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The Role of Pragmatic Competence in Second Language Acquisition

By

Leah J. Reigle

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

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan Major Professor	Dr. John Seiter Committee Member
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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2011

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ABSTRACT

The Role of Pragmatic Competence In

Second language Acquisition

by

Leah Jane Reigle, Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2011

Major Professor: Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan
Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Speech Communication

This portfolio is the culmination of the author's years spent observing and studying language in the pursuit of a Master's degree in Second Language Teaching at Utah State University. Included here is the author's personal teaching philosophy on effective language instruction, written with a college-level EFL classroom in mind. In addition, and relating to this teaching philosophy, are three additional artifacts addressing the significance of pragmatics in second language acquisition. These artifacts demonstrate the author's understanding of the roles of culture, language, and literacy in a second language classroom. An annotated bibliography supporting the author's perspective and philosophy on language teaching is also included.

(131 pages)

DEDICATION

To my husband, who never once doubted I could do this.

Who took on more than his fair share of absolutely everything, and still made time -- even late into the night -- to be my supporter and my champion as I wrestled through this process.

And to my parents, who imparted

their love of reading and writing onto me.

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A sincere thank-you belongs to those exceptional teachers who have shown me what great teaching looks like. Among these I count my committee members. To Dr. Karin DeJonge-Kannan for the countless hours she spent reviewing so many rough drafts. To Dr. Sonia Manuel-Dupont, who cares so much about her students. And to Dr. John Seiter, who was the first to inspire in me a love for communication and encourage me on to grad school, without whom I might never have mustered the courage.

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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a compilation of the work that I produced while pursuing a degree in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) Program at Utah State University over the course of sixteen months, 2010-2011. My teaching philosophy contains elements from a variety of methods, theories, and perspectives on effective language teaching to which I subscribe. It also introduces certain pedagogical themes which serve as the foundation for my cultural, linguistic, and literacy artifacts, with a recurring emphasis on improving pragmatic competence among language learners.

The artifacts included here support my philosophy which is rooted in the links between pragmatic competence and biculturalism, my teaching perspectives on how to incorporate pragmatic instruction in the language classroom, and a reflection on the technological tools available for introducing literacy and building pragmatic awareness among language learners.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

More than nineteen years of my life have been spent in a classroom, participating in the observation and assessment of formal teaching. I have been a student in numerous classrooms varying in both size and structure, studied various subjects, and witnessed a wide range of teaching philosophies and approaches in action. Even outside of the classroom, I have had frequent opportunities to participate in informal teaching. I learned to read with my mother on her bed at night as a child. I learned certain colloquial vernacular at school with my peers as a youth. And I learned Romanian while living abroad communicating with native speakers as an adult. And I continue to learn more and more in my day-to-day life because, just like the expression “you cannot *not* communicate”, I believe you cannot *not* be learning. This lifelong apprenticeship of classroom observation began at a young age and will most likely continue long into the future because teaching and learning are constant.

Despite my vast and varying classroom experiences, or perhaps because of them, I can remember only a few specifics from my years in the classroom. I recall a few great illustrations of effective teaching, a few terrible examples of ineffective teaching, and the rest I can safely assume fall somewhere in between, being neither horrible nor wonderful enough to be remembered.

What I do recall is sitting cross-legged with Ms. Kami on the floor in my kindergarten classroom tasting for the first time green tea while studying the Japanese culture. I remember well my fifth grade science assignment from Mrs.

Gerlitz to illustrate and label all the fascinating inner workings of the human eye. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could forget my tenth grade teacher Mr. Kearl reading aloud to an enraptured audience *The Cask of Amontillado* in a darkened classroom. And I frequently think back to the first day of class with Professor Seiter when he sat cross legged on the desk in front of us college aged students doing his best impersonation of a Swami and illustrating fundamental differences between cultures. These are the positive associations I have with effective teaching. These are the examples I look to when approaching a classroom. And these teachers have shown more than told what teaching is about.

These and other great educators share commonalities that demonstrate the characteristics of successful instructors. Their success is not accidental. They each exhibit a very deliberate combination of qualities, characteristics, and behaviors that allow them to be strong and effective professionals in unique ways. And it has been my experience that this kind of success has very little to do with how much a person knows about a particular subject. Despite vast differences in styles and personalities, certain qualities made each of my past teachers exceptional. They each had an infectious enthusiasm for the subject matter they taught. They each cultivated a personal knowledge of and caring for their students. And they each developed a familiarity with basic teaching methods and an understanding of how to tailor those methods to meet the needs of the class and the individual. These characteristics, coupled with an understanding and love for the subject matter they are teaching, enable educators to be effective.

Due to the nature of the language training program in which I participated, I had the opportunity to learn Romanian in a short period from a variety of instructors. Each one brought different characteristics to the classroom, but every teacher shared the qualities of enthusiasm for the subject matter, building strong relationships with students, and advanced pedagogical awareness. When dealing with teaching as it relates to second language learning motivation, out of necessity, must be great, and stress, out of necessity, should be low. Therefore, it is especially important to hone not only these teaching characteristics but some additional attributes specific to *language* teaching as well.

My own experience as a student of a foreign language didn't begin until I was an adult. And the difficulties that come with learning another language well past the critical period made me acutely aware of just how difficult language learning can be. Because the subject (Romanian) was so immense, and my ability to communicate in the target language so limited, this experience was a tremendously overwhelming and deeply frustrating process. I was a naïve first-time language learner entering the classroom under the assumption that all I had to do was insert Romanian vocabulary into my English sentences. My profoundly mistaken notion was that this language acquisition would be a simple process of memorization. I quickly discovered my own ignorance on the matter of language learning as I experienced a daily battle with the linguistic structure of the language.

My language learning experience was unique because I did not select Romanian as an elective, but was assigned to learn it as part of a missionary volunteer program with my church. At times, I felt completely inadequate to the task. But through the frustration, I had insightful teachers who took the time to meet with me privately and work through those frustrations with me. Hearing from those who had gone through similar language learning experiences strengthened my resolve to persist and my belief that slowly but surely this foreign language would start to make sense to me. These same perceptive instructors embedded culture into the language lessons motivating me to persevere. These initial encounters with the target culture first sparked my love for Romania, and later, as I navigated through the target culture, this love for the country and for the language was strengthened.

Language learning is a slow process, and I recall thinking, when I first entered the country, that the language I had learned prior to arrival was not the same language I was hearing on the streets of Romania. But eventually, after considerable time, effort, and exposure to the language, I did in fact acquire it. And the entire experience demonstrated to me that because language learning is distinctive from the learning of other subjects, it is important for language teachers to implement some additional strategies to help ease learners through the process.

