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ADDRESSING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF ADULT ESL AND FL STUDENTS

by

Lea Marie Whiteley Child

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

Dr. María Luisa Spicer-Escalante	Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan
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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2012

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Abstract

Addressing the Need of Adult ESL and FL Students

By

Lea Whiteley Child

Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2012

Major Professor: Dr. María Luísa Spicer-Escalante

Department: Language, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

In this portfolio, the author examines what she considers to be good language teaching. The centerpiece of the portfolio is the teaching philosophy which discusses what the author believes constitutes effective language teaching such as using different teaching methods (such as task-based instruction), following the TESOL standards and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL), and promoting authenticity in the classroom. The artifacts are papers I wrote for the MSLT program which support the author's teaching philosophy. The culture artifact emphasizes pragmatic transfer from the first language to English. The literacy artifact examines different methods of improving vocabulary acquisition. The language artifact discusses my reflections on issues faced when teaching adult ESL students. In addition to the artifacts, the author includes a reflection of her teaching based on a video recording of her teaching a Spanish 1010 class. Finally, in the annotated

bibliography, she highlights the articles and books which were most influential for her in developing her teaching philosophy and artifacts. (117 pages)

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I am unable to adequately express the gratitude to the many people that helped make this possible. However, I will try. First, I wish to thank my professors, Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante, Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan, and Dr. Joshua Thoms for their time and their hard work. They have helped and supported me as I have developed as a student and as a professional. In particular, I wish to express gratitude to Dr. de Jonge-Kannan. I first met her shortly before I started my studies at USU. From that first meeting and throughout my time in the MSLT program, she has helped and encouraged me to reach my potential as a student.

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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a reflection of my work over the past two years in the MSLT program. It contains my teaching philosophy which I have slowly developed during my time at USU as well as three artifacts which further support my beliefs. In my teaching philosophy, I examine the beliefs I have regarding good language teaching. These include using different instructional methods, following the TESOL standards and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL), and promoting authenticity in the classroom.

First, I emphasize the need for instructors to encourage communication in the classroom. Once students have received input, they need to participate in meaningful activities where they are expected to produce the language. I highlight the use of task-based activities to encourage meaningful communication.

I then discuss the importance of the TESOL standards and the SFLL. The TESOL standards address the commitment and professional development of the instructor while the SFLL address the different aspects of language learning. Combined, these standards provide direction with lesson planning and curriculum development.

Finally, I address the need for promoting authenticity in the classroom. This includes using authentic situations (grocery shopping, job interviews, etc.) to teach the language as well as using authentic texts. By designing authentic situations, I help my students better understand how to use the language in real-world contexts. In addition, the use of authentic texts brings culture into the classroom.

In addition to my teaching philosophy, this portfolio contains artifacts which highlight different areas of my teaching philosophy. First, in my language artifact, I reflect on my experience interning at the English Language Center (ELC). At the ELC

I had the opportunity to observe and assist in English classes as well teach. Through these experiences I came to better understand the difficulties faced by English instructors and how research can be used as a tool to improve instruction. For example, when a new teaching situation is presented (such as teaching a multi-level class) instructors can turn to current research rather than rely on their own resources. In my literacy artifact, I address the role of input in the classroom, especially in regards to vocabulary acquisition. Finally, in my culture artifact, I address the role of culture in the classroom. Specifically, I discuss the use of compliments and compliment responses as well as how transfers from the L1 into English can occur.

Throughout my two years in the MSLT program, I have learned of different teaching methodologies and theories and have had the opportunity to use them in the classroom. From these methodologies and theories, I have developed my own beliefs regarding good language teaching. These beliefs are set forth in my teaching philosophy. As I begin my career as an adult ESL instructor, I intend to use various methods of teaching, the TESOL standards and SFLL as a guide, and authentic materials in the classroom.

Teaching Philosophy

Apprenticeship of Observation

On average, by the time American teenagers start college at the age of 18, they have spent roughly 2300 hours in a classroom. Once college is completed, they have spent an estimated 3320 hours in a formal, classroom setting. My education, however, was not average. I was educated at home until I was sixteen, which was the age I first set foot inside a formal classroom, my first day at the community college. Therefore, my time observing teachers and the teachers I have observed are not the usual combination of elementary, high school, and college teachers. However, my observations have been rich and beneficial for my future as an educator. My observation of teaching can be divided into three periods of my life – the homeschool years, the college years, and the mission years.

The earliest "classroom" setting that I remember was at the kitchen table with my siblings, learning the alphabet. My mother was our teacher. Our curriculum was an assortment of workbooks and textbooks. At the time my mother had her Associate's degree, her emphasis in theater – not in education. Despite the "disadvantages" she faced (no formal education in teaching, limited funds for acquiring teaching materials, teaching five children of differing grades and ages, etc.), she taught us to the best of her abilities. In many ways she provided a positive example of teaching. For instance, through her attitude towards learning and her passion for the lesson material, I came to understand the power the teacher's attitude can have over the student. However, the most important principle I learned from her was the influence of high expectations and the effect they have on the students' attitude towards learning and performance.

While my mother was an important figure in my years as a student, I encountered many different instructors during my college years. Throughout my

college experience I was fortunate to have many wonderful teachers, with very few negative experiences. The negative, however, are as beneficial as the good to help me understand what constitutes good teaching. Through my observations, I have noticed many different elements that contribute to good teaching – such as enthusiasm, creativity, and a positive attitude. However, from my personal experience the most powerful tool a teacher possesses is that of love and concern for the student. I performed to the best of my abilities whenever I had teachers who I felt truly cared about who I was, my college career, etc. Because they cared about me, I would reciprocate by doing the best I could in their classes. From what I have observed, it is a common characteristic of human nature to respond positively when someone demonstrates true care and concern. As students are treated as individuals with personalities and lives outside of the classroom rather than as a group, then they, in return, view the teacher as a human being trying to further their education rather than a task master. While on the one hand, I had teachers who demonstrated true care and concern, I also had other teachers who came to class with the same attitude as the student – the next hour or semester was something to be endured rather than enjoyed. The difference in the educational experience is astounding.

After graduation, my "formal" education was temporarily over, but I still had opportunities to observe various teaching methods, especially with respect to learning a foreign language. In my college Spanish classes the teachers used the traditional method of instruction. Grammar drills, memorization, and the like were the order of the day. Oral communication was minimal. However, shortly after graduation I entered the Missionary Training Center as a Spanish speaking missionary. The expectation was that within eight weeks, regardless of previous language instruction, the missionaries would be able to communicate in a foreign language. To accomplish

this, the students were expected to learn the grammar and vocabulary necessary and then speak as much as possible. The second language, in my case Spanish, was the primary language spoken in the classroom. I came to understand that it is as vital to have opportunities to produce the language as it is to learn grammar and vocabulary. Also, it is important to note, that the teachers demonstrated their care and concern to the students in a myriad of ways, the most pronounced being that of high expectations.

Despite missing about 2300 hours of classroom time in elementary school, middle school and high school, in the end I feel that it has proved beneficial for my future as an ESL instructor. I have experienced what some would consider unconventional methods of instruction in additional to the more traditional methods. While there are times when the standard lecture method is appropriate, I am not afraid of more creative, possibly unconventional methods of instruction. Throughout my homeschool education, college instruction, and missionary training, I learned that one of the most influential characteristics an educator can possess is the ability to demonstrate true concern for students as individuals.

Professional Environment

Various opportunities exist for an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor. While in Boston, I became acutely aware of the struggles faced by those learning ESL. This was augmented by my experiences at the English Language Center in Logan. People come to this country needing to earn money but not being able to speak English, often struggling with basic skills such as going to the store, reading bus schedules, etc. More than once I was asked to interpret for Spanish-speaking friends of mine as they negotiated contracts. While they have the desire to learn English, they do not always have the time or the money to attend English classes. As a result of my personal experiences, I am interested in teaching adults in the community – at community centers, libraries, etc. These settings will be both formal and informal, from structured classroom settings to informal conversation groups. I will use what I have learned in the MSLT program to assist people to become more confident in their use of the target language. I want to use my skills and abilities to empower individuals in the community.

Personal Teaching Philosophy

As a result of my desire to teach adult ESL students, I have researched the different foreign language teaching methodologies. The field of second language acquisition (SLA) presents various theories and methods of teaching. As a student and as an instructor, I have observed many different styles of teaching and incorporated various teaching methods into my own instruction. Through this process, I have developed my own ideas and theories. Most importantly, I consider the teacher's role in the classroom to be a guide or facilitator of learning, as suggested by Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical construct termed Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and by the communicative approach (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010; Zhang, 2010). A learner's ZPD refers to teachers assisting students in the learning process, providing scaffolding and helping them achieve autonomy (Vygotsky, 1978).

With the communicative approach instructors, rather than being the central figure, allow students to take center stage. As Lee and VanPatten (2003) state "when the instructor takes on the role of *architect*, the one who designs and plans but is not responsible for the final product, then students become *builders* or *coworkers*, who put it together" (p. 71). Instructors should view themselves as facilitators in the learning process. Simply standing and lecturing with minimal interaction with the students does not promote learning, especially not second language learning. Students are ultimately responsible for learning the language (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). As the instructor, I am responsible for providing my students with the tools and opportunities they need for creating a learning environment which enables the learning process. A classroom which facilitates learning is one that features a balanced approach to teaching, follows a standards-based method of instruction, and promotes authenticity

in the classroom. In this paper, I will attempt to describe how these theories and methods have modified and I keep modifying my teaching philosophy.

Balanced Approach

One of the oldest, most commonly used forms of foreign-language instruction is the bottom-up method, which focuses on learning the rules and mechanics first and using them later (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The bottom-up method, by focusing on mechanics (i.e., grammar) without opportunities to produce meaningful output, hinders students' abilities to communicate in the language. While input does play a crucial role in SLA, output is equally essential. Swain (2005) argues that output is "part of the *process* of learning, not simply the product of it" (p. 471). If students are not producing the language, they do not have opportunities to learn from their mistakes. VanPatten (2003) further explains the role of output in SLA when he states "Output…is not language production without meaning. *Output* in SLA means language that has a *communicative purpose;* it is language that learners produce to express some kind of meaning" (p. 62, italics in original). As Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) point out, students do not learn a foreign language to recite grammatical rules. Instead, the point of learning a foreign language is "to learn how to carry out specific communicative tasks rather than to produce specific grammatical forms" (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, p. 61). This is especially true of adult ESL students as they are learning English to communicate with those around them. Through my experience, when adult ESL students are asked what they want to learn, they want to learn how to make a doctors' appointment or what to do during a job interview. They need to be given opportunities to use English in meaningful ways, not grammar lessons.

One way of accomplishing this is to design activities that encourage meaningful communication. Task-based activities (TBA) are both meaningful and communicative, if done properly. TBA, according to Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), are learner-centered, focus on a "meaningful exchange of information" (p. 77), and prepare students for one cumulative communicative goal. Interaction between students, which includes communication and use of the target language, is essential for successful completion of an activity. As students interact in the target language, negotiation of meaning occurs as they try to understand each other, resolve problems, and draw conclusions to complete the activity. Examples of TBA include interview activities and information gap activities. An essential ingredient for TBA is that all activities need to have real-world application. As Xu (2010) states, "…motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics" (p. 160). In the context of an adult ESL classroom, some meaningful topics might be those which help students navigate their new environment such as grocery shopping, medical emergencies, or job hunting. Therefore, instructors need to provide activities that help their students learn the skills they need (Sung, 2010). Peyton, Moore, and Young (2010) remind instructors of the need to connect "instruction to adult learners' lives outside the classroom" (p. 2). When that connection is made, the activities have meaning for the students.

Task-based instruction incorporates methods from a top-down approach. One example of TBA and a top-down approach incorporates a text that students are given which they then analyze, focusing on certain details (Adair-Hauck & Cumo-Johanssen, 1997; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). However, Shrum and Glisan point out that this type of learning leads to "strategic guessing" (p. 60). While it introduces new vocabulary in a meaningful context it can also result in incorrectly guessing the

meaning of words and phrases thus creating confusion rather than clarity. Although both bottom-up and top-down methods have merit, I propose that a balanced approach is desirable, incorporating elements from both top-down and bottom-up approaches (Liu, Zhu, & Nain, 2010). This balance provides students with the assistance they need to carry out the tasks they are expected to perform, such as task-based activities. For example, highlighting and previewing grammar features or vocabulary, as a bottom-up approach suggests, creates scaffolding or support. This scaffolding facilitates the learning process. As students are provided with scaffolding, they are better able to negotiate the meaning of the text as well as engage in meaningful discussions (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). In defining negotiation of meaning, Lee (2003) states:

> Negotiation consists of interactions during which speakers come to terms, reach an agreement, make arrangements, resolve a problem, or settle an issue by conferring or discussing: the purpose of language use is to accomplish some task rather than to practice any particular language forms. (p. 65)

In the context of reading, negotiation occurs between the students and the text as well as student to student. Student to student negotiation occurs when discussing the meaning of a text. Negotiation of meaning, however, extends to all aspects of language learning: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2008) point out that it is important to give students opportunities to "[practice] English and [make] themselves understood," which they accomplish through negotiating meaning (p. 121). All activities should be centered on a balanced-methods approach, preparing students to use the language and then challenging students to use the language in meaningful, communicative ways. As part of a balanced approach,

instructors need to consider what their students already know and how to provide the language support their students need.

Schema Theory and Scaffolding

When students are exposed to new input it is important to consider what they already know. According to schema theory (Echevarría, Voght, & Short, 2008; Liu, Zhu, & Nain, 2010; Minsky, 1975; Schank & Ableson, 1977; Shrum & Glisan 2010; Zhang, 2010), it is essential for the new input to build on previously acquired knowledge. Zhang (2010) explains that the input students receive must be "mapped against some existing schema and that all aspects of the schema must be compatible with the input information" (p. 487). In relation to schema, it is important to consider the different cultural backgrounds of the students (Echevarría, Voght, & Short, 2008, p. 55). If their cultural differences are not considered, even if background knowledge is provided, it still might not provide the necessary assistance the students need to make connections. These connections facilitate learning while, if students are unable to make connections, learning is hindered. It is similar to building a house with no foundation; if the house is not structurally sound, it will fall.

As guides or facilitators, instructors need to understand the students' current level, provide necessary assistance, and work together with the students. This results in creating a learning environment where scaffolding occurs (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Nair, 2008; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Peregoy and Boyles define scaffolds as "temporary supports, provided by more capable people, that permit learners to participate in the complex process before they are able to do so unassisted…once proficiency is achieved, the scaffold is no longer needed and may be dropped" (pp. 85-86). Scaffolding allows students to challenge themselves in a safe environment where they will receive the support they need. As Krashen (1987) points

out, students acquire language when they are stretched a little beyond their current abilities. As students slowly increase in ability and proficiency, they will become autonomous learners and proficient speakers of English.

