this person has written. Don't worry! Many of you have already read books by famous writers such as

Oscar Wilde, Jane Austen, or Mark Twain. These writers have lots of interesting quotes! You should be able to talk about your choice with your classmates in a show-and-tell lesson next week, so be prepared to talk about your choice.

#### Part 2: Take a Photo

Use a photo you have already taken or take another photograph that you think goes well with the quote you have chosen. You could also use a photo you have taken in the past or a family photo from your own collection. Your photos will be shared with the class so please be prepared to talk about your choice.

#### Part 3: Write Two Paragraphs

In your response you need to write two paragraphs. Write about the following details. Use the example as a model. Write 200-300 words.

Paragraph 1: Background of the quote and reasons for choosing the quote

1. Who your author was/is and other biographical details
2. Why this person was famous and/or well known
3. What you have read by him/her
4. What you thought when reading the quote. E.g.: Did you like it/not like it? How did it make you feel?

Paragraph 2: Interpretation of quote and use of photo

1. Write in your own words what you think the quote means
2. Write why you think this is important for life
3. Describe the picture you are using
4. Explain why you think that the picture links to the meaning of the quote

Finally, make sure to write the reference for the quote you have found. Use the model example shared with you to help.

### Part 4: Share Your Work

Save your picture as a JPG file and submit it before class via Edmodo. Be prepared to show your work to the class and discuss your quote and picture in the next lesson.

## Appendix B

### Example Visual Artifact and Written Response

“In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life: it goes on.” - Robert Frost (Evans, 1973, p. 109)

I chose a quote from Robert Frost, who was a well-loved American poet who lived from 1874 to 1963. His works *The Road Not Taken* and *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* are popular poems that ask readers to think about the journey of life and how sometimes life doesn’t take us exactly where we’d like to go. I’ve read these poems several times over the years and my reaction changes each time I read them. I think that they have an ambiguous message, which can be interpreted in many ways. Depending on the mood, I might feel happy, sad or something else in between, and understand his poems in different ways. In particular, I felt that his work is not judging people for their decisions, and that people should not feel regret for things that they have done (or not done) in life. For these reasons, I chose this quote.

In this quote, Frost is surprising the reader by possibly giving a message that we should have no regrets in life. By suggesting that learning can be summarized so neatly, only in three words, at first I thought that would be impossible. However, he then goes on to say that “it goes on”, where I believe “it” means “life” or “time”. He does not give a simple solution, and this is surprising. By giving

the message that life will continue, no matter what happens, he is giving a valuable message. This is important for me because I tend to worry about the future sometimes. I used a photo of my daughter on a swing. The idea is that life keeps moving, going forward, pushed on by invisible forces, and has a power of its own. Just like my daughter’s life will continue on, progressing from childhood into the future, I think that this quote reminds us that it is good to have no regrets; that life always goes on, whatever it brings.

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