Simple things such as commiserating with language students about the struggles of language acquisition and sharing personal language experiences with them can help students feel more comfortable in the classroom and more

confident in their ability to learn an L2. Incorporating cultural artifacts into the language curriculum can also motivate students and help them overcome some of the frustrations of SLA. My language teachers demonstrated these abilities and made this difficult endeavor of acquiring a second language much more accessible for my classmates and me. By implementing similar approaches, I can assist my students in surmounting this same hurdle.

Learning a second language had a profound impact on me, and my language teachers inspired me with a desire to pursue a future in teaching language. My ultimate goal as a second language teacher is to similarly impact the lives of the students I teach and help them to feel the same passion I felt about the target language and culture. My informal apprenticeship of observation has not only taught me what is most effective in a classroom but has made me a better teacher. My exposure to so many different teaching methods and styles has shaped me as a language teacher and I am enthusiastic about applying this knowledge from my own personal experiences into my future teaching.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Ideally, my professional career will consist of teaching English as a foreign language at a Romanian University. This university classroom will contain adult language learners with varying amounts of exposure to and experience with the English language. Because English is taught in Romania at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, I hope to teach at the advanced level to adult English language learners.

Although this environment is my focus as a future teacher, I would also enjoy teaching Romanian as a second language at an American University. Therefore, my portfolio is geared towards teaching in these professional environments.

PERSONAL TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

The fundamental assumption of teaching is that students will be different after the interaction (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Thus, a great responsibility is placed on teachers of significantly impacting those they teach. Language teachers have an especially profound expectation of impact as they facilitate the transition of language learners from one culture and community into the next: A transition that requires language students to develop a sound competence in a variety of linguistic areas.

These areas are summarized in the ACTFL *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1986) as it outlines the 5 C's that form the very essence of standards-based instruction for world-wide language classrooms (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The ideal is that all language students will become competent in the five arenas of language learning; Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. In congruence with these standards, my principal goal in the language classroom is to help my students develop the communicative competences encompassed in these 5 C's.

Communicative competence is a term coined by the linguist Dell Hymes (1970). Although there is no one communicative method, the most salient aspects of the communicative approach to language teaching include a focus on meaning, learner-centered curriculum, emphasis on oral, written, and gestural communication, authentic language samples, and purposeful communicative classroom activities (Hymes, 1970, Lee & Van Patten, 1995). It refers to more

than just a basic textbook familiarity with a foreign language and results from the combination of grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competencies (Hymes, 1970). Sociocultural competence is a similar ability referencing a speaker's pragmatic knowledge and ability to "express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication. This includes knowledge of language variation with reference to sociocultural norms of the target language." (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). It references the merger of both syntactic competency and the appropriateness of imbedded cultural norms in speech behaviors and patterns (Hymes). This communicative and sociocultural language competence becomes a possibility as I enlist the use of three specific teaching strategies into the language classroom: 1) Create a socially interactive and low-anxiety classroom environment. 2) Incorporate a variety of teaching methods. 3) Embed L2 culture into the curriculum.

Create a socially interactive and low-anxiety classroom environment

First and foremost I believe that language teachers need to foster a socially interactive and low-anxiety classroom environment for their students. One of the challenges in developing socially interactive classrooms is overcoming the previously mainstream idea of the teacher acts as an intimidating authority figure meant to coerce student cooperation as demonstrated in the audio-lingual method (Young, 1991). Similarly, when considering the "Atlas Complex" (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002) there is the tendency of educators to stand in front of a class and simply present textbook information and field

questions. Even good teachers can sometimes revert to these methods while teaching, forgetting basic pedagogical practices in their zeal to teach. I have frequently witnessed teachers who take center stage for an entire class period, working hard themselves but requiring very little from their students. This is not only more work for the teacher but deprives students of valuable opportunities to participate in and formulate output (the production of written or verbal language in the TL), which is a daily requirement in language acquisition (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Conversely, when students are actively involved in the learning process, it can help foster a dynamic and mutually beneficial learning environment where all students can thrive and experience success (Fukuya & Martinez-Flor, 2008).

Because learning is largely social in nature, according to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, it is important to develop a language classroom where interaction, collaboration, and cooperation are fostered (Hatch, 1992). The communicative approach to language teaching emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of language learning (Hymes, 1970); it places a strong emphasis on the social interaction between language learners as the means of second language acquisition (SLA) . I strongly believe in this interactive and social language-learning environment, and hope to create an environment that is socially engaging and rich with student interaction.

As a teacher, I plan to include myself in this practice of social engagement with my students. Our time together gives us the opportunity to develop bonds of mutual respect, trust, and friendship while learning. It is by developing these relationships that I am capable of reaching even the most difficult student. It is by

building a classroom community that I am able to convey an appreciation for students and interact personally with them, and they will respond by also valuing and appreciating each other (Bernoff,1992). As students feel respected and valued, they are able to reach their full potential in language acquisition. This kind of genuine concern for and interest in students is one of the most necessary attributes of an effective language teacher, because creating and maintaining positive relationships with students has a profound impact on their motivation and learning (Bernoff, 1992).

Equally important in creating a learner-friendly atmosphere is providing students with a low-anxiety classroom. Research conducted by Gregerson and Horwitz (2002) reveals that anxious learners have a much more difficult time with L2 production due to their tendency to self repair, resort to their native language, and overestimate the number of errors they made. Anxiety and tension hinder a learner's ability to learn, according to the Affective Filter hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982). Krashen suggests that certain anxieties are particular to the foreign language setting, because learners attempt to acquire a second language in order to participate as a member of the target language group, or qualify for "group membership" (Krashen). Such a strong motivation for assimilation can make learners anxious. This anxiety decreases as learners identify as member of the target group, referred to by Gardner (1983) as integrative motivation. In a language classroom, it becomes vitally important for educators to make each student feel included and an equal part of the classroom community of language learners. This, for students, is the target group in which learners seek

membership, at least until they become members of the actual target language community (Lawrence, 1997).

In addition to group-membership, anxiety throughout the language learning process can be attributed to a host of other potential sources such as learner and instructor beliefs about language learning, interactions between learner and instructor, daily classroom procedures, and language testing and assessment (Young, 1991). Regardless of the source of apprehension, as long as a learner's anxiety level is high, his or her ability to acquire the target language is impeded. Krashen explains this phenomenon in his Affective Filter Hypothesis as he describes how motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety are all variables that affect a learner's ability to acquire a second language (1985). Low motivation, low self-esteem, and high levels of anxiety can combine to raise the affective filter of a learner, creating a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being processed (Krashen, 1985). When the affective filter is up, it impedes acquisition (Krashen); therefore it is my personal goal as a language teacher to keep the affective filter lowered, as much as possible, through classroom management.