In addition to scaffolding, instructors need to consider the primacy-recency effect when designing lesson plans (Murray & Christison, 2011; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). When introducing new concepts in the classroom, it is essential to do so either at the beginning or the end of class and not in the middle. Murray and Christison (2011) point out that instructors need to design lesson plans to take advantage of "primetimes" (Murray & Christison, 2011, p.149). Recently, I started to create lesson plans according to the primacy-recency theory. The result is that my lesson plans are better balanced and my students are more active participants.

Also, the backward design of creating a lesson plan assists in creating student-centered classes and is driven by the desired end result (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Having a vision of what the students need to know or learn helps instructors create effective lesson plans. The backward design supports the communicative approach as the end result is the culminating communicative goal. Instructors first choose a goal such as what they want the students to be able to complete by the end of the lesson or unit. Then, instructors design activities that build up to the goal. For example, a communicative goal could be "The students will interview each other about their lives and their classes. They will then write a short paragraph based on the answers." All of the lesson's activities focus on helping the students achieve this final goal. Some activities might include a "sign here" activity to practice the vocabulary they need for the final interview or an activity for which they have to practice creating questions. A "sign here" activity is an activity that requires students to ask questions and, depending on the answer, having other students sign a piece of paper. I have used

these types of activities. When used appropriately, these activities encourage students to interact in the foreign language, helping them to achieve the final goal. To help instructors know what goals to set, the TESOL standards and Standard for foreign language learning are designed to give direction to lesson planning and curriculum development.

Standards for Teaching ESL Adults

In addition to a balanced approach when creating lessons, I will refer to the Standards of ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults as designed by TESOL (2008) as well as the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL) (NSLEP, 2006; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The standards designed by TESOL focus on the instructor, rather than the student. It is divided into eight domains from planning to commitment and professionalism. These standards help me know what I need to do to become an effective teacher.

In addition to the TESOL standards, the SFLL provide a holistic view of language learning. The SFLL connect the students' understanding of communication, cultures, connections, comparison, and communities (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Communicating is more than simply being able to understand what is being said and being able to speak. It is being able to understand the customs and mores of the people, the nuances of the language, and being able to connect everything together (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009). As Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008) state, "achieving success in a new culture does not…lie solely in learning the grammar and lexicon of the language. Ability to negotiate cultural barriers and develop new ways of learning are also essential" (p. 72). For example, while an ESL student might be able to speak English and understand when spoken to, but confusion might occur due to body language, sarcasm, idiomatic phrases, etc. Gibbons (2002) argues that "speakers

within a culture share particular assumptions and expectations, so that they are able to take for granted the ways in which things are done" (p. 2). Native English speakers do not necessarily recognize how often they say or do things that leave non-native speakers confused (LoCastro, 2010). These aspects of culture or pragmatics need to be taught explicitly to the language learner. It is therefore the responsibility of instructors to help ESL students *understand* the cultural nuances they encounter (Tran, 2008). As students better understand these nuances, they will be able to avoid those misunderstandings which can disrupt communication (LoCastro, 2010).

Portfolios for assessment

One of the domains emphasized in the TESOL standards is the importance of assessments. Assessments allow instructors to determine the progress of their students as well as what needs to be addressed. Therefore, it is important to consider what forms of assessment should be used. The TESOL standards emphasize the importance of involving students in "[determining] what will be assessed" ("Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework", standard 3).

One form of assessment which requires active student participation and is easily adaptable is the portfolio. According to Schwarzer (2009) portfolios are effective in assessing "learners' progress over time" and "provide learners with useful and actionable information about their own progress" (p. 30). O'Malley and Pierce (1996) further describe portfolio assessment as "a systematic collection of student work that is analyzed to show progress over time with regard to instructional objectives" (p. 5). Instructors can decide what student work will be collected for portfolios. For example, culture, while important, can be difficult to assess (Schulz, 2007). Schulz recommends using portfolios as a method of assessment. The examples she provides are specifically for English speakers learning German, however, they are

easily adapted for English learners. For example, the students can compare their native culture to American culture, comparing various aspects from religion and educational systems to gender roles and important personalities. This allows the students to explore American culture in a highly personal way, thus increasing the saliency of the topic. Portfolios are useful as they cover more than one aspect of language learning. For example, portfolios may be used to focus on the writing development of students (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 1993; Spicer-Escalante, 2004). As Spicer-Escalante points out, portfolios allow students to recognize the weaknesses of their writing and help them gain confidence in their ability to write in the L2.

Currently, I am teaching a Spanish 1010 course. I have implemented the portfolio as a method of assessing students' understanding of how to create sentences and short paragraphs using the Spanish language. They are in the process of writing a short story, adding sentences every week according to what was learned in class and editing their work.

This is one example of how my teaching will reflect various aspects of the TESOL Standards and SFLL. My lessons and methods of instruction will be based on these Standards. The Standards and SFLL provide a framework or an outline for all methods of instruction. In frequently referring back to them and adapting my lessons accordingly, I ensure that my students are being taught what they need to know. The focus will not be on how well they perform but rather on what they actually know and what they are able to do with that knowledge (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). In addition, these standards provide a framework which allows for the use of authentic materials in the classroom.

Authenticity in the Classroom

By adhering to the TESOL Standards and SFLL, I will also be creating an authentic environment for my students. Schwarzer (2009) explains that authentic learning "means to incorporate learning materials and learning experiences from the learners' daily lives" (p. 29).

In an ESL environment, it is vital that the classroom be as authentic as possible meaning that the activities reflect real-world situations (Roberts & Cooke, 2009). Authenticity can be achieved through various methods such as using recordings of real-life (rather than scripted) situations as well as helping students develop their "authentic voice" (Roberts & Cooke, 2009, p. 635). In other words, when teachers introduce authentic forms of communication and culture and proceed to help students draw connections and comparisons, the students' confidence in the use of the language increases. For example, communication in the classroom can be enhanced, as Roberts and Cooke (2009) suggest, by teaching the narrative form, both oral and written. They point out that narratives "occur across all communicative settings in different forms" (p. 632). While they emphasize the use of narrative during job interviews, the narrative form is commonly used in all forms of communication as people often relate personal experiences or funny stories (Mitchell, 2008). Increasing students' ability to use that specific form will help them in various communicative situations outside the classroom.

Authentic Texts

In creating authenticity in the classroom, it is also useful to incorporate authentic texts (Maxim, 2002; O'Donnell, 2009; Shrum & Glisan, 2010; Wong, 2006). Maxim (2002) defines authentic texts or materials as texts "written to be read by native speakers of the language" (p. 20). The first time I was exposed to authentic

Spanish literature I felt that I was given a whole new perspective on the Spanish language. I began to understand the practical applications of the grammar concepts I had learned, and to learn about some of the cultural practices and culture-specific vocabulary. The differences between these authentic texts (i.e., texts written by Spanish speakers for Spanish speakers) and texts translated into Spanish were marked. When one considers that each language has its own set of slang terms, idioms, etc., which do not directly translate into other languages, this exposure to authentic texts becomes essential to language learning.

In the summer of 2011, I had the opportunity to teach a diverse group of ESL students. In our classes, we used many different types of authentic texts to teach the content. Given the program's focus on natural resources, we, the instructors, covered topics such as climate change, sustainable agriculture, etc. We found newspaper articles, websites, and other authentic materials for the students to read. Using these sources helped make the topics more real to the students. Rather than simply talking about the importance of sustainable agriculture, we read a newspaper article about a farmer who converted his farm so that was sustainable. Also, for one class period we read a couple of American tall-tales. The students enjoyed listening to the stories and then they were thrilled when we gave them the opportunity to write down legends or myths from their own countries. This use of authentic materials allowed for meaningful participation and interaction among our students.

As a result of my personal experiences as a student and an instructor, I intend to use authentic texts whenever possible to expose my students to American culture, nuances, and customs. I will do so in various ways, from using newspapers and short stories to watching video clips and listening to music. When presenting short stories or other forms of literature I will occasionally utilize the PACE model (Donato &

Adair-Hauck, 2002a; Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2002b; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The PACE model is divided into four sections which "[integrates] focus on form in the context of a story-based unit of study" (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2010, p. 223). As Donato and Adair-Hauck (2002a) point out, the art of storytelling is common in most cultures. Therefore, regardless of language background, students will recognize the story form. Also, in reference to the PACE method, Adair-Hauck and Donato (2010) state that this model "allows for learners to construct understandings of relevant and meaningful form in collaboration with the teacher and each other" (p. 223). They explain that when using the PACE method, it can take a few days to completely cover a story. Although the PACE method is useful, I believe in variety in lesson planning and, therefore, I will avoid using one teaching method over and over. It is essential to be flexible in my teaching and adapt my lessons to my students (Shrum & Glisan, 2010; Sun & Cheng, 2002). Each semester will bring new students to my class and, by keeping variety in my lessons, I will be better able to adapt to the new students' learning styles.

Observations

Throughout the process of developing my teaching philosophy, and in conjunction with Dr. Spicer-Escalante's LING 6800, I wanted to better understand how other ESL instructors are able to apply their teaching philosophy into the classroom. In order to do so, I observed and interviewed an ESL instructor teaching at Utah State University. The ESL course was an integrated skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) ESL college course. It was a multi-level class, meaning that the English proficiency of the students varied; however, the majority of them were level two students. I interviewed the instructor using a semi-structured interview in order to discover her teaching philosophy and to what extent she believes she

implements the communicative approach (CA) in her classroom. In addition, I observed her classroom three times in order to determine to what extent she implemented her teaching philosophy into the classroom.

When interviewing the ESL instructor, she demonstrated a preference for the CA as well as how she feels about implementing this method into her classroom. At one point, she explicitly stated that the students are her primary concern. She emphasized that she is responsible for "[figuring] out the needs of the students and giving them what they want, and what they need in the best way possible [and making] it interesting, making it applicable and true to real life." Her teaching philosophy and her role as the instructor center around this idea. From personal experience, she understands some of the concerns and difficulties foreign students face when they come to the United States. It is her responsibility to decipher what her students need and to provide them with the necessary help through instruction.

While in her interviews she demonstrated an understanding of the CA her teaching did not always reflect her beliefs. In particular, I focused my observations on textbook use, the use of the target language, and classroom activities as these points reflected different ways in which she incorporates the CA into the classroom.

For example, while she said that she adapts her lesson materials to the needs of her students when she taught her instruction and activities seemed entirely derived from the textbook. This might be because the material is new to her and in her interviews she stated that she is still discovering the best method of teaching it. In her interview she explained how this semester she is piloting a new textbook. She acknowledged that the old textbook was outdated, but she felt the content was more applicable to the students. With this new textbook, she is working on adapting it for her students, determining how it is applicable to them, and what adjustments she

needs to make. She considers it important for her to take ownership of the textbook, reflected in a statement saying she wants to, “make it my own and help it […] help the students in the best way that it can and that I can.” She said that she is willing to omit anything from the text that she does not feel is pertinent and bring in outside materials to supplement the lesson. However, this was not apparent during the observations. She frequently referred to the textbook and had the students complete the activities in it.

In addition to textbook use, I observed the students’ use of the target language in the classroom. During my observations I noticed that Professor Smith’s classes had a relaxed environment, in which the target language was used on a regular basis. She encouraged the students to speak only in English, which she did through several methods; for example, if she heard any language in class other than English she reminded all the students to speak only in English. She said if she does not understand it then they should not use it. Also, when dividing into groups she made it a point to require that they should pair up with someone who did not speak their native language.

Finally, I observed the activities Professor Smith used in the classroom and if they encouraged communication between her students. I noticed that her activities promoted more creative dialogue between the students. As an example, she presented a lesson focused on learning the names of animals. She divided them into groups and each group was instructed to go through the vocabulary list and try to describe the animals to each other. The methods they used to describe the animals were at times unconventional, but they were able to communicate, whether through actions, drawing pictures, or verbal description. Another example included the organization of a mock town hall meeting. The issue being discussed was what should be done about

the wolves in Yellowstone National Park. Students were required to take positions (they had three options) and defend those positions. Although these activities did provide for the negotiation of meaning, they were not true task-based activities in that they were not part of a larger activity with an ultimate end goal.

Through my interviews and observations, I came to better understand how instructors do not always implement what they believe to be good language teaching into the classroom. In particular, this instructor struggled due to the textbook. This is a factor which can make teaching communicatively difficult for language instructors. From this experience I came to better understand that, while I have specific beliefs regarding good language teaching, I may not always be able to implement those beliefs into classroom practice.

Conclusion

Despite the difficulties that may arise, as an ESL instructor, my goal will be to ensure that my classroom is a student-centered environment. Concern for the students, their goals, and how to achieve them is paramount (Zhou, 2009). While the students are responsible for learning English, I can enhance the learning environment to promote their acquisition of the language (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Creating the ideal classroom and strictly adhering to my principles will not be easy; however, it will be worth the time and effort as my students become proficient English speakers as well as gain an understanding and appreciation for the English language. As an ESL teacher, I will focus on the needs of my students – helping them not only learn the language but also understand the intricacies and complexities of American culture and society. Having come to a new country, they will be adjusting and trying to cope with a variety of changes in their lives. My role is to guide them through this experience and help them achieve independence. As I create lessons which use a balanced

method of instruction, adhere to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning, and create an authentic environment for my students, they will increase in their ability to communicate confidently in English.

LITERACY ARTIFACT

Methods for Improving Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention

INTRODUCTION

In my teaching philosophy, I state that I will address the needs of my students. Those needs will vary from student to students; however, all students need to acquire vocabulary in order to acquire the language. Therefore, in this artifact, originally written for Dr. de Jonge-Kannan's LING 6010 class, I examine different methods of helping students increase vocabulary acquisition. Pre-reading, post-reading, and in-text glosses all offer benefits and assist students in acquiring vocabulary. These are methods which I can use to help my students improve their vocabulary acquisition and, subsequently, their language acquisition. As I wrote this artifact, I came to better understand the difficulties faced in enhancing students vocabulary acquisition. However, I also came to better understand the resources available to instructors through current research. Therefore, I chose this to be an artifact as it represents how research can guide instructional practices as well as lead to further research.

Language proficiency is evidenced by an individual's ability to read, write, speak, and listen. As Wrigley (2008) states, "proficiency in any language is multidimensional" (p. 182). Regardless of which dimension of language acquisition is the focus, input is a necessary component. According to Krashen's (1987) input hypothesis acquisition will only occur "when learners receive an optimal quantity of comprehensible input" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 15). Lee and VanPatten (2003) compare input to gas, which cars need in order to run. Likewise, language acquisition needs input. For second language acquisition (SLA), input is the forms of oral and written language that instructors provide to the students and that students have to pay attention to. In addition, output is essential for SLA. Whether speaking, writing, etc., vocabulary is an important element of language acquisition and proficiency. Vocabulary acquisition, therefore, is vital to becoming proficient in a second language. How to best enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition, however, is debatable. Many studies have investigated vocabulary acquisition, examining such factors as the effect of certain activities, the role of reading, and the use of glosses on vocabulary acquisition. This study will examine the effect pre-reading activities, post-reading activities, and in-text glosses have on students' vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Activities

Multiple studies focus on what types of activities are most beneficial for vocabulary acquisition (Alessi & Dwyer, 2008; Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Li, 2010; Min, 2008). Alessi and Dwyer (2008) examined the differences between vocabulary assistance before and during reading, focusing on its impact on reading comprehension. They found that while pre-reading activities significantly decreased time spent reading, they did not improve reading comprehension and performance.