There is little teachers can do to influence motivation and self-confidence, but research shows that teachers can have a profound impact on a learner's level of anxiety (Young, 1991). To reduce learner anxieties, instructors can critically evaluate their approach and attitude toward error correction. Research has shown that error correction is not useful in the classroom when the goal is acquisition (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). It is my goal to provide positive

reinforcement as students perform well, and recast (restate correctly the attempted phrase) as necessary when students make errors (Shrum & Glisan). Blatant corrections only increase anxiety levels and discourage class participation. Better, I think, to model the desired language behavior, and emphasize the correct usage of language through positive and encouraging feedback. By emphasizing repeatedly that mistakes are an integral and completely acceptable part of language learning, I hope to reduce the anxiety associated with performance and create an environment free from criticism. This will keep the affective filters of students constantly lowered and thus foster second language acquisition (Krashen,1982). In my classroom, students will feel valued and appreciated through my interactions with them (corrective feedback and modeling), and my positive feedback in response to their participation. This, according to Krashen, will lower the learners' affective filter and invite participation, encouraging them to speak up and out more (1985).

In addition to positive and corrective feedback and modeling, obvious instructions and unambiguous organization can aid in communicating clear expectations to my students so that their affective filter is not raised due to unclear expectations (Van Patten, 2000). Language instructors bear the responsibility of being clear in their expectations and requirements of the students. This is accomplished through clarification (that must take place very near the beginning of any program) of what the goals and direction of the class are. By informing my students of our purpose in the class, I provide them with a roadmap of the course. This way I can minimize confusion that can so easily

disrupt the learning we work so hard to achieve. I want all my students to have a very clear understanding of what their role is as a student, what mine is as their teacher, and how we will journey together in the same direction throughout the class.

Clarity is one of those language-teaching fundamentals that can easily get overlooked. But when it is neglected, language students can start to feel anxious about not understanding an assignment or classroom expectation and fall through the cracks due to simple miscommunication. One of my goals is to communicate with students a clear understanding of what the class entails (course material), where it will take them (final objectives), and signposts they can expect to encounter along the way (projects, assignments, and tests).

Incorporate a variety of teaching methods

In addition to creating an environment conducive to language-learning, good teaching, in my view, requires that I tailor even my most natural tendencies in the classroom to match the personal and cultural learning styles of my students. Gardner (1983) recognizes that students possess a wide range of intelligences, which means that students learn best in a variety of different ways. Since its original publication, Gardner's list has been expanded and the current list of intelligences now includes the following: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist (Armstrong, 2009). These eight learning preferences make it mandatory for

teachers of any subject to accommodate for a wide range of learning preferences.

Because language learning is challenging language teachers especially will need to be creative in integrating a variety of teaching methods and techniques into the classroom in order to successfully impact every student. Additionally, because these intelligences interconnect, growth in one area will naturally stimulate more growth in one or more of the other intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Learners enter the classroom with a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and experiences, and each of these impacts their individual learning style. So I must be perceptive and flexible in my methods of instruction. Too frequently and easily teachers misdiagnose as a poor aptitude, personality clash, or bad learner attitude what is in reality just a mismatch of learning and teaching techniques (Oxford & Lavine, 1992). This very remediable obstacle of a difference in learning styles and teaching approach can be overcome as the educator puts a variety of pedagogical methods and theories into practice.

If, for example, my inclination as a teacher is to get students working in groups and participating orally in class but some students learn best visually, then I can adapt to that by incorporating visual aids into my interactive teaching. Or if it is apparent that some students are most engaged when the activities are kinesthetically involved, then the implementation of the Total Physical Response technique could be incorporated in order to address the learning needs of those particular students. The total physical response (Asher, 1969) is the strategy of having students listen to a command in a foreign language and obey with a

physical action (Asher, 1969). It mimics what is thought to be a similar learning process of children in their first language, as they develop listening fluency long before the other three fluencies of speaking, reading and writing (1969). By incorporating this technique, I adapt lesson material to those students who learn best by using physical movement.

By applying an assortment of teaching strategies and methodologies and never relying too much on any single technique, I have a higher likelihood of effectively teaching the greatest number of students. It is my responsibility to figure out the learning styles of my students and then implement a variety of teaching methods so that I can meet them. Lawrence holds that “a sign of a good teacher is the ability to flex one’s teaching style to better fit the needs of those being taught” (1997, p.74). I also believe that it is much easier for teachers to alter their teaching style than it is for students to change their learning style (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). By adopting a variety of teaching methods into the language classroom, I will not only maximize the number of students who will develop target language proficiency, but will also keep the routine varied enough to avoid stagnation and boredom.

Activities and materials, however, are only one portion of classroom instruction; the other portion concerns student assessment. Similar to teaching methods, research shows, multiple and varied means of assessment methods provide a much more accurate measurement of student competence than any single method used alone (Fukuya & Martinez-Flor, 2008). Different means of assessment often produce significantly varying results, and can indicate

proficiency either higher or lower than what it is in reality (Fukuya & Martinez-Flor). Chomsky (1965) acknowledges the fundamental difference between competence and performance, and so I believe that we must aim for the most accurate measure of student competence in classroom assessment. By implementing several different modes of evaluation teachers can solve for this variance between assessment practices, testing for ability rather than just performance.

By using a variety of assessments, we can best evaluate students in a language classroom. Rather than relying solely on standardized language tests, an assortment of alternative forms of assessment can be used to complement traditional-testing methods and provide a more accurate look into student proficiency levels (Cohen, 1994). Alternative assessment can also offer students a more engaging opportunity to demonstrate what they know and have learned (Cohen).

In implementing any form of assessment in the language classroom, it is important to remember that it is not enough for assessment to simply be developed and administered; it must also be reliable and valid (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Assessments should be consistent in testing for and demonstrating what a student knows and what the assessment tool is designed to demonstrate, without unintentionally requiring additional awareness outside of the subject's parameters (O'Malley & Pierce). For example, an L2 vocabulary assessment must accurately demonstrate knowledge of the intended L2 vocabulary without also testing for something additional, such as grammar or

drawing ability. If an assessment measures the desired vocabulary but also unintentionally measures a student's grammatical skills or ability to draw, we must call into question that tool's ability to accurately assess.

It is important that we make sure language assessment tools are also authentic and competency based. Authentic assessments demonstrate strong construct validity and positive impact on student learning (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004). Regardless of how well language students answer "yes" or "no" on a multiple-choice test, they also need to display the ability to perform linguistically in real-life settings (Gulikers, et al.). This means that authentic and genuine assessments need to be administered in the language classroom in the form of opportunities for realistic language output. These authentic forms of assessment allow us to test for the application of knowledge (Gulikers, et al.).

A valuable example of authentic assessment is demonstrated through the use of portfolio, a compilation of student work over time. This kind of authentic assessment, in addition to measuring proficiency and marking progress, gives students the opportunity to showcase themselves, highlighting their personal strengths while demonstrating to educators what they know (Cohen, 1994).