Rather, vocabulary assistance during reading proved more beneficial for reading comprehension. Hunt and Beglar (2005), however, argue that pre-reading activities which "highlight vocabulary in the text" will result in the "acquisition of new lexis" (p. 30). While pre-reading activities may not enhance reading comprehension, they do enhance vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, in determining the most beneficial pre-reading activities, the purpose of the activities needs to be considered.

Activity Design and Vocabulary Retention

In discussing activity design, Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) present the Involvement Load Hypothesis which states that "retention of new information depends on the amount and the quality of attention that individuals pay to various aspects of words. Rich (qualitative) and numerous (quantitative) associations with existing knowledge…increase the chances that the new information will be retained" (p. 3). They argue that regardless of whether the task is input- or output-oriented, the more involved the students are with a word (through the task), the better they will retain that word. This theory supports the hypothesis that vocabulary-based activities have a significant impact on acquisition, especially if the activities allow students to see and use the vocabulary in a variety of instances.

This subject was further investigated by File and Adams (2010), who studied the effect of isolated form-focused instruction versus integrated form-focused instruction (FFI) on vocabulary acquisition and retention. The isolated approach focuses on vocabulary in isolation, such as teaching vocabulary before a reading. The integrated approach focuses on the linguistic form, usually performed during reading and within a context. Using two ESL university classes, they compared isolated instruction, integrated instruction, and incidental acquisition. Predictably, a significant difference was seen between the FFI groups and the incidental vocabulary acquisition

group. However, no significant difference was found between the two FFI groups. As for retention, though, when the delayed test was performed no significant difference occurred between the three groups. One disadvantage of this study is the short time lag (36 days) from the pretest to the delayed test. That is not a significant amount of time, especially when compared to Min's (2008) study, which used a three-month lag. Despite this drawback, it is interesting that none of the groups achieved long-term retention (i.e., one month) of vocabulary. While the activities (either performed before or during the reading) proved effective on immediate vocabulary acquisition, it is still uncertain what methods prove the most beneficial for long-term vocabulary retention.

Reading and Vocabulary Acquisition

In order to examine factors that influence vocabulary acquisition, Min (2008) investigated the effect of reading on vocabulary acquisition and retention among EFL secondary school students. She compared vocabulary-enhancement activities and narrow reading (i.e., reading thematically related texts) to determine their relative effect on vocabulary acquisition and retention. To determine the long-term retention of vocabulary, she performed a test three months after the initial post-reading test. The results of the study support the hypothesis that vocabulary exercises contribute to improved vocabulary acquisition. However, they do not support the hypothesis that they will lead to long-term retention or the ability to recall the vocabulary initially learned. Despite the question of whether vocabulary activities assist in long-term retention of vocabulary, the argument is clear that activities are beneficial to short-term vocabulary acquisition. While Eyraud, Giles, Koenig, and Stoller (2000) agree that reading is a superior method of acquiring vocabulary, they also acknowledge that students prefer "explicit vocabulary instruction" (p. 1). Explicit vocabulary

instruction, according to Eyraud et. al., involves teaching the meanings of words, suffixes, prefixes, etc., outside of a traditional reading text/context.

In addition, Eyraud, Giles, Koenig, and Stoller (2000) claim that instructors need to focus attention on vocabulary which students encounter through reading. Horst (2005) asserts that if "learners [hope] to move beyond basic oral communication skills…[they] must read written text in order to expand their lexicons" (p. 356). He argues that reading exposes learners to a larger variety of vocabulary than will be encountered in oral discourse. In accordance with these statements, Lee (2007) performed 3 consecutive studies on 3 EFL university classes in Taiwan that used Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). The first study investigated a one-semester English class that used the SSR component. Similar to extensive reading programs, the students could choose from a selection of books. Once a week, they read in class and were required to write summaries of their readings. The second study followed an English class for one academic year but, rather than giving options, the students were assigned texts such as *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*. The final study investigated an English class where the texts were also student selected. For all three studies, Lee used the National Vocabulary Test and a cloze test as the pre-test and post-test. From the results, Lee concluded that SSR programs are effective methods of promoting SLA, as vocabulary grew and reading comprehension improved. While these studies demonstrate increased vocabulary, Lee never addresses how vocabulary-focused instruction combined with reading could affect vocabulary acquisition. Leung (2002), after performing an introspective study in which she was both the researcher and the lone subject, came to the same conclusion. For this study, she selected Japanese children's stories that were both authentic and translated texts. She also performed two vocabulary tests (a pre-test and a post-test). After reading

Japanese for one hour a day over the course of one year, she found a significant improvement in her ability to "identify words and use them to construct[…]semantically and grammatically correct sentences" (p. 70). However, the researcher and the participant were one and the same and it is impossible to generalize the study of one individual to the whole community of foreign language learners.

Lee (2007) examined reading as part of a class while Leung (2002) involved voluntary reading. Mason (2006) performed a study that examined the impact of voluntary reading on improving TOEFL scores. The study involved six university students learning English in Japan. On average, the students read 70-100 pages per week during the course of the 13 week program. They read in their free time and chose books from a selection of 700 titles. Their pre-test and post-test consisted of taking the TOEFL at the beginning and conclusion of the program. Mason found that all students improved their TOEFL scores and that reading could lead to improved vocabulary and grammar. Similar to Leung's study, one of the limitations of this study is the small number of participants. At the same time, the impact of voluntary reading on these students' TOEFL scores cannot be overlooked.

Investigating the benefits of extensive reading, Pigada and Schmitt (2006) discuss incidental vocabulary acquisition. In this case study, they investigated how much students' understanding of vocabulary was enhanced after a one-month extensive reading program. However, rather than focusing on the typical definition of vocabulary acquisition (students' ability to understand and use new vocabulary), they divided vocabulary knowledge into three components "form (spelling), meaning (form-meaning relationship), and use (grammatical functions)" (p. 6). Their reasoning for this distinction is that vocabulary acquisition is more than the ability to define the word. It includes spelling, ability to recognize words, etc. Simplified texts were

selected as they "offer L2 learners appropriate conditions for word learning" (p. 8) as the text is less dense and more accessible to the reader. Results from this study indicated that while all three aspects of word knowledge were enhanced, spelling benefited the most. Their conclusion to this study is that while incidental vocabulary acquisition is possible, "incidental learning should be followed with intentional learning" (p. 21). Zhou (2009) continued this line of inquiry with her study on ESL learners' viewpoints concerning improving grammar and vocabulary. Regarding incidental vocabulary acquisition, she proposed that "incidental and intentional learning of vocabulary can be complementary in the acquisition process" (p. 35). Therefore, post-reading activities would prove beneficial to solidify what was learned incidentally.

Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

Focusing on students' ability to acquire vocabulary incidentally, Pellicer-Sànchez and Schmitt (2010) performed a study where the students read the novel *Things Fall Apart.*This novel contains words with the translations/definitions from Ibo (an African language) and those are the words the researchers selected. From this study they found that substantial learning occurred, particularly in recognizing meaning. This further supports the claim that incidental vocabulary acquisition is possible when reading.

While incidental vocabulary acquisition is important to consider, many studies examine the use of glosses while reading and their impact on vocabulary acquisition (Cheng & Good, 2009; Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001; Ko, 2005). Ko (2005) defines a gloss as "information on important words via definitions or synonyms" (p. 1). Many factors must be considered regarding the use of glosses during reading such as L1 glosses versus L2 glosses (Ko, 2005), the potential of glosses being distracting

(Cheng & Good, 2009; Taylor, 2010), and types of glosses used such as marginal glossing and hyper-text glossing (Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001). Ko (2005) investigated whether reading comprehension was affected by having glosses in the L1 or the L2. She also took into account which method the students preferred. The results showed that L2 glosses were most effective for reading comprehension and that the students preferred L2 glosses over L1 glosses. Taylor (2010) proposes, along with Cheng and Good (2009) that, depending on the level of the student, glossing could be distracting. They report that lower-level students found glossing distracting as it disrupts the flow of reading, while students at a higher level were able to effectively use the glosses. Finally, Gettys, Imhof, and Kautz (2001) focused on the effect that glossing has on reading comprehension and vocabulary retention. Specifically, they compared the effect of basic dictionary form glosses with sentence-level L1 equivalents of L2 words glosses. They found that students who used the basic dictionary technique had better vocabulary retention even though students preferred the sentence-level equivalents. This demonstrates that preference does not necessarily equal performance.

Rationale of the Study

The research literature presents many options for enhancing vocabulary acquisition through various input and output activities. Pre-reading activities which focus on specific words within the text result in better vocabulary acquisition, post-reading activities are useful in solidifying the new information, and glosses within the text which provide basic dictionary form have a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition. The act of reading is a viable method for acquiring new vocabulary as it provides students with increased opportunities to encounter new vocabulary (Pellicer-

Sànchez &Schmitt, 2010). Each method has proven merit. However, it is still unclear as to which one has the greatest impact on vocabulary acquisition and retention.

The studies presented propose various effective methods of enhancing vocabulary acquisition. However, a combined methods approach is missing. A study that combines the relative benefits of pre-reading activities, post-reading activities, and in-text glosses is lacking. Also, while many studies have been performed either in the secondary or university setting, hardly any studies examine the effect these methods have on adult ESL students in the community. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect all three methods have on vocabulary acquisition and retention in an adult ESL setting. For the purposes of this study, *acquisition* refers to new vocabulary acquired immediately after reading, while *retention* refers to students' ability to remember the new vocabulary long-term. The long-term effect is of particular interest as this has not been explored in great detail.

Research Questions

In this study, I investigate the following questions:

1. How does the use of pre-reading activities, post-reading activities, and in-text glosses affect vocabulary acquisition?
2. Is there a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group with regard to vocabulary acquisition?
3. Is there a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group with regarding to vocabulary retention?

In this study I am investigating the effect of these activities on vocabulary acquisition, both in the short-term and the long-term. While initial vocabulary

acquisition is important, it is also important to recognize how effective the methods are for the long-term.

Methodology

Following the format of Lee's (2007) Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) class in his first study, I will be comparing four ESL classes. Rather than focusing on advanced university students, however, the focus of this research will be on advanced ESL students at a community center over the course of a ten-week term. All classes will have the SSR component where one class period a week will be focused on reading the assigned text. Rather than allowing student self-selection, the texts will be assigned to ensure students are exposed to the same vocabulary. Advanced classes were selected due to Taylor (2010) and Cheng and Good's (2009) theory that lower-level students find glosses distracting. The control group will follow the standard class schedule, while each experimental group will receive a specific treatment. Group 1 will have pre-reading activities, Group 2 will have post-reading activities, and Group 3 will have marginal glosses in the basic L2 dictionary form (Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001). Given that the students in the class are from various language backgrounds, it would be difficult to provide texts with glosses in the L1.

This study will use a format similar to Min's (2008) study. Rather than investigating adolescents in secondary school, this study investigates adults in the community. The measurement instruments consist of a pre-test, post-test, and a delayed post-test three months later. For the tests, I will use Min's modification of Paribakht and Wesche's (1997) Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). The modified VKS provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the word, its meaning, and how to use it, resulting in the researcher knowing exactly how well the students acquired the vocabulary. As the study will consist of multiple groups

and tests, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the scores.

Conclusion

This study would provide additional insight on the effect certain instructional practices have on vocabulary acquisition and retention, particularly long-term retention. While it is premature to state that this study would conclusively determine which methods are most effective, it would provide further clarification. Language instructors would better know how to assist their students in the acquisition and retention of vocabulary. This knowledge, once implemented into the classroom, will help students improve their acquisition and retention of vocabulary resulting in improved while reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills. Also, once a specific method is determined as being most beneficial, further studies can be conducted on specific activities or types of glosses. In addition, an extension of this study would be to have the texts on-line and compare the findings with this study. Does the difference between printed text and on-line text affect the results? If so, how? Does students' preference between the two affect results? Also, would the results of this study transfer to secondary or elementary students? What about learners of other languages? As with most studies, the findings of this study will most likely introduce more questions than answers. However, it will contribute to the existing literature by comparing pre-reading activities, post-reading activities, and in-text glosses in one study.

CULTURE ARTIFACT

Language Transfer in Compliments and Compliment Responses

INTRODUCTION

In this artifact, originally written for Dr. de Jonge-Kannan's LING 6900 class, I investigate pragmatic transfer from the L1 to English. As I mention in my teaching philosophy, pragmatic errors may cause misunderstandings and interrupt communication. As I researched this in more depth, I came to better understand the difficulties surrounding pragmatics. In particular, I discovered that some pragmatic errors are because English language learners tend to transfer their L1 pragmatic knowledge which can cause confusion and frustration for those involved in the speech act. I decided to use this paper as an artifact as I felt that it reflected my understanding of the diversity of cultures. This understanding will help me when in diverse ESL classrooms. In addition, it is important for me to increase students' awareness of English pragmatics to help them avoid possible miscommunications.

As second language (L2) learners acquire the language, they begin to learn about the target culture as well. Moran (2001) points out that "the words of the language, its expressions, structures, sounds, and scripts reflect the culture, just as the cultural products and practices reflect the language. Language, therefore, is a window to the culture" (p. 35). However, gaining understanding of a culture is not a simple process. Using Moran's (2001) example of language as a window to culture, windows are full of imperfections. Windows can be dirty, cracked, have blinds, etc. Similarly, language is not a perfectly clear window to culture. In order to view culture clearly, instructors need to help students look beyond the mechanics of language and see the meaning intended. Through the study of pragmatics, researchers gain greater understanding of the differences between cultures and how interpersonal communication between differing cultures is affected by the pragmatics (Huth, 2006; Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Pragmatics, as explained by Crystal, is "the study of language from the point of view of users…the choices they make, the constraints they encounter…and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (as cited in Tatsuki & Houck, 2010, p. 1). Essentially, the pragmatics of a culture determines what is and is not appropriate in interpersonal communication.

While L2 pragmatics can be attained implicitly, studies have shown that to better understand the pragmatics of the target culture, explicit instruction is necessary (Dastjerdi & Farshid, 2011; Rose & Kwai-fu, 2001; Tran, 2008). As Tran (2008) points out, children learning their L1 are explicitly taught certain pragmatics from the time they are young. It is therefore important to provide adult L2 learners with explicit pragmatic instruction, especially since they "rarely receive explicit input on the appropriateness and politeness of their L2 language use from adult native speakers" (Tran, 2008, p. 8). This explicit instruction allows students to examine the

rules of different pragmatic areas and then apply those rules in a non-threatening environment. However, in order to understand how to teach pragmatics, it is important to understand the pragmatics of various cultures. Therefore, in this paper, I will first examine the pragmatics concerning compliments and compliment responses. Then, I will address how first language (L1) transfer affects L2 students' use of the target language (TL). Finally, I will present a research proposal to further investigate transfers from the L1 to the L2, specifically Puerto Rican Spanish speakers into English.

Literature Review

Compliments

One area of pragmatics that has been extensively researched is that of compliments (Cs) and compliment responses (CRs) (Rose & Kwai-fun, 2001). It is common to hear compliment sequences (when a person gives a C and another person responds to the C) when conversing in American English. In regards to Cs, Manes and Wolfson (1981) state "one of the most striking features of compliments in American English is their almost lack of originality" (p. 115). This comment is found in an influential study conducted by Manes and Wolfson (1981) who investigated the semantic, syntactic, and discourse features of Cs. To accomplish this, the researchers analyzed six hundred and eighty-six Cs. These Cs occurred in natural interactions, given and received by employers and employees, colleagues, neighbors, friends, family members, etc. (p. 116). Analyzing all these Cs, the authors were able to categorize them into nine types. Ishihara (2010, p. 116) summarizes them as follows:

1. Your blouse is/looks (really) beautiful.	(NP is/looks (really) ADJ)
2. I (really) like/love your car.	(I (really) like/love NP)

3. That's a (really) nice wall hanging.	(PRO is (really) a ADJ NP)
4. You did a (really) good job.	(You V a (really) ADV NP)
5. You really handled that situation well.	(You V (NP) (really) ADV)
6. You have such beautiful hair!	(You have (a) ADJ NP!)
7. What a lovely baby you have!	(What (a) ADJ NP!)
8. Nice game!	(ADJ NP!)
9. Isn't your ring beautiful!	(Isn't NP ADJ!)

Surprisingly, however, English speakers tend to use the first three C forms the majority of the time (Ishihara, 2010). Nevertheless, despite this apparent simplicity, Cs provide a rich field for investigation. In addition, Cs and their uses vary widely across cultures (Ishihara, 2010). Manes (1983) points out that Cs also *reflect* the cultural values of the target culture. She states:

> Any speech act…reflects a variety of cultural norms and values and in so doing serves to express and maintain those values. Compliments are of particular interest…in regard to the reflection and expression of cultural values because of their nature as judgments, overt expressions of approval or admiration of another's work, appearance, or taste. (pp. 96-97)

An examination of what Americans comment on in Cs is provided by Wolfson (1983) who, through further analysis of Cs, found that the majority of compliments focused on appearance and ability (p. 90). Kohls summarizes the values Americans live by including individualism, competition, and materialism/acquisitiveness (as cited in Jason & Posner, 1995). These values are reflected in what Americans compliment – appearance and ability. As Dastjerdi and Farshid (2011) point out, the Cs people give "usually [reflect] values because in performing these speech acts, people are often implicitly assessing the behavior, possessions, accomplishments,

character, or appearance of others" (p. 464). When Americans compliment a new acquisition, a person's performance, etc. they are implicitly passing judgment on and approving the behavior. To further investigate this, Yu (2005) researched the differences between American English Cs and Mandarin Chinese Cs. He observes that while Americans compliment appearance more than performance, Chinese compliment performance more than appearance. He reasons that this is due to the fact that Chinese do not consider good looks as being important.

In conjunction with reflecting cultural values, Cs have various functions within the language. Ishihara (2010) states that, along with simply giving and receiving Cs, it is possible for "compliments and the discourses that expand beyond single-statement compliments [to] also serve multiple purposes" (p. 180). Some of these purposes include greetings, apologies, thanks, etc. (Cheng, 2011; Ishihara, 2010; Manes & Wolfson, 1981). Ishihara further expands this idea by pointing out that Cs can serve as conversation starters, to "soften face-threatening acts", as well as to flirt (2010, p. 180). For the most part, these functions serve to either promote solidarity or serve as a "social lubricant" (Wolfson, 1983; Yu, 2005). Therefore, Cs are an important aspect of interpersonal communication. Cs, however, are usually accompanied by CRs.

Compliment Responses

It is rare for a C to be given and for the complimentee to not respond. The CR completes a compliment sequence. Many researchers have examined CRs and how cultures differ in their choice of CRs (Cheng, 2011; Ishihara, 2010; Tajeddin & Ghamari, 2011; Tran, 2007; Valdés & Pino, 1981). Ishihara (2010, p. 181) breaks down compliment responses into five categories with subcategories as follows:

1. Acceptance
   - Token of appreciation *(Thanks/Thank you)*
   - Agreement by means of a comment *(Yeah, it's my favourite, too)*
   - Upgrading the compliment by self-praise *(Yeah, I can play other sports well too)*
2. Mitigationl/Deflection
   - Comment about history *(I bought it for the trip to Arizona)*
   - Shifting the credit *(My brother gave it to me/It really knitted itself)*
   - Questioning or requesting reassurance *(Do you really like them?)*
   - Reciprocating *(So's yours)*
   - Downgrading *(It's really quite old)*
3. Rejection
   - Disagreeing (A: *You look good and healthy.* B: *I feel fat.)*
4. No Response
5. Request Interpretation
   - Addressee interprets the compliment as a request: (*You wanna borrow this one too?)*

This list is not exclusively for American English, but rather represents the different strategies various cultures may use when responding to Cs. Tran (2007) adapted a similar chart to create what she calls the "acceptance to denial continuum" (p. 178). She begins with compliment upgrades and then continues to disagreement. This continuum presents a linear view which provides an improved visual of CRs, especially when determining which CRs are used and how cultures differ.

Whether using the list or the continuum, there are many different CR strategies and people will select the response that is most in harmony with their cultural values

(Cheng, 2011). Ishihara (2010) offers various examples of how cultures differ in their responses. For example, he states that while some cultures consider it more appropriate to simply reject Cs, others consider it more appropriate to give a positive response (p. 182). Tajeddin and Ghamari (2011) discuss the difference between Japanese speakers' and American English speakers' responses to Cs. In referencing previous studies, Tran (2007) points out that there is a difference between Asian cultures' and English speakers' use of CR acceptance strategies. However, Valdés and Pino (1981) found that CRs of American English speakers and Mexican Spanish speakers were similar. While it is interesting to analyze the differences between cultures, it is important to recognize the miscommunication that might occur when L1 and L2 speakers engage in a compliment sequence. If the response is seemingly inappropriate, communication might disintegrate (Huth, 2006). Tran further emphasizes this by pointing out that miscommunication due to a pragmatic mistake can be more damaging to relationships than a grammatical error.

Lorenzo-Dus (2001) bases his study on the theory that people's responses to Cs reflect the values of their culture. When explaining the stereotypical viewpoints of the British and the Spanish, he states "CRs are clearly influenced by both linguistic and sociocultural norms of behavior" (p. 109). He further emphasizes that gender plays an integral role in Cs and CRs. For example, Australian men and women interpret Cs differently (Lorenzo-Dus). He explains that CRs are influenced by whether the C is given by a man or a woman.

He therefore examined the effect of gender in CRs and how that reflects certain cultural values, in particular the difference between British English and Spanish spoken in Spain. To accomplish this, the author designed a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which consisted of 9 different situations, written in English and Spanish.

The participants responded (in their native language) by writing how they would respond to the C, given the situation. The author selected participants from Valencia University and Cardiff University.

From the responses gathered, the author noticed differing patterns in CRs. For example, he found that the British participants tended to question the sincerity of the C while the Spanish participants "requested for repetition and an expansion of the C" (p. 114). However, both groups employed humor and avoided self-praise. Also, a distinct difference between cross-gender compliments was found especially with the Spanish participants. While Lorenzo-Dus (2001) hesitates generalizing the results of this study to all Spanish and British students, he states that knowing the differences between Spanish and British CRs increases understanding of the miscommunication that can occur through C sequences.

Language Transfer

A person's cultural values do not necessarily change as a new language is learned. As Huth (2006) points out, "L2 learners tend to transfer their native pragmatic resources when they use the target language" (p. 2026). Cs are no exception. Similar to other pragmatic areas, L2 speakers transfer their pragmatic understanding of Cs from their L1 to the L2 (Tran, 2007). Tran further researched this when she studied the transfers made from Vietnamese to English. She wanted to know if transfers are made and, if they are, what transfers are made. To answer these questions, she had a Vietnamese native speaker (V) group and an Australian native English speaker (E) group to determine what CR strategies they used in the L1. In addition, she had a group of Vietnamese ESL students (VE) in Australia. Tran used naturalistic role-plays which she designed for the purpose of controlling "social variables, and collecting a limited amount of spontaneous data" (p. 174). She trained

Vietnamese and English native speakers as role-play conductors. During the role-plays, the conductors ensured that the specific C structures were performed without bringing attention to those forms.

After the role-plays had been conducted, they were then "coded according to the strategies selected to reply to compliments" (Tran, 2007, p. 176). She found that the E group used a larger number of acceptance CR strategies while the VE group tended to used downgrading strategies more often. Comparing the V and VE groups she discovered marked similarities between the two groups. The V group did not use any forms of acceptance strategies, using more downgrading and negating of Cs. The author concludes that transfer occurs, especially in regards to the use of returning, downgrading, and other similar strategies. By using L1 groups to create a base for comparison, Tran effectively determines the CR strategies used to discover if transfer occurs and what is transferred.

In addition to identifying what is transferred, researchers have investigated why L2 learners use the strategies they use. Cheng (2011) focused on this aspect, analyzing the differences between Chinese ESL students and Chinese EFL students, with American English as the base for comparison. Cheng used Tran's (2007) naturalistic role-plays; however, in order to answer the question why, she also used retrospective interviews. Researchers use retrospective interviews to ask students why they chose the answers they did. The role-plays consisted of various situations such as greetings, giving directions, etc. Cs and CRs were incorporated into the role-play; however, the participants were unaware that those speech acts were the purpose of the study. With the Chinese ESL group, an interview immediately followed the role-play to discover the participants' reasons for using the CRs. Cheng found that the most common CR used by all three groups was acceptance by simply saying "thank you."

When asked why, the Chinese ESL students responded that it is the safest way to respond to all Cs (p. 2210). However, the Chinese EFL group struggled most when it came to using variety in responding to Cs. The author attributes this to the fact that the ESL group is immersed in the language while the EFL group is not. In conclusion, Cheng points out that explicit instruction of CR strategies with exposure to authentic use of the language is needed if students are to perform similarly to native English speakers.

While Cheng's study demonstrates the effectiveness of the naturalistic role-play (none of the students knew that Cs and CRs were the purpose of the study), it is difficult to generalize the findings as the sample size is fairly limited. Each group consisted of only 15 participants. Also, Cheng interviewed only the ESL group. She did not explain why she did not also perform retrospective interviews with the other two groups, especially the EFL group. In the end her conclusions appear to be more conjecture than founded in sound data.

Rationale of the study

In regards to Cs and CRs, the studies have been numerous. Researchers have investigated the structure and content of Cs and CRs, the role of culture, and L1 pragmatics transfer. Also, studies have specifically examined the differences between Spanish vs. British cultures and Mexican vs. American cultures use of Cs and CRs. The U.S. Census Bureau (2007) estimates that 20% of the population in the United States speaks a language other than English in the home and of that percentage, 62% speak only Spanish in the home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Due to the high number of Spanish speakers in the United States, it is important to examine the various Spanish-speaking cultures. The Mexican-American culture is only one Spanish-speaking culture represented within the United States. According to the 2010 census,

there are 4.6 million Puerto Ricans living the United States, which makes them second to Mexicans (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). Although English is an official language in Puerto Rico, Spanish is the primary language spoken. Also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2009), 95% of Puerto Ricans speak only English in the home (Population and Housing Narrative Profile for Puerto Rico, 2009). As a result of the unique situation of Puerto Ricans within the United States, I wish to research the English C responses used by Puerto Rican Spanish speakers living on the USA mainland.

Research questions

For this study, I want to research the following questions:

1) How do CRs differ between Puerto Rican Spanish speakers and American English speakers?
2) Why do they use those specific CRs?
3) What transfers are made from Spanish to English?
4) Why do Puerto Rican ESL speakers use the CRs that they use?

In this study, I first want to research what strategies are used by the L1 speakers of both languages and why they use those strategies. Then I want to research the strategies used by Puerto Rican ESL students. I want to determine if transfers are made into the L2 and what is transferred. In particular, I want to understand why they use those strategies, if they are wholly relying on L1 strategies or if they are incorporating L2 strategies as well.

Methods

To answer these questions, I will follow the methods and formats from Tran's (2007) and Cheng's (2011) studies. For the first question, I will have two L1 groups (one Spanish and one English). I will use Tran's (2007) naturalistic role-play to

determine the differences between the CRs used by the two groups. Once the role-plays have been completed, I will use Cheng's (2011) method of retrospective interviews to determine why native speakers chose the CRs that they did. For the third and fourth question, I will use Puerto Rican ESL adults living on the US mainland. I will use naturalistic role-plays and retrospective interviews to determine which strategies they use and why.

Once the data has been collected from the first two questions I will determine what strategies were used in English and Spanish. I will then compare that data with the data from the last two questions to determine what transfers were made from the L1 (Spanish) to the L2 (English). Do they use the same strategies? What strategies do they adopt from the L2 culture, if any?

Conclusion

This study will provide additional insight into what students transfer from the L1 into the L2 and why. This information can help clarify miscommunications that might occur between the two cultures. It will also assist ESL instructors in helping students bridge the differences between their L1 culture and American English culture. It is possible that, due to the fact that Puerto Rico is part of the United States, the CR strategies used will be similar. However, why they use those specific strategies might be different due to a difference in cultures. Once this study is completed, more questions will be introduced. For example, if there are differences between the two cultures, what differences exist between other Latino cultures and the English-speaking culture of the US mainland? Since the Latino population is continually increasing in the United States, it is important for native English speakers and non-native English speakers to increase cultural awareness of the differences that exist (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011).

As ESL instructors understand these cultural differences, they can better facilitate their students' transition from L1 culture to L2 culture. Since Cs can serve important social functions in the United States, it is important for ESL students to be taught how Cs work and how to respond to them as well as how to make comparisons with how Cs function in their own culture. This understanding will help ESL learners to know how to avoid miscommunication or how to help native English speakers understand the cultural differences that exist, even in something as simple as in giving and receiving compliments.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

The Dynamic Adult ESL Classroom

INTRODUCTION

In this artifact, I recount my experience as an intern at the English Language Center (ELC) and what I learned. From the internship I observed experienced instructors and compared what they did in the classroom with my teaching philosophy. Also, I had the opportunity to teach, which enabled me to apply my teaching philosophy in a classroom. From this experience I learned that there can be a disconnect between the theories of language teaching and actual language teaching. During my time at the ELC I came to better understand the difficulties ESL instructors face such as students with little to no previous education and the structure of textbook activities. These are factors which affect students' language acquisition. It is important for me to be aware of these and other factors when teaching.