A truly successful portfolio, I believe, allows students the opportunity to develop a self-portrait. It is an effective and engaging way for language learners to showcase what they know, what they can do, and what their personal style is. Not only does this kind of showcasing improve a student's confidence in and motivation for his/her own work, but it also serves as a valuable progress report along the way for both teacher and student (Cohen, 1994). Without portfolio

assessment, it becomes difficult for educators to recognize and acknowledge progress in their students, especially those who are less successful in the classroom but who are still improving over the course of a semester. Because grading is always subjective and can never be perfectly fair, portfolios are one way in which students and teachers can gather and present evidence of learning. They are invaluable for students and teachers in the language classroom.

Because the whole purpose of language is to be able to communicate and share information, opinions, and ideas (Gulikers, et al., 2004) and this occurs most frequently through oral interaction, I believe that oral assessment is a profoundly important aspect of language learning that can be incorporated into portfolio work. Requiring students to participate orally through speeches, group work, and verbal dialogue are particularly successful means of output opportunities for students.

Such examples of authentic and alternative assessments, used in tandem with other means of traditional assessments and standardized tests, give a more accurate depiction of student abilities as well as maintain student interest (Cohen, 1994). A wide variety of activities, assignments, and assessment strategies will benefit language students and language teachers alike.

Embed L2 culture into the curriculum

Because authentic texts, defined as texts produced by members of a speech community for members of a speech community (Shrum & Glisan, 2010), are rich with culturally embedded stimuli, they are also an invaluable resource in

the language classroom (Reagan, 2005). Such texts allow students to participate within the target community of speakers as they observe and interact with a text that uses authentic word choice and common lexical bundles demonstrating how native speakers speak (Biber, 2006). In addition to exposing learners to speech norms, authentic texts also immerse readers in cultural innuendo as well. Authentic literature naturally lends itself to a genuine demonstration and imbedding of culture within the language classroom. This allows students a glimpse into the ideas, values, and ways of thinking and behaving of a target culture as they become familiar with common idioms, metaphors, hyperboles, use of sarcasm, etc. (Reagan, 2005). Using authentic L2 texts in the language classroom can provide students with such examples of native speakers using the language appropriately and contextually within the target culture (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Because the goal of my language classroom is the acquisition of communicative and sociocultural competence, it is imperative that authentic texts are carefully selected to illustrate current communicative norms within the target community (Reagan, 2005). For example, using a historic novel that was written by an English speaker for English speakers is clearly authentic, but the discourse will be dated and inappropriate for use in daily speech or written text in today's modern society. Teachers must select for appropriate, current, and relevant authentic texts to introduce into the language classroom to meet the communicative needs of their students and introduce them to language that "is done" (Hymes, 1970).

Additionally, these texts must match the linguistic level of the students and provide the necessary comprehensible input (Krashen,1985). Input is comprehensible when there is an appropriate balance between the learner's previously acquired linguistic competence and the extra-linguistic knowledge that a learner is now ready to acquire (Krashen,1985). Van Patten deems a certain amount of comprehensible input necessary for acquisition to occur (2000). In other words, in order for authentic literature to serve the purposes of the classroom it is not enough for them to simply be authentic; they must be selected to also meet the linguistic goals of the course and be both language-appropriate and level-appropriate.

One of the greatest teacher assets in the language classroom for incorporating authentic L2 texts is modern technology. Over the years, as technology has changed, so has the way L2 instructors can access and use authentic literature in the classroom (Trier, 2007). The current pervasiveness of technology in the classroom makes authentic L2 text very accessible. Where once teachers had to skim through books in the library hoping to find something useable for the classroom, now all they have to do is type the name of an article, song, or current television show into an online search engine. Digital media in the classroom is now a common tool, and YouTube clips, for example, are regularly used as teaching supplements (Trier, 2007).

Additional technological and social networking tools, such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, audio/video recordings, and even online gaming in the target language, can all serve as valuable out of class supplements to language

learning (Arnold & Ducate, 2011). The technological options are virtually unlimited and far more varied than the basic reading and writing traditionally done. Modern technology applications are interactive, social in nature, culturally significant, and enhance the learner's opportunity for acquisition both inside and outside of the classroom (Arnold & Ducate, 2011).

Because high-tech media is a part of everyday student life, educators can help increase student motivation for language learning as they integrate this into the curriculum as well. There relationship between technology and literature in the language classroom is growing (Osborn, 2006). And Osborn (2006) has argued that both classic and contemporary examples of authentic literature produce an emotional attachment to and more genuine interest in studying a language. Incorporating these into a language classroom can cause students to become more involved in their own learning (Osborn, 2006). Because technological resources can better engage language students, these resources should be used to access authentic texts and increase student motivation for second language learning (Arnold & Ducate, 2011).

Culturally significant materials and assignments that are relevant and applicable for language students can be accessed, demonstrated, and evaluated using technology. This can enhance student perception that their time is being used wisely with readings and assignments with social significance. By implementing material that is applicable outside the classroom via technology, teachers can communicate the importance and impact of an assignment and increase student motivation (Osborn, 2006). My goal is to keep students

engaged in assignments that have meaning and relevance and can be accessed outside the classroom to keep them engaged in and motivated about the target language.

Not only will this increase student motivation but it will introduce them to the necessary oral and written pragmatics of a target language. Traditionally, language classroom reading has consisted of textbooks and material written by people outside of the target culture for people outside of the target culture (Rings, 2008). The problem with such materials is that the subtle language nuances and pragmatics of authentic written text is often overlooked and unrecognized by authors and readers of these texts (Rings, 2008). Pragmatics is the influence of context on speech patterns and behaviors. According to May (2001), it is the communicative use of language as determined by society. Pragmatics refers to the societal expectation for basic speech acts, and is a necessary component of any language.

Written texts are generally seen as a secondary language system unable to produce all of the distinctions of speech, yet they are equally prevalent for language learners and have a distinct set of pragmatic guidelines (Stein, 1992). Authentic texts give language learners the opportunity to experience and learn about the grammatical, vocabulary, and social expectations of both spoken (through dialogic encounters) and written expectations (through written text).

By experiencing and comparing the pragmatic differences in their native language and the target language, students will be better able to develop the communicative competence desired (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Through consistent

use of authentic literature, students are exposed to the target language, which will foster the development of appropriate and pragmatic forms of discourse. This exposure coupled with frequent opportunities for output will greatly benefit their reading, writing, speaking, and pronunciation in the L2.

Pragmatics are not the only linguistic element embedded into authentic texts, grammar can also be learned through the incorporation of these texts in the classroom (Krashen, 1985). Traditionally grammar has had the most prominent role in the language classroom (with an emphasis on form) and has been facilitated through repetition and memorization (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). However, the implementation of authentic literature can subsequently aid students in acquiring appropriate TL grammar use (Krashen, 1985). Well chosen, authentic literature can also provide valuable opportunity for additional comprehensible input. When comprehensible, literature can demonstrate to the student “how language is done” (Hymes, 1970) and establish appropriate grammar rules and usage through written text.