In the MSLT program I have studied different methods of instruction. In particular, I have learned about the communicative approach (CA) and the benefits of using this method in teaching English. Previously, foreign language was taught using the audiolingual methodology (ALM) which uses drills and memorization (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Instructors were the head of the classroom, the fount of all knowledge. Classes were lecture style with the instructor speaking and the students listening. The students were required to absorb the information and then regurgitate it at the appropriate time. The CA, on the other hand, produces very different results. In this environment, instructors, rather than being the central figure, allow students to take center stage. Instructors help the students communicate by taking the role of an architect or coach (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). They provide meaningful activities and enough grammar and vocabulary for the students to be able to perform activities with minimal assistance. Within these activities, the students engage in meaningful, real-world conversations that give context and meaning to the language. Students are given opportunities to use the language with each other, explore how the language is used through the negotiation of meaning with other students and with the instructor, and understand the real-world application of what is done in class. According to Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), when real-world communication is the focus of the foreign language classroom, the relevancy of the material is increased.

Discussing theories and actually applying them into the classroom, however, are very different things. The opportunity to intern at the English Language Center (ELC) provided me with the chance to apply what I was learning in school into an actual classroom as well as perform further research due to my experiences at the ELC. The ELC is a center where students of all languages and levels (from beginning

to advanced) come to learn English. The purpose is to help students become more fluent in English whether it be to help them receive better employment or read to their children. In this paper, I will first present my experience teaching English, one-on-one. This allowed me to recognize the issues of literacy in the adult ESL classroom. In the second part, I will then discuss my experience assisting in two ELC classes. I realized the importance of input and output as well as the difficulty of applying teaching theories into the classroom. Finally, I will address my experience teaching my own class. I discovered the difficulty of teaching a multi-level class.

Teaching one-on-one

My first student was from China and had limited English abilities. Communicating with her was extremely difficult and required some creativity. To better understand her background, I spoke with her daughter. From her daughter I learned that, along with limited English proficiency, my student had minimal education in her native language having only completed a couple years of school. While she had been given a Chinese-English dictionary, it was not always helpful as she could not read the Chinese characters. When she registered, the ELC provided her with workbooks. One workbook was very basic, teaching various adjectives, pronouns, etc. Its purpose was to expand vocabulary by using pictures and having students write and rewrite words. The other was more advanced and designed for the Level 1 class she was taking. At the ELC, a Beginning class is for students with very little English. In Level 1, the students are able to communicate on a basic level in English, speaking using familiar phrases and terms, avoiding complex sentence structures. This particular student needed to be in the Beginning class but due to scheduling conflicts she was placed in Level 1. As I worked with her, I came to

understand the difficulty of teaching someone with limited literacy skills in their native language as well as designing communicative lesson plans.

When teaching someone with limited native-language literacy skills, instructors need to take into consideration how much time the student has spent in formal classrooms. Just as a child needs to learn how to "do school," so do adults who have spent very little if any time in the schoolroom. Pre-literate students need to learn how they are expected to sit at a desk, interact with other students, and listen to the instructor (Burt, Peyton, & Schaetzel, 2008). To understand how to teach my student, I visited a pre-literate English class taught at the ELC. This small class consisted of students at various levels of oral English proficiency, but at the same level when it came to English literacy. They attend other classes in conjunction with the pre-literacy class. The instructors had noticed that these students were struggling with learning English and they came to realize that the students were struggling due to their inability to read in their native language. The pre-literate class then focused on teaching the alphabet, letter sounds, how to sound out words, and all the basics associated with learning how to read. As Burt, Peyton, and Schaetzel point out, students at this level need to learn the alphabet sounds and be able to connect those sounds with the written form.

As a result of my research and observations, I began to teach the alphabet and letter sounds to my student along with vocabulary. Using this approach, I found it difficult to create communicative lesson plans. While I understood the concept, it was difficult to put it into practice. It was especially difficult when considering the limited literacy skills of my student. Even if she was literate in Chinese, there would still be difficulties as she would be unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet. Therefore, written instructions of any kind were not an option. Since I was unable to rely on written

instructions, I relied heavily on using pictures and gestures to communicate. Lee and VanPatten (2003) discuss the necessity of using "non-linguistic" means in order to be understood (p. 33). They recommend using "drawings, photos, diagrams, objects, gestures, and other visual aids" when teaching beginners (p. 33). Student interaction is also crucial to creating an effective learning environment. Unfortunately, my student's interactions (in the classroom) were limited to only me. This limited the kind of activities I could design to help her practice English in a meaningful way. Total physical response (TPR) is one activity which involves the students in an interactive way and, according to Lee and VanPatten, increases the quality of the input. While I understood the principles, I struggled to apply them when teaching. I used TPR to help my student learn new words; however, I had difficulties in knowing how to focus my time. Teaching her the alphabet and how to read began to take precedence over teaching her to communicate. While being able to read is an important skill and assists in learning, it is more important to be able to communicate. In the next section I will discuss what I learned from classroom observations.

Classroom Observations

I had the opportunity to observe two classes – a Level 1 class and a Level 4 class. The instructors for these classes were very different in their approach to teaching. While some of this can be attributed to the different levels, it is also due to the teaching styles and philosophies of the instructors. The Level 1 instructor's schedule was very structured. The first 30-45 minutes was typically spent working in the workbooks. The class was small enough that, between the two of us, we were able to divide our attention among the students equally. The rest of the class was usually spent learning the vocabulary or grammar of the unit. For the last half hour the students would work on the grammar section of the textbook. This instructor tended

towards a more teacher-centered classroom with some student interaction. The textbook topics and activities were relevant to students' needs. For example, one unit focused on visiting an emergency room while another focused on food and going to the grocery store. Many of the activities, however, were false communicative activities because they did not encourage any meaningful dialogue between the students. The activities assigned were highly structured, with students expected to produce something very specific to accomplish the activity. For example, a common activity required the students to follow a scripted dialogue, inserting the appropriate vocabulary word in the blank space. They were not given room to create anything truly meaningful to them which resulted in them knowing new vocabulary but not knowing how to apply that to their daily life.

While it was frustrating that the activities were not more meaningful, the instructor was not entirely at fault. She was working with the textbook that she was given. According to Shrum and Glisan (2010), the textbook "has been at the center of the foreign language curriculum, used by teachers […] as the framework for organizing instruction and the primary source of exercises and activities" (pp. 62-63). Despite the push towards more communicative classrooms, textbooks have yet to make the complete transformation from audiolingual methods to communicative methods. While textbook activities appear to be communicative, they are mechanical drills which require little to no negotiation of meaning on the part of the students. As a result, instructors who prefer communicative activities need to adjust the textbook activities. Many activities found in the Level 1 textbook were grammar focused, rather than being "embedded in real-world contexts" (Brown, 2009, p. 53). Although the activities in the Level 1 textbook were contextualized to some extent, this did not mean that the activities were meaningful (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Once activities are

both appropriately contextualized and communicative, they will then be meaningful for the students.

The Level 4 instructor also had a set schedule, although the structure was not as apparent. In her class, the students were more advanced which might have affected how the lessons were designed. This instructor had the students break into conversation groups for the first 30-45 minutes. She would assign a specific question the students would have to answer such as "where do you see yourself in five years?" or "what is the most beautiful place you have ever visited?" These discussions usually related to some point in the lesson, whether a theme or a grammatical point. This instructor frequently used the textbook and the activities. At first, I wondered why she did not assign homework from the workbook rather than having the students do the work in the classroom. I then found out that she used to assign homework but the students never did the work so she started to simply do the activities in class. This is a common problem at the ELC due to the busy lives of the students.

When I asked the Level 1 instructor about her work, she said that students learn English best by listening and writing. This surprised me as it seemed like a non-communicative way of teaching. I later realized, however, that in saying this she was referring to Krashen's input hypothesis (Krashen, 1987). Krashen's input hypothesis stresses that students need to receive input that is meaningful, comprehensible, and a little beyond their level to acquire the language (Krashen, 1987; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Input is any form of the language from which the learner derives meaning and makes connections (VanPatten, 2003). Instructors expose students to input by providing them with target language words and sentences that are relevant and to which students need to pay attention.

Lee and VanPatten (2003) stress the need for input to be comprehensible and meaning-bearing. Communicative activities, such as task-based activities (TBA), accomplish this as these types of activities focus on a "meaningful exchange of information" (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 77). When instructors design such activities they provide students with the input the students need to complete the activity. For example, to set an appointment with the doctor students need to know the vocabulary and phrases they will need to accomplish that task.

Ideally, ESL classrooms should provide students with input as well as opportunities to produce the language. Communicative activities also encourage the use of the language in meaningful contexts. VanPatten (2003) stipulates that what students are required to produce needs to be meaningful. He states "*Output* in SLA means language that has a *communicative purpose*" (p. 62). While the Level 1 instructor excelled in providing comprehensible input for the students, she did not require the students to produce meaningful output. When they were given opportunities to use the language it was not always meaningful (as was previously mentioned).

Imagine Learning

The final aspect of my internship that I will discuss is the Imagine Learning classes I conducted. The class size was small, student attendance varying from 5-10 students. Class time was divided into two sections. For the first hour, students worked on the Imagine Learning program and then I taught a lesson for the rest of the time. My lessons focused on creating conversation and discussion in the classroom. Sometimes I would provide the students with questions which they could use to interview each other (usually culture related discussions). Also, I would design lessons around topics relevant to their situation such as going to the doctor, job

interviews, etc. Imagine Learning is a computer-based program designed for the K-12 setting to teach ESL. To determine what the program covered, I decided to take the placement test. I was impressed with the thoroughness of the evaluation. It assessed phonemic awareness (or the ability to identify letters with their sounds), reading comprehension, listening comprehension, etc. Despite the program's juvenile graphics and content, the actual language concepts covered are useful for adults. My students had varied reactions to the cartoon nature of the program. Some enjoyed it, while others seemed to feel that it was beneath them. The students' computer skills were initially a concern for the ELC directs, however, very few students struggled with using the computer.

The use of computers in teaching or learning a second language is comparatively new in the research field. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is starting to be used in English classrooms, usually as a supplement. Ma and Kelly (2006) outline what program designers need to take into consideration when creating a program to teach English. They state that designers need to consider the theory which will guide the creation of the program, what computer technologies should be used, what the learner does with the information provided, and the characteristics of the learner.

The process of creating an effective CALL program is complex and difficult. Imagine Learning addresses the dynamic needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) as well as covers a wide range of English skills. However, computer instruction will not replace the need for classroom instruction. Xing, Wang, and Spencer's (2008) study illustrates this point with the case of an e-course as a supplemental form of instruction. Along with taking the face-to-face ESL classes, students in their study also took an e-course for further writing practice. One of the benefits of the e-course

was the high comfort level students had when interacting on the computer and completing the assignments. Similarly, Imagine Learning is a supplemental tool. While it helps with vocabulary, reading comprehension, and phonemic awareness, it does not allow for meaningful interaction which can occur only in student-teacher or student-student interaction.

As I considered Imagine Learning to be supplemental to actual classroom instruction, I decided to spend a portion of class time teaching. The dynamics of the class, however, made it difficult to prepare lessons. Students of all levels came to the class and, since it had open enrollment, I could potentially have new students every class. My attempts were not always successful. Lessons needed to be adaptable so that, depending on the students, I could make the lesson more difficult or easy. For example, one day I made the mistake of creating a more advanced lesson plan because the previous week I had students that were at a more advanced level. However, I ended up having some students who were beginners so I had to completely change the lesson I had prepared.

To better understand how I might best serve my students, I read an article by Pireh (2009) who outlines some of the issues faced in a multi-level class. She recommends first discovering common topics that students need to learn such as vocabulary building strategies. From there, she advises teachers to create activities for the different levels within their class. This way the different needs of students are met. One concern in a multi-level class is how students will be able to interact in a way that benefits all levels. According to Pireh, some activities are better suited for heterogeneous groups when “different skills are complementary” (p. 23). Other activities, however, are best accomplished when students have similar skills and abilities. Following Pireh’s format, I began to create lessons in which, while the

content was the same, the activities varied according to the level of my students. I also grouped students according to ability, depending on the activity and what the students were expected to produce.

Conclusion

From observer to instructor, my experiences at the ELC taught me the importance and difficulty of applying current research into the classroom. ESL classrooms are dynamic and, by turning to current research, instructors are better able to understand how to address the various needs of their students. Moreover, while it is easy to discuss the importance of the CA, the method is difficult to apply in the classroom. Despite the difficulties, I came to better understand the importance of using the CA in the classroom. Adults learning English are doing so to survive in this new environment. Therefore, the content needs to be relevant to them in their situations. From my one-on-one experience I discovered the necessity of addressing the literacy needs of students. This experience, and subsequent experiences, has increased my awareness of the need for instructors to understand their students' literacy levels in their native language as well as their English language proficiency. Through the classroom observations I came to better understand the role of input and output in the ESL classroom. Students need both exposure to the language and opportunities to produce the language to become proficient. Finally, from my teaching experiences, I learned the difficulty of addressing the diverse needs of students in a multi-level class. It is important to have activities which can be adapted to different learning levels as well as pairing students according to proficiency levels.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

Based on a video recording of my teaching, I am going to examine in what ways my actual teaching reflects what I believe to be good language teaching. For this video recording, I recorded my Spanish 1010 course, a 50-minute class. By this point in the semester, we were just starting chapter six in the textbook. My students were able to communicate using the present tense and vocabulary ranging from weather to professions. In the textbook for this class, the chapters usually begin with new vocabulary followed by a grammar concept. My lesson plan followed the format of the textbook. As I watched the recording, I noticed that in regards to adhering to the communicative approach, I struggled while my overall lesson plan coincided with important aspects of my teaching philosophy.

While the lesson was carried out completely in Spanish, there were times when I taught more audio-lingual than communicative. First, when I introduced the new vocabulary from the textbook (words associated with sports), I was a little too repetitive in my review. I would say a word (pointing to the appropriate picture) and have them repeat. Once through is acceptable as it allows the students to hear how the word is pronounced and give them the opportunity to say it. However, more than once might be a bit much. Some sets of words might require more, but this set of words was easier due to the higher frequency of cognates. Also, another part of the lesson that could have been more communicative was when I reviewed a new grammar concept. I introduced it in the middle of the lesson (which contradicts my teaching philosophy) and I went into more detail than I should have. This is in part due to the layout of the textbook. Textbook organization and activities can cause difficult to instructors that want to teach communicatively. It may require reorganization and adaptation of activities. Therefore, I could have made some adjustments so that it

would have flowed better and I would not have spent as much time covering a grammar point.