The PACE method highlights in-text grammar using a story-based approach that utilizes reading, writing, and speaking in tandem (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002) to demonstrate and provide practice opportunity for grammar principles. PACE is an alternative approach to grammar teaching that reconciles the polarized and traditionally explicit and implicit approaches to grammar teaching (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). Rather than learners forming explanations on their own, or teachers providing comprehensive grammar explanations, teachers and learners collaborate and form grammar explanations

together (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). This method introduces a more communicative approach to teaching that provides ample opportunity for student synthesis of and output in the target language.

Luckily, our ability to access and incorporate culturally authentic material is greatly augmented by our prevalent access to technology tools. These tools allow us, in unprecedented ways, to access pop culture, politically relevant, current events, and other forms of culturally embedded authentic texts. As teachers use these tools to incorporate authentic texts into the language curriculum, they can increase student motivation and enthusiasm for the course material, create awareness of, and collaborate with students to formulate grammatical explanations.

Because technological tools are constantly being changed and updated, it is important for educators to stay up to date on the latest tools and learn how to implement them in classroom instruction (Osborn, 2006). Teachers should constantly be searching for better approaches to teaching; they should themselves be learners and must continue in the pursuit for new and innovative teaching methodologies. Effective teaching requires the constant pursuit and application of effective ideas. It involves the unremitting integration of what we learn daily from our students, our peers, and most importantly ourselves through inevitable mistakes.

Through these three teaching strategies -- the organization of the physical environment, the variety of course material, and the embedding of authentic and cultural texts -- teachers can create conditions for successful language

acquisition in the classroom. I want my students to leave my class significantly changed because of our time together. It is my hope that they will do more than just learn a second language, that they will be better and more active learners after participating in my class. I hope to succeed in changing students for the better because of our interaction together (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). It is by creating an atmosphere of social interaction and low anxiety, relying on a wide variety of language teaching methods, and embedding culture using technology that I hope to facilitate successfully this change in my second language students.

CULTURE STRAND ARTIFACT

Pragmatically Speaking: The Link Between Pragmatic Competence and Biculturalism

INTRODUCTION

This artifact was written to fulfill a requirement in Linguistics 6900, a class that focused on the significance of culture in the language classroom and the connectedness between culture and language. Throughout the course I realized how necessary pragmatic competence was for a language learners in order to adapt to and fit in with a target culture. Pragmatic competence can easily get overlooked in a second language classroom but it is an important element of language acquisition and this artifact explores the reasons why.

Pragmatically Speaking:
The Link between Pragmatic Competence and Biculturalism

The Pursuit of Communicative Competence

There is more to second language acquisition than just becoming fluent (Bennett, 1993). Along with language is the inseparable function of culture, which means that, in order to achieve communicative competence, sojourners need to develop cultural competence as well as linguistic competence (Bennett). Becoming bicultural (i.e., becoming culturally competent) in two speech communities is just as important an aspect for language learners as bilingualism. In order to appropriately navigate a culture and become a member of the new speech community, a sojourner must develop both bilingual and bicultural competence (Bennett).

I participated as a language learner striving for fluency while living in the target language culture, and since then, I have encountered numerous language learners attempting to do the same. Some seem to find it relatively easy to recognize, learn about, and adapt to the target culture and its social norms, while others encounter tremendous difficulty in acting and feeling like part of the community. Biculturalism is the ability to navigate socially within a target culture with ease (Tadmore, 2006), and is the necessary counterpart to bilingualism, or the ability to navigate linguistically within a culture (Tadmore). So, what is it that separates those who develop biculturalism from those who simply learn the

language? I have found that pragmatic competence seems to be a key ingredient in developing cultural literacy and communicative competence. The readings and research presented here have brought me to the conclusion that pragmatic awareness and competence are key to the full development of biculturalism.

According to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (1999) *functional communicative competence* is the standard by which proficiency is tested, thus making this the goal of most language learners. However, in the study of language there is generally a great emphasis placed on the necessity for grammatical and linguistic competence only, while the equally important aspect of pragmatic competence is often overlooked (Hatch, 1992). Yet, the general understanding among linguists is that communicative competence includes far more than just sentence-level grammar (Hatch). Communicative competence is achieved through a combination of both grammatical and social knowledge, and includes the understanding of how and when to use utterances appropriately (Hymes, 1962). Although pragmatic competence alone is not the sole requirement for developing appropriate communicative and cultural behaviors, it is a necessary component.

A Pragmatic Definition

Pragmatics, according to Levinson (1983), is difficult to define. The field of pragmatics deals with the context-dependent aspects of language and the intent behind how a speaker frames or encodes a communicative message (Levinson). It goes beyond the literal interpretation of words and deals with the undertones of

speech (Paradis, 1998). I would define it as the study of contextual meaning and intention, an emphasis on what is meant beyond what is said. The ability to understand intended meaning (beyond what is vocalized) includes the comprehension of metaphors, euphemisms, and sarcasm in conversation. These are all rich in unspoken meaning.

Paradis (1998) estimates that more than half of what we say is not literally what we mean because “most of the time, we mean more than what we say, or something different than we actually say, or even the opposite of what we say” (Paradis, p.1). Therefore, it becomes vitally important for language learners to become familiar with the pragmatics of their target language in order to avoid miscommunication (Levinson, 1983). Understanding contextual implications is a necessary part of achieving communicative competence (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989).

Becoming bilingual is the process of learning another language, while becoming bicultural is a separate yet related process of understanding clearly, communicating appropriately, and fitting in seamlessly with another culture. In fact, the process of becoming bicultural could possibly require an even greater desire and effort on the part of the learner (Moran, 2001). “It is not easy to obtain cross-cultural understanding… contact alone will not do it. Even sustained contact will not do it. There must be a readiness to respect and accept and a capacity to participate” (Moran, 2001, p.161). Luckily for language learners, (and teachers) these two objectives are not mutually exclusive. A learner can concurrently pursue linguistic competence while also achieving cultural

competence. But that does not mean that these two competencies automatically occur simultaneously (Bennett, 2004). They are not co-conditional. One might achieve linguistic fluency while remaining deficient in cultural fluency (Bennett).

Because language and culture are so intimately linked (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004), the study of one necessitates the study of the other. Biculturalism, by its very nature, should be made a parallel goal to second language acquisition. Culture, according to DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004), impacts the way speakers perceive the world and how they use language to communicate. Likewise, language influences how speakers view and understand the world and the way in which they communicate (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). Language is a vast “window into a culture” (Moran, 2001, p.35). Therefore, the more one learns and uses the target language, the greater insight one obtains into its culture, and the more appropriately one can interact with its members.

The role played by pragmatic competence in this process of becoming bicultural is paramount. In order to fully integrate into a society, a language learner must be able to navigate the meanings of both what is said and what is not said. Pragmatics, as defined in this paper, deals with meaning contextually. A non-native speaker may be able to understand grammatically, lexically, and literally, what is being said without comprehending the full meaning or the intent behind the message. The resulting pragmatic failure can prove especially burdensome when a non-native speaker attempts to decode such a pragmatically embedded message (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). No grammatical

blunder can make a speaker seem quite so incompetent, inappropriate, or foreign as the “kind of trouble a learner gets into when he or she doesn’t understand or otherwise disregards a language’s rules of use” (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989, p. 252).

Pragmatic Blunders

Learning Romanian as an adult provided me with first-hand experience with pragmatically based miscommunication. I remember someone asking me on the bus within my first few months in the country “Nu va suparati, dar cat e ceasul?” The literal translation is “Don’t be mad, but how much is your watch.” I was baffled, both because I didn’t know why that would make me mad, and also, because at the time I was not wearing a watch. Only later, after similar experiences and talking with some fellow language learners, did I realize the true meaning behind this man’s request. “Nu va suparati” is a common term indicating a sentiment closer to “excuse me” than “don’t be mad”. It is used to communicate both meanings and must be interpreted contextually. Similarly, “Cat e ceasul?” can mean “how much does your watch cost?” or more commonly, “what time is it?” or “do you have the time?” These meanings must be situationally and contextually interpreted.

Another example demonstrated itself when I was purchasing lunch at a local deli. The woman behind the counter handed me my change and said with a smile, “cu placinta!” Now I knew for a fact that *cu* was the Romanian equivalent

of *with* and *placinta* meant pie, and I was confused by her asking me if I wanted pie with my meal directly after I paid. I smiled back and responded with “Nu, multumesc” (No, thank you), to which she smiled even broader and I walked away with a sneaking suspicion that I had said something foolish. Indeed, I had.

With her response she had intended two very non-literal intentions to be communicated using this expression, which were both meant to be understood contextually. First, was a common idiomatic expression playing on the more literal equivalent to “*you are welcome”*, which is pronounced *cu placere* and means *with pleasure*. This malapropism is a humorous play on words and is used especially by the older generation with young children. But there was also another abstract meaning to be derived through contextual timing, as she inserted the pun-like play on words deliberately after I had not thanked her for the change. She was soliciting a customary show of appreciation through thank you, or *multumesc*. Regrettably, due to my novice language skills, I did not pick up on either of these alluded intentions until much later.

These examples demonstrate that pragmatic competence goes beyond the realm of linguistics and actually has a substantial impact on a learner’s ability to acclimate into a new society. Daily interaction requires an understanding of idiomatic and colloquial speech patterns and behaviors. Even the most basic of Searle’s speech acts such as greetings, descriptions, questions, apologies, requests, and complaints (Searle, 1979) require a certain degree of pragmatic competence in order to be navigated appropriately by a non-native speaker.

Indirect Communication

When these speech acts are obvious or direct they are somewhat more easily managed, but with indirect speech acts, it becomes even more complicated. Indirect speech acts occur when the speaker communicates to the hearer more than what is actually said (Searle, 1979). In using indirect speech acts, a speaker relies heavily on their shared background knowledge, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, and on the listener's rationality and inference (Searle). Indirect speech acts contain an illocutionary force that makes the unstated meanings immediately obvious to the native interlocutor (Austin, 1962) but these implied meanings are not always immediately obvious to the second language learner.

Indirect speech acts also incorporate the more subtle application of figurative language through figures of speech: metaphors, similes, hyperboles, euphemisms, sarcasm, and even humor are particularly challenging for language learners to recognize and comprehend. And because these figures of speech involve cultural norms and practices, a learner cannot fully acculturate without developing a shared understanding of the intricacies of social norms within the target language. In order to fully belong, grammatical knowledge and linguistic familiarity are not enough; pragmatic competence is requisite to bridge the gap between bilingualism and biculturalism. With pragmatic awareness, a language learner can integrate as part of the target culture and become part of the group.

Without an understanding of pragmatics and the ability to wield this knowledge suitably, a learner will always maintain his or her status as an outsider. In biology, acclimatization is defined as the process of an individual organism adjusting to a gradual change in its environment (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011). Similarly, in the study of second-language acquisition, acclimation involves the adjustment of an individual to a change in his or her linguistic environment. Pragmatic competence is fundamental for this kind of acclimation into the target culture.

Although living in the target culture is not on its own enough to develop the kind of communicative competency necessary for acculturation, it provides valuable opportunities to observe and identify cultural realities that impact communicative strategies. Because context, background, and position powerfully impact how individuals in cultures construct and perceive reality, living in a community of target-language speakers can help to demonstrate the ways of thinking specific to a culture (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). By living and interacting with people from the target culture, a learner can begin to understand how to alter his or her own cultural framework of thinking to better adapt to that of the target culture (Reagan & Osborn). It is in context that one can observe and eventually assume the cultural manner of thinking and organizing experiences and knowledge (Reagan & Osborn).

Enculturation, Acculturation, & Biculturalism

Enculturation, acculturation, and biculturalism are all linguistic terms associated with this paradigm shift, and yet by definition they are distinctive, differentiated from each other. Each term is specific to certain contexts. Enculturation is the process that occurs as individuals acquire, from an early age, the local culture of the community in which they are raised (Levine & Norman, 2001). Generally it refers to the process by which an individual discovers and acquires the norms of the community and culture by which he or she is surrounded and the achievement of local values and behaviors that are expected and even essential within that culture (Levine & Norman). This process goes unnoticed by the participants. When we are immersed in only one culture and language, we do not consciously realize that we are even developing cultural behaviors and practices, and rarely notice the peculiarities or limitations of our native culture even in adulthood (Wagner, 2002). It is only through the study of another way of life that we discover and appreciate the nuances of our most natural cultural and linguistic tendencies (Wagner).

While enculturation is the process of first-culture learning, acculturation is the development of second-culture learning (Levine & Norman, 2001). However, acculturation has more recently been associated with the tendency of minority groups to largely give up the values, beliefs, and behaviors of their native culture and assume those of the majority culture (Bhatia, Ram, 2001). This abandonment of a language learner's native culture is not the goal of cross-cultural acclimation. Nor is it entirely possible, especially for first-generation

immigrants, because, language barrier aside, cultural misunderstanding and disorientation will persist (Bhatia, Ram). No matter how familiar one becomes with the target culture, and even despite the length of time spent living among the culture, the truth remains that: “the doctrine of cultural relativism is that we can never apprehend another people’s or another period’s imagination neatly, as though it were our own” (Geertz, 1983, p. 44). Acculturation is not usually desirable or in most cases even entirely possible.

The objective for most language learners is to achieve L2 proficiency as well as some level of biculturalism, which is to develop the ability to understand and navigate within two distinct cultural frameworks without forsaking one over the other. Biculturalism is the expansion of an individual’s awareness and grasp of the target culture without diminishing the value of his or her native culture. It is the ability to maintain multiple cultural frameworks within one’s own mind.