Despite the shortcomings, in many ways my lesson plan and its implementation reflect my teaching philosophy. First, I designed the activities so that they would build on each other. I began with an input activity where I showed them pictures to coincide with the new vocabulary. Then we played a version of *matamoscas* where the students did not have to produce the language orally but still demonstrated understanding of the new vocabulary. Finally, the students did a *firme aquí* activity (an output activity) where they created yes/no questions using the vocabulary. The *firme aquí* activity allowed them to use the new vocabulary combined with the information that they have learned prior to this lesson. In order to wrap up the activity, I asked the students to orally provide me with the answers they had. The method in which I slowly built up the activities also provided scaffolding for the students. I did not expect them to immediately start producing the language. Even the final activity I had them complete was similar to previous activities so that they could concentrate on using the new vocabulary and not on a new type of activity. I also related the new vocabulary to their lives by asking questions when introducing the vocabulary. I asked questions such as "Who likes to lift weights?", "Who went to the USU vs. BYU basketball game last weekend?", etc. These questions, for which they did not have to produce the language, only respond to it, allowed them to understand how the vocabulary related to them.

Overall, I was pleased to see how closely my teaching coincides with my teaching philosophy. However, my teaching is far from perfect as there are areas where I need to improve my teaching to better reflect what I know. I will do so by frequently re-evaluating the activities I use. Are they truly communicative? How can I

adjust them so that they are encouraging students to use the language in meaningful ways? In addition, I need to re-evaluate how I introduce grammar or vocabulary. While the textbook is an important component in the classroom, I need to be willing to take the necessary time to ensure I am teaching communicatively. Finally, I need to constantly review my classroom practices and compare what I do with what I consider to be good language teaching. By continually assessing my classroom practices, comparing it to my teaching philosophy and current research, I will ensure that I am teaching to the best of my abilities.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

As I researched the topics of my teaching philosophy as well as the main ideas of my artifacts, I collected the articles and books that had the greatest impression on me. These books and articles are presented here in my annotated bibliography. Included in the annotations is a summary of the book or journal article followed by my reaction. The books and articles are grouped thematically: teaching methods, communicative language teaching, feedback, adult ESL, culture, and student/teacher perceptions.

Teaching Methods

Adair-Hauck, B., & Donato, R. (2002). The PACE model: A story based approach to meaning and form for standards-based language learning. *The French Review, 76*(2), 265-276.

Summary: In this article, the authors present a story based approach to teaching grammar otherwise known as the PACE model. Historically, language classes' focus on grammar did not teach students how to communicate in the foreign language. While communication should be paramount, researchers conclude that focus on form is necessary for SLA. Grammar research is not widely performed and, when it is, it is in very controlled situations that do not adequately reflect actual classroom experiences. With grammar instruction there are two positions: explicit grammar instruction (which is common in a teacher-centered environment) and implicit grammar instruction (which relies on students figuring out the grammar rules through exposure to the language). However, both these methods undervalue the role of the teacher in providing students opportunities to have meaningful interactions with the language. The authors propose a story-based form of instruction. Language consists of grammar, vocabulary, etc., and literature exposes students to all of these elements within a meaningful context. The first step in developing a PACE lesson is choosing a story. The story should be short and easily narrated, rather than read. Stories need to have five elements. 1) The story has a time and setting 2) The characters have a personality 3) The story features a problem 4) Attempts are made to resolve the problem and 5) The story comes to a quick resolution. It is important to remember that, if the story does need to be simplified, authenticity must not be lost. This is

accomplished by making sure that, after simplifying the story, it still contains the five elements previously listed.

Reaction: This article is the first in a two-part series explaining the benefits of the PACE model and how to effectively use it in the classroom. The authors present the research behind this approach and why it is beneficial. While both explicit and implicit grammar instruction has advantages and disadvantages, the PACE model attempts to combine the benefits of both while addressing some of the disadvantages. It encourages both teacher-student and student-student interaction. It also allows for the use of authentic text so that students are exposed to the language in meaningful contexts. As the authors point out, language is a complex system involving many different facets. Students need to be aware of these different facets but, more importantly, they need to recognize how these facets interact with each other.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M & Short, D. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Summary: In this book, the authors introduce the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). They first explain why and how the SIOP model developed. The authors posit that due to the increase of minorities in the United States as well as the No Child Left Behind act, the need to adapt teaching methods for K-12 classrooms has increased. With more English Learners (ELs) in the classroom, teachers need to adapt how they teach the content to make it more comprehensible for their students. The SIOP model is a detailed outline for designing lesson plans. The authors break it down into thirteen features, from lesson preparation (content and language objectives)

to assessment (providing feedback and assessing students' comprehension). Within these thirteen features, the authors address how to make input comprehensible, what strategies ELs need to be taught, what strategies teachers should use, and how the lessons should be delivered. In conclusion, the authors discuss research studies on the effectiveness of the SIOP model on students' test scores. The results from the research show an improvement in students' scores. Overall, the authors provide a clear and succinct outline for instructors to follow for making content comprehensible in the K-12 classroom.

Reaction: This book provides an outline for teaching content-based, in terms of what instructors need to do and how to do it. The overall presentation is easy to follow and easy to read. In particular, the authors use examples (bad and good) from real classrooms and provide the reader with an opportunity to analyze the methods used based on the information from the chapter. This helps the reader to better understand how to use the SIOP model in the classroom. While the focus of the book is on ESL students in the K-12 setting, the SIOP model is applicable for any age group. By using the SIOP model, as outlined in this book, instructors can better ensure that their students are learning language as well as content.

Hong-Nam, K., & Leavell, A.G. (2006). Language learning strategy use of ESL students in an intensive English learning context. *System, 34*, (399-415). doi: 10.1016/j.system.2006.02.002

Summary: In this article, the authors discuss various language learning strategies and how their use is influenced by gender, culture, and language proficiency. The

literature examines language learning strategies and the role these factors play, but very few examine these same issues in regards to an Intensive English Program (IEP) at the university level. In particular, previous research failed to discuss the overall strategy used by students in an IEP. Fifty-five students participated in this study, 25 males and 30 females. Their English proficiency ranged from beginning to advanced. They received 4-5 hours of language instruction each day with lab opportunities. The instruments used in this study were a Strategy Inventory For Language Learning (SILL), a self-report questionnaire, and an Individual Background Questionnaire (IBQ). The SILL divided the language learning strategies into six catetories – Memory strategies, Cognitive strategies, Compensation strategies, Metacognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Social strategies. A 1-5 point Likert scale was used. The IBQ collected demographic information. The results from the SILL showed that the least preferred strategies were affective and memory strategies while the preferred strategies were metacognitive strategies followed by social, compensation, and cognitive strategies. The authors compared the results from the SILL with English proficiency, gender, and nationality. When they compared the results according to proficiency they were surprised to find that the intermediate students used more strategies than the beginners or advanced students. When they compared the results according to gender they found that female students used more strategies than males. Finally, when they compared the results according to nationality, they discovered differences in the use of metacognitive, memory, and affective strategies. While showing the preferred strategies, this study also demonstrates students' awareness of the strategies they employ.

Reaction: It is important to be aware of the learning strategies preferred by students in order to adapt teaching methods to those strategies. The suggestions the authors provide at the end of the article are very useful in showing how to present lesson materials so as to address the preferred strategies while encouraging the use of others. One must consider, however, the environment of the class as that can have an effect on strategies used by students. The authors propose that the IEP atmosphere promoted the use of certain strategies which would be emphasized less in a more relaxed language learning atmosphere.

Mikulec, E. & Miller, P.C. (2011). Using project-based instruction to meet foreign language standards. *The Clearing House, 84*(3), 81-86. doi: 10.1080/00098655.2010.516779.

Summary: The authors explain how project-based instruction (PBI) is one teaching method teachers can use to effectively incorporate the ACTFL standards into their classroom. Projects can be simple or intricate and encourage collaboration among students. The authors point out that through the communicative approach students learn how to use the language. Language consists of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. These skills are interdependent and culture also plays an important role. The standards reflect this in the five c's: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the PBI, the authors use the example of an eighth grade French class. The project has two goals: first, students will learn about different aspects of French life. Second, this project will encourage the students to further study French in high school. In the second week of class, the students were given the guidelines of the project. They

could select five artifacts out of twenty to develop and then put into a final portfolio. Through this project all the five c's are addressed from requiring students to conduct interviews, learn about French food, interact with each other (in French) to gain information, etc. The authors caution that this method requires careful planning, constant instructor supervision to ensure target language use, and students need to find the topics interesting.

Reaction: These authors present another method, along with task-based activities and content-based instruction, to help incorporate the five c's into the classroom and encourage communication. Their explanation makes PBI seem like an effective form of language teaching, although they do not mention if they accomplished the two goals of the project. While PBI does seem to be a viable method of instruction as they point out, it requires careful planning and constant vigilance on the part of the instructor. Ideally, however, the time spent would be well worth it as the students would gain a great deal due to the active participation required through the projects and the incorporation of the ACTFL standards.

Peyton, J.K., Moore, S.C.K, & Young, S. (2010). Evidenced-based, student-centered instructional practices. *CAELA Network Brief.*

Summary: The authors briefly describe evidence-based and student-centered instruction, supporting their claims with current research. They state that the U.S. Department of Education has, in the past decade, made an effort to base the educational system, particularly instructional methods, on research. When conducting research, strict guidelines have been followed. Those guidelines include that the

research must have valid and reliable outcomes, the research must be approved by a panel of experts or accepted by a peer-reviewed journal. The authors point out that in recent years instruction has moved from teacher-centered to student-centered. Classrooms are becoming more communicative with opportunities to use the language in meaningful contexts, focusing on the students' needs. The authors present four approaches that are supported by research: Promote interaction among learners, use the native language when possible and appropriate, connect instruction with learners' lives, and teach learning strategies explicitly. Studies indicate that interaction between learners promotes language acquisition. Evidence also supports native language use when clarifying or providing explanations. Studies show that adult ESL students test better when teachers connect what is being learned in the classroom with life outside of the classroom. Finally, explicit instruction of certain strategies (such as reading or listening strategies) proves beneficial to adult ESL students. The authors acknowledge the difficulty of being aware of current research. In order to increase awareness of current research, the authors recommend teachers forming discussion groups. In these groups teachers can discuss the current research and how to apply it into the classroom.

Reaction: The authors succinctly outline some ways of applying current research into the classroom, specifically communicative methods in adult ESL classrooms. For example, they briefly discuss the positive benefits of student interaction, citing current research. While the simple strategies they list are useful and worth investigating, the most beneficial aspect of this brief is the wealth of research that is provided. The authors cite current research, discussing various issues from student interaction to

task-based activities. This is a good resource to begin researching certain issues concerning adult ESL instruction.

Shrum, J.L., & Glisan, E.W. (2010). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction* L. Semones, (Ed.), Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary: Shrum and Glisan present an overview of the ACTFL standards and an analysis of key instructional methods for SLT. In the first two chapters, the authors set the foundation for the remainder of the book. First, they briefly explain the theories related to SLA, such as the role of input, output, and interaction. Then, after outlining the history of SLT, the authors introduce the SFLL. In chapter three, the authors introduce various methods of creating lesson plans which will incorporate the theories and standards discussed. They then address language learning in the contexts of elementary and middle schools in the next two chapters. The rest of the handbook focuses on methods of instruction building on topics discussed in the previous chapters. First, the authors discuss the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and the importance of integrating these three modes into the classroom. For example, they address the role of the interpretive mode in reading and listening as well different methods of integrating it into the classroom. Then they address the other modes of communication and their role in reading, writing, and speaking. The authors then conclude the book by pointing out the diverse needs of students, addressing different methods of assessment, and discussing how technology can be used to facilitate language learning.

Reaction: Shrum and Glisan provide an in-depth view of FL instruction, how it has developed through time, where it is today, and what FL instructors can do to improve their teaching. This is an excellent resource for those beginning L2 instruction because it is a useful reference to better understand the many theories associated with language learning as well as those researchers that have developed those theories. These theories and researchers are constantly mentioned in the field of second language acquisition. As instructors come to better understand the various theories associated with foreign language instruction, they will be better prepared.

Xing, M., Wang, J., & Spencer, K. (2008). Raising students' awareness of cross-cultural contrastive rhetoric in English writing via an e-learning course. *Language Learning and Technology, 12*(2), 71-93.

Summary: The authors examine the differences between Chinese and English writing styles, focusing on how ESL students' awareness of the differences between the writing styles improves their ability to write in English. They propose that learning to write is a "social and cultural experience" (p. 73). For the purposes of this study, the authors present five "contrastive features" (p. 73) of Chinese and English. These features are 1) Inductive vs. Deductive 2) "Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum" vs. "Introduction-Body-Conclusion" 3) Circular vs. Linear 4) Metaphorical vs. Straight forward and 5) Explicit Discourse Markers. Ninety Chinese students and 15 English lecturers participated in this study. Sixty students were divided into two study groups – a control group (n=30) and an experimental group (n=30). Both groups received four hours of English instruction. The experimental group, however, participated in an e-course for academic writing as a supplemental course. The students were required to

spend 20 minutes every other week on the e-course. Using the five contrastive features, the authors compared the writing of the students from the beginning of the study and at the end of the study. They found that the control group improved in the number of paragraphs used and the position of the thesis paragraph. The experiment group, along with improvement of those two indicators, also improved in the number of discourse markers. The authors conclude that the e-course proved effective as it provided more interaction for the students and opportunities to ask questions of native speakers.

Reaction: This article provides some important perspectives for teachers of academic writing to Chinese students. First, the authors analyzed some of the differences between Chinese and English writing styles. It is useful to understand those differences. Second, it interesting that they used an e-course for the experimental group, although it is important to point out that the e-course did not replace class instruction but was an additional component. One thing the authors point out was that students, on the computer, were more open to communicating and asking questions. I had never thought of that as an advantage of using an e-course before, but now I understand its benefits.

Zhang, C. (2010). The teaching of reading comprehension under the psychology schemata theory**.** *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1*(4), 457-459.

Summary: Reading is considered one of the most important skills an English Language Learner (ELL) can acquire. ESL reading theory has been studied from the perspective of the Schema Theory. Schemata refer to students' previous knowledge

concerning a specific topic. The Schema Theory suggests that students' previous knowledge affects their reading comprehension. In other words, input needs to connect in some way to previously existing schemata and agree with that information. If there is a disconnect between the information and students' existing schemata when students read, their reading comprehension will be lower. Therefore, instructors should take steps to enable students to increase their reading comprehension. The author suggests four steps. First, instructors need to improve students' schemata structure and expand students' background knowledge. This can be accomplished by teaching culture so that students understand the cultural background the writer is addressing. Second, instructors need to develop students' ability to make predictions. The author argues that predicting is essential to reading comprehension. Third, instructors need to improve students' schemata of different writing styles by discussing the structure, style, and theme of the reading with the students. Finally, instructors need to activate their students' existing content schema and help to create their new content schema. In conclusion, if students' reading comprehension is to be improved instructors must improve their students' existing schemata and help them connect the new information with existing schemata.

Reaction: The author uses the schema theory to address, from a different angle, the importance of scaffolding. Students need some foundation when being introduced to new material or be able to connect the new information to previously acquired information to improve retention. Also, the author indirectly addresses the importance of finding materials that are relevant to the students. While new schemata can be introduced, such as cultural nuances, students will pay more attention if the new schemata relates to previously existing schemata. For example, giving literature

students a science textbook to read might result in poor reading comprehension as the literature students' interest in science is likely to be low.

Communicative Language Teaching

Ballman, T.L., Liskin-Gasparro, J.E., & Mandell, P.B. (2001). *The communicative classroom* (Vol. III). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary: Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell outline the communicative language teaching methodology and how to implement it into the classroom. They first discuss what communication is and why it is so important, emphasizing that students should be taught how to communicate so that they can use the language in real-life situations. Having established the importance of communication, they discuss the role of grammar in the classroom and teaching grammar to support communication. Essentially, instructors need to have a communicative goal in mind when deciding what grammar needs to be addressed. Also, the authors address different methods of teaching grammar in the classroom from instructors initiating grammar instruction to grammar instruction being initiated by students' questions. Next the authors present how to design activities that encourage classroom communication, emphasizing the importance of using the target language in the classroom and using comprehensible input. The activities mentioned are interview, information gap, and task-based. The authors then address issues concerning assessments in general and how to assess students in a communicative classroom. They discuss the role of testing in the classroom as well as the national level and the different forms of testing. Then they present how to design oral tests either to be completed in class or outside of class. Finally, the authors conclude with analyses of

interactions between native speakers in authentic situations as well as student and teacher interactions in the classroom. The purpose is to determine what forms of communication and interaction are most desirable.

Reaction: This book provides a basic introduction to teaching communicatively that is easily accessible to foreign language (L2) instructors. Without going into great depth, the authors address various concerns regarding teaching communicatively as well as the application of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the classroom. I appreciate their clear explanations of the different types of communicative activities, such as information gap and interview. These activities are practical for classroom use and helpful in creating a communicative environment for the students. Finally, as assessments are an important component in L2 instruction, the chapter on assessments is essential for understanding how to test communicatively.

Khatib, M., Derakhshan, A., & Rezaei, S. (2011). Why and why not literature: A task-based approach to teaching literature. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 1*(1), 213-218.

Summary: In this article, the authors discuss why literature is not used in secondary education English classes in Iran, the benefits of using literature, and a method that can be used to incorporate literature into teaching. They point out that accuracy of form and structure does not guarantee students will be communicatively competent. Literature can help. The complexity of literature is the first obstacle to using literature it in teaching English. This complexity, especially for an English as a foreign language (EFL) student, stems from literary language. In literature, the writing does

not always follow perfect grammatical forms. Also, the meaning of the text might be unrelated to the reader's present situation thus making it difficult for the reader to understand. Another concern is students' unfamiliarity with certain styles of literature, which could cause confusion. The benefits of using literature, however, are many. First, literature introduces students to different, more authentic ways to use English as well as increasing students' cultural awareness. The authenticity of literature, based on the authors' experience, can increase students' motivation to read and to learn English. Literature also helps students gain understanding and respect for other people thus reducing prejudices and increasing sympathy. The authors suggest using a task-based approach to effectively use literature in the classroom. This method divides the class into three phases: pre-task, during-task, and post-task. Each task contains steps or processes such as brainstorming, taking notes, predicting, and student writing. Overall, the authors consider literature as an effective means of teaching English and, through a task-based approach, propose a method of teaching literature effectively.

Reaction: Literature has great potential in the classroom and these authors effectively explain the reasons why as well as explain how. They persuasively argue the benefits of using literature, which are supported by research and by their personal experiences as English teachers. While the focus of this paper is towards teachers educating middle and high school students, it is also applicable to educating adults. In particular, their outline of how to use a task-based approach when using literature is helpful and easy to follow. As the authors point out, literature is a key component to any culture and, through this article, they clearly explain how literature can be used to benefit the students.

Lee, J.F., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen.* San Francisco: McGraw-Hill.

Summary: Lee and VanPatten provide an in-depth analysis of communicative language teaching, covering a host of issues related to teaching communicatively. They address why it is important to teach communicatively and how to do it. When teaching communicatively, the authors emphasize the need to have a specific proficiency goal and creating classroom activities that build up to that goal. The activities are to be designed so that they promote meaningful communication. They also discuss input processing and how to develop input activities. Along with input is the need for structured output which allows students to use the language communicatively. In addition to discussing how to teach communicatively, the authors address how to assess communicatively. First, they outline concerns when creating tests such as washback effects. Then they specifically focus on oral testing, grammar testing, and listening comprehension. Finally, the authors discuss issues instructors face when teaching communicatively. For example, instructors may have misconceptions of grammar instruction. Instructors may believe that students need drills and explicit explanations in order to learn the grammar. Throughout the book, while presenting how and why to teach communicatively, the authors provide examples of what has been done in classrooms. These examples enhance the content of the book, providing the reader with a better understanding of how to apply these theories and techniques into the classroom.

Reaction: Once instructors understand the basic theories of communicative language teaching (CLT), this book provides a thorough explanation of how to implement CLT

into the classroom. First, the authors provide detailed explanations for the activities that should be used, the concerns instructors might face, etc. Along with the explanations the authors provide examples of activities which have been used in teaching. These examples help increase the reader's understanding of how the activities work. Finally, the chapters which focus on assessment are especially useful. Assessments are a challenge to develop and the authors again provide detailed explanations accompanied with examples to help instructors better understand how to assess communicatively as well as teach communicatively.

VanPatten, B. (2003). *From input to output: A teacher's guide to second language acquisition.* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Summary: In this book, VanPatten clearly outlines the process of second language acquisition (SLA), the role of input and output, questions of foreign language (FL) instructors, and the implications for teaching. He begins by outlining SLA research, the history and the questions asked. FL teaching has gone through various transitions, influenced by societal factors as well as research. He presents some givens about SLA such as the creation of an implicit linguistic system, the complexity of SLA, how SLA is a dynamic but slow process, that most L2 learners fall short of native-like competence, and that there is a difference between skill acquisition and the creation of an implicit system. Concerning input, VanPatten explains what input is and why it is important. Along with input, output also plays a role in SLA as producing a language is a by-product of acquisition. In relation to SLA, the author addresses many questions instructors have concerning various issues such as the use of the first language in the classroom, the relationship between learning a second language and

first language acquisition, and factors which influence the effectiveness of instruction. The implications of this book include the use of more input in the classroom, more communicative activities, and a meaningful connection between grammar and input.

Reaction: VanPatten succinctly explains the role of input and output in the classroom. It is clearly organized and addresses many different aspects of SLA. The list of givens of SLA offers important considerations when teaching a FL. For example, FL instructors need to be aware of the complexity of learning a FL as well as the dynamic process involved. Students also need to be aware of these issues in order to avoid discouragement and frustration. Instructors are therefore responsible for explaining some of the processes of acquiring a second language. Also, the questions listed are valid questions and VanPatten answers the questions in a way that is clear and beneficial for FL instructors.

Xu, Y. (2010). Theories analyzing the communicative approach in China's EFL classes. *English Language Teaching, 3*(1), 159-161. doi: 10.5539/elt.v3n1P159

Summary: Xu provides an overview of the history of the Communicative Approach, specifically its use in China's English schools. He defines Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as when the teacher is both a facilitator and a monitor as the classes move from a teacher-centered environment to a student-centered environment. Also, rather than focusing on drills and repetition, students begin to communicate in English from the beginning. CLT has both advantages and disadvantages, according to Xu. The advantages include creating real-life communication activities in the classroom,

allowing for more flexibility and diverse exposure to the language. The disadvantages include the belief that students will tire of this method due to their wanting to converse with native speakers of English. China was first introduced to CLT in the early 1990s. Initially it was not accepted due to instructors not wanting to change the way they taught, the inability of the instructors to speak English comfortably, the format of the Matriculation English Test (a test all students entering college needed to take), and class size. Over the past few years, China has made changes which make CLT more acceptable. However, the author postulates that no single teaching method is perfect. He concludes by stating that the Communicative Approach would be best applied by combining it with older methods.

Reaction: Xu helps his readers understand the basic tenets of the Communicative Approach, then focuses on China's use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). I have often heard it said that English classes in China are not communicative, resulting in students who are unable to communicate effectively in English. Xu, however, never mentions this, creating an optimistic view that the Communicative Approach can be used successfully in China classrooms. His concern that students would tire of CLT was rather interesting, but something to take into consideration.

Feedback

Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System, 36,* 353-371. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2008.02.001.

Summary: In this quasi-experimental study, the authors examine the use of written corrective feedback (CF) and its effect on students' acquisition of indefinite and definite articles to express first and second mention. They point out that various studies have examined CF in relation to ESL students, whether it should be direct or indirect, etc. No studies, however, have compared the use of focused versus unfocused CF. Therefore, the authors investigated whether written CF (unfocused or focused) helps English students in Japan improve their use of indefinite and definite articles. Analyzing the learners' use of indefinite and definite articles, they compared the effects of unfocused versus focused CF. Forty-nine university students participated in the study. They were divided into 3 groups – unfocused (n=18), focused (n=18), and control (n=13). The tests consisted of a pre-test, post-test, and a delayed post-test which was taken 4 weeks after the last writing assignment. The students also received an exit questionnaire which asked them if they knew the purpose of the writing assignments. Results from the study indicate that both experimental groups showed statistically significant improvement. Improvement was also seen between the post-test and the delayed post-test, although the focused group saw the most consistent improvement.

Reaction: Methods of correcting students, what works and what does not, seem to be a highly debatable topic in the field of Second Language Acquisition. As a result, the

authors' focus on corrective feedback (CF) was helpful in examining the positive effect CF has on acquisition. The authors discuss this in the literature review as they present various, opposing studies regarding corrective feedback. The results clearly show that the CF is beneficial to students, whether focused or unfocused. Therefore, while there is still some debate, this study supports the claim that corrective feedback is useful for students and ought to be used by instructors.

Shin, S.-K. (2008). 'Fire your proofreader!' Grammar correction in the writing classroom. *ELT Journal, 62*(4), 358-365. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccm089

Summary: In this article, Shin questions the theory that grammar correction is ineffective and harmful for L2 writers. He points out that previous research has focused on the writing tasks assigned to students but few have examined how L2 students write and the needs of L2 writers. Five advanced ESL students attending graduate school participated in this study. Shin used stimulus recall and interviews to discover these students' methods of composition and feedback preferences. Using their responses, he compared them to four teaching principles focusing on error correction. Shin discovered that, for the most part, these students' struggles with composition and editing stem from translating issues. The students prefer explicit grammar correction and assistance as they believe this will help them improve in their composition. The author concludes that, while it is impossible to generalize these findings, grammar correction is essential for helping students develop their writing skills. He postulates that it is the instructor's responsibility to provide grammar correction as the students will not receive that assistance elsewhere.

Reaction: The author brings to the forefront the importance of understanding the needs of students. While the author is focused on grammar correction, this idea can be applied to other aspects of teaching such as L2 use in the classroom. It is interesting that the author selected graduate students whose writing ability was more advanced. This could affect their perceptions of feedback while less-advanced students might have different reactions. However, the author has a valid argument that, when teaching a composition class, it is important to remember the fact that the students are still learning the language. While composition is important, so is grammar.

Truscott, J., & Hsu, A Y-P. (2008). Error correction, revision, and learning. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 17*(4), 292-305.

Summary: In this study, the authors examine the effect of error correction on short-term learning. They present two opposing views in regards to error correction. The first is that error correction when revising is an ineffective measure of learning. The second is that it *is* an accurate measure of learning. The authors point out, however, that no studies use a second writing assignment to assess whether students learned from previous error correction. The format of this study consists of students writing an in-class narrative, one week later performing revisions, and the following week writing another in-class narrative. 37 EFL graduate students participated in this study, divided into a control group and an experimental group. These students were part of an elective basic writing seminar. The study occurred in weeks 12-14 of the course. The students were given 8 pictures from which they were required to write a narrative. The control group received no feedback while the experimental group's essays received correction. The focus was on grammar and what was incorrect was

underlined. They then had 30 minutes to revise the narrative in class. The following week, using the same process as before, they wrote another narrative. The researchers found that the students who received feedback provided better revised essays than those who did not. They also found, however, that the students did not show improvement on the second essay. Ultimately, the authors agreed with the first view that error correction performed during revision is not an accurate measure of learning.

Reaction: Some of the findings in this study seemed obvious, such as the improved revisions when students received feedback. I suppose this is one of those instances where, even though it is obvious, it is good to have empirical evidence to support it. The grammar focus was interesting. It would seem beneficial, for ESL/EFL instructors, to know what the focus should be when correction papers, whether it be grammar, flow, etc. It is also important to remember that if the idea is for students to learn, it is better to focus on a single form to help make it more salient for the learners. While this article presents some pertinent information it also invites further study and inquiry.

Adult ESL

Burt, M., Peyton, J.K., & Schaetzel, K. (2008). Working with adult English language learners with limited literacy: Research, practice, and professional development. *CAELA Network Brief.*

Summary: This brief was written so that those teaching adult English language learners (ELLs) with limited or no literacy have the knowledge and skills necessary to address their students' literacy needs. The authors point out the growing need for

instructors to be aware of their students' limited literacy. In 2006-2007, half of adult ELLs tested at the three lowest levels of the National Reporting System (NRS). The authors provide five definitions or categories of limited literacy: preliterate, semiliterate, non-alphabet literate, and Non-Roman alphabet literate. Some students have no previous education, some limited, and some (such as students from China, Korea, etc.) are unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet. Additional factors which influence the learning of English literacy are the students' level of oral and written proficiency in their L1, their exposure and experience with literacy, and their motivation for learning English. The authors suggest that four components of reading are essential for the development of English literacy. First, the teaching of the alphabet letters and sounds. Second, the ability to read fluently and easily. Third, the teaching of vocabulary. And, fourth, the ability to understand and decode what they are reading. The authors then provide an extensive list of various teaching strategies instructors should use when dealing with limited literacy adult ELLs. They point out the necessity of instructors continually striving to improve their teaching methods and keeping abreast of the most current research.