It is the exception when a sojourner transitions from being a temporary addition into part of the group, and it requires exceptional time and effort to do so. And although, as Geertz states, most individuals can never fully apprehend another person’s imagination (1983), we can however take steps to better understand and participate with him or her culturally. Therefore, it wouldn’t be fair to claim that absolute acclimation was the ultimate goal but instead the aim is to become more adaptable, to develop the ability to adjust oneself and one’s manner of thinking, as far as possible, to function according to another distinct cultural framework. Because culture is learned rather than inherited, and inevitably plural, with each of us belonging to multiple and distinct cultural

identities (Reagan, 2005), there is no reason to doubt that multiculturalism is indeed possible.

This is accomplished by degree, and the acquisition of pragmatic competence takes a learner one step further in the improvement of cultural acclimation. The pursuit of biculturalism is a continual process because a learner is constantly learning more about cultural pragmatics, and even native speakers occasionally blunder when it comes to intended pragmatic meaning. Some researchers even claim that we can never do more than participate in miscommunication (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Yet, regardless of its inherent defects, communicative and pragmatic competence can and should be improved in order to achieve biculturalism.

Culture Shock

Language, as Whorf states, creates our reality (1956), it reflects the world view, thought processes, and lifestyles of its people (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). Therefore, language is inherently cultural in nature.

Because of the stark contrast between cultures regarding norms and social expectations, culture shock is a prevalent facet of cultural immersion. Culture shock refers to the experience of individuals as they are confronted with the reality of different cultural environments, social norms, values, beliefs, and ways of doing (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). A learner's reaction to a new and different culture will typically include all five stages of culture shock to varying

degrees upon entering a foreign cultural community. 1) The honeymoon phase, when a newcomer is fascinated by and interested in everything about the new culture (DeCapua & Wintergerst). 2) The crisis stage, when a newcomer begins to be overwhelmed and perplexed by the new culture. (Moran, 2001, DeCapua & Wintergerst). 3) The adjustment period, when a sojourner begins to adjust and adapt to the new cultural environment (DeCapua & Wintergerst). 4) The recovery period, when a newcomer is finally function effectively within the target culture (DeCapua & Wintergerst). And finally, 5) the re-entry process of experiencing these same stages upon reentry into the native culture (DeCapua & Wintergerst). These are all stages that must be passed through along a learner's journey towards biculturalism (Moran, 2001). While dealing with these reactions, language learners can become frustrated and experience a desire to withdraw from the target culture into something more familiar. However, opposite to that inclination, one of the best remedies to culture shock is a deeper immersion into the target culture (DeCapua & Wintergerst).

This was evident in my personal experience as I lived in Romania. My experience abroad started to feel difficult after the first couple of blissful days in the country. I began to feel disconnected from the culture in which I found myself. This was partly due to the tremendous language barrier as I struggled to develop linguistically, and partly due to the drastically different culture in which I found myself. My first reaction to such feelings was to further distance myself from the people and the culture of Romania. Thankfully, due to the nature of my volunteer work, this sort of reclusive reaction was not possible. Because I was forced to be

thoroughly involved with the people and the culture, I believe that I experienced the symptoms of culture shock to a much lesser degree than if I had been able to cater to my initial inclination.

Not only did an immersion in the daily culture and behaviors of the Romanian people help to lighten the impact of my culture shock, but it also afforded me a valuable opportunity to dive into the culture headfirst so that as I was becoming more fluent in the language I was also becoming more fluent in the culture. I can see that my bilingualism and biculturalism did in fact develop simultaneously, although this is not always the case. I was able to shop with and among Romanians, walk the streets and ride the buses with them, build relationships with Romanian people, talk and negotiate meaning with Romanians, and experience all the cultural nuances of the country as I was learning the language.

For foreign language learners the processes of language acquisition and pragmatic acquisition are typically separate. Most foreign language learners are only given language training before entering the target culture and country. This separation of language learning from culture learning can be detrimental to language learner's biculturalism as they can potentially encounter difficulty overcoming culturally inappropriate behaviors and communicative frameworks picked up while learning the language outside of the target culture. Although this could make the integration process more difficult, it can still be accomplished, and could offer the learner the advantage of being able to communicate more

openly with native speakers and ask questions on the pragmatics of specific speech acts.

Authentic texts, those produced by members of a speech community for members of a speech community (Shrum & Glisan, 2010), language use, examples, and materials are paramount in developing pragmatic competence (Bennett, 1993). But in addition to the integration of authentic texts and examples in the language classroom, teachers also need to be aware of fundamental differences between the target culture and language learners' own heritage culture, and draw their student's attention to these differences (Bennett). According to Bennet (p. 16):

> To avoid turning out fluent fools, language teachers can be deliberate in helping students learn to experience reality in a new way. Using a "culture-contrast" approach may be useful … including the following steps:
>
> - Inform students about how their native language is related to basic values, beliefs, thought patterns, and social action in their own cultures.
> - Compare native language-culture patterns to those of the new language-culture.

Teachers play a critical role in making students aware of cultural and linguistic pragmatic differences so that they can eventually understand and incorporate these differences.

In the use of humor, for example, non-native speakers may be told a joke they do not understand. Luckily, with at least intermediate language skills they are able to ask the speaker about the implied meaning behind the literal one. This could be advantageous to cultural learners as they navigate the ins and outs of a new culture and can request assistance in the construction of meaning.

Conclusion

Regardless of an individual's level of linguistic or grammatical knowledge before entering the target-language community, the process of developing biculturalism and acclimating into a new culture is never entirely easy. By being made aware of potential pragmatic differences while in the classroom, a learner is better equipped to recognize and then deal with them when they arise outside of the classroom. Time spent interacting with native speakers and native cultural participants is one of the best (but not only) ways to observe and learn what is pragmatically appropriate in the target culture.

In order to function most fully within a society, knowledge of language structures is simply not enough. Knowledge of how to use a language to best convey and interpret intended meaning is necessary as well. An emphasis on and capacity for pragmatic competence seem to be a common denominator among language learners who acclimate easily into the target culture. Successfully integrated language learners all seem to share an ability to

understand and accurately use implicative meaning. This is what is meant by the term pragmatic competence, and it is a necessary factor that can help bridge the gap between bilingualism and biculturalism.

LANGUAGE STRAND ARTIFACT

Pragmatic Competence: Teaching Indirect Complaints to English Language Learners

INTRODUCTION

This artifact was written to fulfill a requirement in Linguistics 6510, a class that focused on linguistic analysis. I opted to write about the intricacies of teaching English learners about the social norms and pragmatic appropriateness of indirect complaints as solidarity building acts. This is just one of many speech acts, but by focusing on the specifics of indirect complaints I was able to emphasize the nuances of speaking pragmatically within a target language and the difficulties of increasing student's awareness of language that is done.