Reaction: This brief provides a wealth of useful information. Teaching adults with limited literacy is vastly different from teaching those who are educated in their L1. ELLs with limited or no literacy in their L1 need to learn more than the second language and this briefly addresses many of the concerns instructors may face when teaching adult ELLs with limited literacy. Along with learning the language, letter structure, etc., these students need to learn basic classroom behavior and even how to learn, study, etc. This brief outlines some approaches instructors can use as well as

providing additional resources that instructors can implement to further research this topic.

Murray, D.E., & Christison, M. (2011). *What English language teachers need to know (Vol. 1): Understanding learning.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Summary: The authors wrote this book for teachers new to the field of English language teaching. They divide the book into four parts: identity and context, language awareness, learning, and professionalism. In the first part the authors first address the identity of the English student and how that affects the classroom environment as well as how the classroom environment affects the identity of the English student. Culture and motivations for learning English are part of students' identity. They also discuss the role of the institution in teaching and the importance of the English language teacher (ELT) to become familiar with the resources, human and non-human, available. In part two, the authors cover the mechanics of the language. The purpose is to increase ELT understanding of how the English language works, from how sounds are formed to how sentences are created. In part three, the authors examine the theories of ELT. They begin by examining basic theories, and then they introduce the history of second language acquisition (SLA) theories. Finally, they present research concerning key topics related to SLA. The authors emphasize the need for ELTs to apply current research into their teaching. In part four, the authors conclude with the importance of professionalism. They point out the need for ELTs to constantly strive to improve their teaching by continually learning and applying what they learn into the classroom. Throughout this book, the authors address the various

issues related to English language teaching as well as the importance of ELTs to be aware of these issues.

Reaction: In this book, the authors provide an introduction to the world of English Language Teaching (ELT), covering issues related to English classrooms from the United States to China. One of the strengths of this book is the focus on the English student as an individual. The chapters which address students' identities, how those identities affect and are affected by language learning, increase EFL/ESL instructors' awareness of the student as an individual. While instructors might consider students' individuality in terms of proficiency and ability, they benefit from knowing how the background of their students will influence learning.

Sanz, C. (2005). *Mind and context in adult second language acquisition: Methods, theory, and practice.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Summary: This book is a compilation of articles in which the authors address issues concerning adult second language acquisition. The book is divided into four parts: theory and methodology, internal factors, external factors, and pedagogical implications. First, the authors discuss the different theories and methodologies concerning adult second language (L2) acquisition. They briefly introduce how internal and external factors affect language learning. Also, they review quantitative and qualitative methods of research as the following chapters contain different studies. In the second section, the authors examine the internal factors which affect adult second language acquisition. These include age, sex, working memory, and prior knowledge. According to the authors, these internal factors greatly influence

students' abilities to acquire the L2. In the third section, the authors move from internal factors to external factors which may affect L2 acquisition. While the internal factors are what the students bring to the classroom, the external factors are what the instructor brings to the classroom. The authors discuss the importance of input and interaction in acquiring the L2. They emphasize the process of providing the students with input, opportunities to use the input, and feedback upon completion of activities or assignments. Finally, in the fourth section, the authors discuss the pedagogical implications of the previous sections. They present two methods of instruction: input processing and content-based instruction (CBI). In contrast to traditional grammar instruction, input processing allows students to gain understanding of form when processing the input. CBI is a method of instruction by which the instructors teach the content in the L2. According to the authors, these methods move further from the traditional method of L2 instruction and closer to how the L2 should be taught.

Reaction: This book provides instructors of adult language learners an overall view of the theories and influential factors which affect L2 acquisition. In each article, the authors present research to support and analyze the theory under discussion. The fact that the book is research based increases its validity as a resource for L2 educators. The section focusing on external factors closely connected with my beliefs regarding communicative language teaching, especially the importance of input in the classroom and the importance of students *using* the input. Also, I find it beneficial that, after explaining the theories, the authors present two forms of instruction which reflect the theories.

Schwarzer, D. (2009). Best practices for teaching the 'whole' adult ESL learner. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 121*, 25-33. doi: 10.1002/ace

Summary: The author addresses some of the issue and concerns an adult ESL instructor might have including how Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory might help a new instructor and how to create a learning community within the classroom. The author proposes, based on current research, a balance between focus on form (grammar instruction) and focus on meaning (CLT). Motivation is an important factor when teaching adult ESL students as their motivation is constantly changing depending on jobs, school, etc. Instructors need to discover what motivates their students and adapt instruction accordingly. Also, the classroom should be a safe environment where students can use the language, make mistakes, and ask questions. Whole language means viewing adults as whole adults not simply ESL students. Seven principles support this method of instruction. These seven principles are 1) a holistic perspective or studying the language as a whole in meaningful contexts 2) authentic learning or using real-life experiences and materials as a basis of instruction 3) curriculum negotiation or adapting the curriculum according the students' needs 4) inquiry-based lessons or encouraging questions 5) language learning, a developmental process or allow mistakes to be made 6) development of alternative assessment such as portfolios, videotapes, etc., and 7) creation of a community of learners or a sense of belonging. Additional methods of teaching the whole adult is to help them feel comfortable in the classroom, use their experience to enrich the teaching/learning experience, help them become independent learners, connect classroom learning to the world, and teach them new literacy skills and habits.

Reaction: This article effectively addresses some concerns a beginning adult ESL instructor might have. The suggestions provided take many of the dynamics of an adult ESL classroom into consideration such as the different motivation factors. Work and school can be factors, as can be the reasons why the students moved to the United States. These factors should influence what is taught and how. Instructors need to be willing to adapt their instruction depending on the motivational factors. Also, the concept of treating adult ESL students as complete individuals, not simply students, should influence instructional methods. Students need to feel comfortable in their learning environment if the environment is to be effective.

Culture

Byram, M., & Grundy, P. (2003). *Context and culture in language teaching and learning.* Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Summary: This book is a compilation of articles in which the authors explore content and culture in the foreign language classroom. The articles are divided into two parts. The first part examines learners in the classroom and what studies have shown regarding the learning of culture. The second part examines teachers in the classroom and the methods that are used. In the first part, the authors address how students' language acquisition and perceptions are influenced by their personal experiences. For example, one author argues that language structure is culturally driven. He emphasizes the need for instructors to be aware of why students speak the way they do. Another author points out that students understand texts as the texts relate their personal experiences. In the second part, the authors address the issues faced by English teachers as they negotiate the role of English in the global context.

One author expresses concern of what culture to teach in English classes. With English becoming the lingua franca, the question remains as to what culture should be taught. As part of this discussion, another author points out how India should be part of culture discussions in English classrooms. In conclusion, the authors emphasize the relationship between context and culture, as culture is learned within contexts. In addition, they point out the importance of instructors using research to continue their professional development.

Reaction: This book provides an intriguing analysis of the role of culture in the classroom. The authors raise interesting points, such as the effect of students' personal experiences on their understanding of the L2 culture as well as which culture to teach when teaching English. In one article, however, the author emphasized the need for instructors to read the current literature and, if needed, conduct research in order to answer questions or concerns they might have. By asking questions and performing research, instructors are able to address questions they have as well other instructors.

Soler, E.A., & Martínez-Flor, A. (2008). *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning, teaching and testing.* Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Press.

Summary: This book is a compilation of articles which discuss research related to the learning, teaching and testing of pragmatics in the foreign context. It is divided into three parts, each addressing one of these points. In part one of the book, the articles focus on how pragmatics is learned in the foreign language context. The authors address issues such language socialization theory and its role in second language (L2) acquisition. Also, in the foreign language context it becomes difficult

for students to develop their pragmatic abilities. In one study, the authors propose having an L2 native speaker classroom guest. This allows the students to have a more diverse experience in practicing the L2 pragmatics than the regular teacher-student and student-student interaction allows. Another method proposed, which increases students to practice L2 pragmatics in different contexts, is the use of computer-mediated communication which allows students to interact with native L2 speakers. In part two, the articles focus on how to teach pragmatics in the foreign language context. Of particular note, is a study where the author focuses on developing pragmatics through awareness raising instruction. The theory is that once students have a better understanding of their L1 pragmatics they can better analyze and understand the L2 pragmatics. Finally, in part three, the articles focus on how to test pragmatics in the foreign language context. The authors in this section focus on the many issues surrounding L2 pragmatics testing such what is being tested and the reliability of the test.

Reaction: This book provides a research and theoretically based analysis of teaching pragmatics. The three distinctions it makes between the learning, teaching, and testing of pragmatics helps focus readers on the different issues involved with those sections. For example, when decided how to incorporate pragmatics into teaching it is important to consider how students have learned pragmatics. Therefore, the section on learning would be a good reference. Additionally, the authors skillfully analyze the difficulties with pragmatics testing. Difficulties arise when creating any form of assessment, but pragmatics seems to offer some unique challenges due to students' perception of L2 pragmatics and other similar issues.

Tatsuki, D.H., & Houck, N.R. (2010). *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

Summary: This book is a guide for those who teach pragmatics or who plan to teach pragmatics in their classrooms. Tatsuki and Houck bring together research on pragmatics and lesson plans which have been tested in the classroom. They first address the importance of pragmatics when teaching English including the negative effect of pragmatic misunderstandings. Once they have established the importance of pragmatics, they then present a series of lessons. These lessons are divided into three parts (requests, indirect acts, and responding acts) with the last part of the book focusing on assessment. The part which focuses on requests covers indirect requests, softening requests, and formal requests. The next part, indirect acts, includes giving advice, expressing opinion, and giving feedback. Finally, with responding acts the lessons focus on refusals. Also included in this section is a lesson which involves an online program which allows students to make comparisons between their L1 and L2. As was previously mentioned, the final chapter focuses specifically on how to assess pragmatics. They discuss various forms of assessment from holistic assessment to self-assessment. All the worksheets and rubrics for the lesson plans and assessments are included in the appendices. Throughout this book, the authors focus on increasing students' awareness of the pragmatic differences between the students' L1 and L2.

Reaction: If teaching pragmatics, this book is an invaluable asset. First, it contains a series of lesson plans which have been tested in classrooms in many different settings. These lesson plans can either be used as they are or adapted for various purposes. The formats are straightforward and clearly explained. A common method used in the

lesson plans is to help students raise their awareness of their L1 pragmatics. Part of helping students better understand the pragmatics of L2 is to help them better understand their L1 pragmatics. Once they better understand their L1 pragmatics it becomes easier to draw comparisons between the different pragmatic forms used.

Student/Teacher Perceptions

Brown, A.V. (2009). Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching: A comparison of ideals. *The Modern Language Journal, 93*(1), 46-60.

Summary: In this study Brown compares students' and teachers' perceptions of effective language teaching. While many studies investigate different aspects of teachers' and students' perceptions, few studies compare their perceptions of effective language teaching. Brown reviews the development of this research from the 80's to the present time. In 1988 Horwitz performed a study examining students' beliefs concerning SLA, in 2005, Bell researched teachers' beliefs regarding SLA theory. Richardson (1996) and Barcelos and Kalaja (2003) confirmed the opinion that teachers need to understand the viewpoints of their students. For his study, Brown adapted the questionnaire used by Bell (2005). Performed at the University of Arizona, the study involved 49 teachers, about 1600 students, 83 L2 classes, and 9 languages. The students and teachers answered the same questionnaire (24-item Likert Scale). The results indicated that the teachers preferred a communicative classroom while the students preferred a grammar-based method of instruction. While the results of this study are beneficial for teachers, students, and administrators, Brown indicates that the results are far from conclusive. He proposes that further

research is required to fully understand the reasons for students' perceptions, such as the effect of other classes, such as science or literature.

Reaction: In this article, Brown effectively brings to the forefront the importance of teachers understanding and acknowledging students' perceptions regarding SLA. If teachers wish to be effective instructors, they need to know what their students are thinking and that teachers not disregard the opinion of their students. Those opinions very well could influence the students' overall performance in the class, especially if they do not agree with or understand the methods employed by the instructor. I consider the teacher-student relationship to be a symbiotic relationship and the better they understand each other, the healthier the relationship.

Zhou, A.A. (2009). What adult ESL learners say about improving grammar and vocabulary in their writing for academic purposes. *Language Awareness, 18*(1), 31-46.

Summary: In this study, Zhou investigates what vocabulary and grammar adult ESL students believe they need to know in order to improve their academic writing. As instructors tend to overlook the learners' point of view when deciding what the students need, Zhou's purpose for conducting this study is to increase instructors' awareness of the needs of their students. Her research questions, therefore, focus on the students, what grammar and vocabulary they want to improve, and how their goals compare with the academic writing program's goals. 15 students participated in the study. First languages included Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Korean, and Farsi. Time in the country extended from one month to 36 months. Zhou used semi-structured

interviews and stimulated recalls to collect the data. The interviews and stimulated recalls began in their pre-university English for academic purposes (EAP) classes and then continued through their first year of college courses. From the findings, the author concludes that these students need explicit grammar instruction through the EAP classes as well as the university classes. The ESL students expressed frustration that university professors focused on meaning more than grammar. Zhou acknowledges the limitations of her study (her use of interviews and stimulated recall as well as the small sample size), however, she points out that instructors can still benefit from the findings. Instructors can help students set attainable and realistic goals, identify why students are struggling with grammar, teach grammar and vocabulary in context, and assist students in finding appropriate environments for learning academic grammar and vocabulary.

Reaction: This study provides additional support that, when deciding what to teach, instructors should take into consideration what students feel they need. While using students' work as a reference is useful, it is important to know what the student is thinking. If there is a mismatch of what the students need and what is being taught, learning is hindered. One point that Zhou brings up is instructors helping students to set realistic and attainable goals. Through her interviews she found students with goals of writing error free or with native like competence. While some goals may be possible in the future, currently they are too far beyond the students' reach. Not reaching one's goals may result in frustration. When instructors help students create goals which are attainable and the students are able to accomplish them, this frustration can be avoided.

LOOKING FORWARD

Receiving my degree is only the beginning for what I want to do with my career as an adult ESL instructor. Over the past couple of years I have had teaching opportunities which have helped me as I have developed my teaching philosophy. However, these teaching experiences are stepping stones to help me with my future career. I want to continue to develop my professional experience through teaching English full-time. I will continue to refer to current research to guide my teaching. In addition to teaching, I wish to further my studies. While I can learn through practical application and experience, I also want to further expand my theoretical understanding. In order to do so, I will pursue a Ph.D. in teaching ESL. I want to further investigate the theories and issues surrounding adult ESL education. In particular, I am interested in further research the situation of pre-literate or early literacy students – adult ESL students who have had little to no previous educational experience. I believe this is an area of research that is new yet vital to ESL instructors. Currently, ESL instructors are required to create courses for adult students to teach them to read and write in English. I want to investigate what is currently being done to help these students and what works and what does not. Ideally, this research will eventually lead to the development of curriculum designed specifically for teaching adult ESL students how to read and write. While pursuing a Ph.D. and continuing my career beyond that, I do not want to forget that my purpose for achieving higher education is for the benefit of others.

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