Pragmatic Competence:
Teaching Indirect Complaints to English Learners

When I was learning Romanian as a second language, my teacher encouraged me to “think like a Romanian!” I had no idea what that meant. But as my language ability increased, and especially as I spent more time living in Romania among Romanians, I began to understand. It wasn’t that I should imagine *what* a Romanian would say or try to imitate *how* he or she would say it. I myself had to *become* Romanian, and *think* like a Romanian -- not just know and memorize correct grammar and vocabulary but familiarize myself with the history, the culture, and the society of the people. I had to immerse myself so much in the life of a Romanian that I could begin to speak and sound like one. Similarly learners of American English must learn to think like an American in order to communicate like one. In fact, when the goal is acquisition it is necessary that language learners observe and reflect language that is done by native speakers (Hymes, 1962) and develop a certain level of pragmatic competence in order to integrate as part of the speech community.

Because the society in which we live influences greatly the way we see and understand the world around us, it is impossible to separate language and culture. The two grow together and become so intertwined that a study of one compels the study of the other. This is the very essence of pragmatics. By definition it is the influence of context on speech patterns and behaviors. Or, according to May (2001), the use of language in communication is determined by

the conditions of society. Pragmatics refer to the societal norm or expectation for basic speech acts, and is a necessary component of any language. I have broken this desired pragmatic competence into four distinct and equally important aspects of pragmatics: Context, turn taking, kinesics, and feedback.

An old English adage maintains that “It’s not what you say it’s how you say it”, and when it comes to pragmatics in a target language this is especially paramount. Communicating appropriately isn’t just about lexical selection and grammatical correctness; it also includes everything that is communicated but not said. Communicating according to context, exploiting pauses, and even employing body language become critical in order to converse effectively.

‘Beyond saying’ was of particular interest to Austin (1962) and refers to the way people communicate with more than just words. It entails the implications of all aspects of speech behaviors, including voice inflection, tone, and non-verbal cues, because all these play a role in how we communicate meaning. A speaker participates in dialogue through encoding and a listener through decoding. These tasks include not merely the analysis of words but also and crucially an interpretation of how the interlocutors use those words. Participants must deal with both the intentions and perceptions of meaning.

Oral communication consists of arbitrary strings of sounds to which speech communities have attached shared meaning. In this way communication and comprehension of meaning can occur through dialogue. Until the middle of the twentieth century it was widely accepted by grammarians and philosophers alike that sentences were categorically either true or false (Austin, 1962). It was

believed that statements themselves ought to be verifiable and those that were not were considered pseudo-statements. Austin was the first to begin organizing these statements into categories entitled speech acts. He developed the concepts of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. In their simplest form, according to Austin, a locutionary act is the process of saying something with clear and direct *meaning*, an illocutionary act refers to the *intent* of the speaker hidden behind a statement, and a perlocutionary act refers to the desired *response* even when a direct request is not expressed.

Searle (1979) further developed Austin's theory when he introduced specific groupings of illocutionary speech acts. His classifications include representatives, directives, commisives, expressives, and declarations. According to Searle, a *representative* speech act commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed intention. A *directive* elicits a direct response or action from its hearer. *Commisive* speech acts obligate the speaker to a future action. *Expressives* communicate the speaker's attitude or emotion toward something specific. And lastly, *declaratives* change the reality of a person through proclamation, e.g., when a jury announces a verdict or a Justice of the Peace pronounces a couple husband and wife.

In addition to laying out the foundation of these particular illocutionary speech acts, Searle (1979) also introduced the concept of indirect speech acts. An indirect speech act (Searle) is any word or series of words that meet these same definitions but without *explicitly* making the statement, request, or declaration. For example, a mother, with the right tone in her voice, can obtain a

desired result simply by stating the name of her child. She does not necessarily state her intentions explicitly, but her meaning can be understood and still produce the desired effect.

Although less obvious than their illocutionary counterparts, indirect speech acts can be just as effective and often much more socially acceptable than the more direct forms of communication. Such is the case for complaints, which fit in the category of expressives and can be made either directly or indirectly. Typically we understand complaining to be the act of expressing dissatisfaction or annoyance toward something for which the listener is directly responsible. This definition however, refers solely to *direct* complaints, which are considered to be intrinsically face-threatening acts (Trosborg). The notion references a person's desire to be positively perceived by others and to avoid embarrassment or humiliation (Trosborg, 1995), and so a speech act that is face threatening endangers that perception. Examples include a student approaching a teacher about a grade he or she was unhappy with or speaking with neighbors about their music being played too loudly, such confrontations have the potential for altering the way a complainer is perceived by others.

Indirect complaining, on the other hand, differs in that it is an expression of dissatisfaction about someone or something not present (Boxer, 1989). 'Griping' (Boxer, 1993a), 'troubles-talk', or 'troubles-telling' (Tannen, 1990) are all synonyms for this same speech act and are frequently used interchangeably. Regardless of the term used, this type of complaint is a common social act (Trimbitis, Yang, & Clark, 2005). It is employed not only to communicate

dissatisfaction but also to establish solidarity with an interlocutor (Boxer, 1993a). This is a common activity among North American social groups (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010), and has been identified as a prominent aspect of social discourse universally (Hatch, 1992). Examples of indirect complaints are seen in almost every social setting. A sense of commonality is created as one individual complains to another about the weather and agreement is generated, or when two people discuss their shared criticism of a movie, restaurant, or venue.

These examples serve to illustrate that in American English indirect complaints serve to communicate both the emotions (Boxer & Pickering, 1995) and psychological state (Searle, 1976) of a person. When sharing critical evaluations or getting negative feelings off one's chest, interlocutors are expected to demonstrate a mutual understanding and convey similar attitudes towards the matter being discussed (Kozlova, 2004). This sense of commonality fosters a feeling of camaraderie between speakers and listeners.

However, even communication among native speakers of the same language is full of misinterpretations and misunderstandings. Because language is innately ambiguous, the process of interpreting meaning and managing perceptions is difficult and *mis*communication can easily occur. Research on indirect complaints as they pertain to sociolinguistics shows that *even* shared expectations about complaint strategies between cultures does not necessarily lessen the difficulty of adapting interlanguage pragmatics.

When Kozlova (2004) conducted a study comparing the complaint strategies of Americans and Russians, she found that "similar to Americans,

Russians also employ indirect complaints and troubles telling as a solidarity-building strategy […] performed with a remedial purpose" (p.88). Considering that indirect complaints fulfill the same social function in both cultures, it can be reasoned that Americans and Russians should not experience much difficulty with this aspect of intercultural communication. Nevertheless, Kozlova demonstrates that this is not the case. She determined that even socially similar cultures conceal covert differences that are difficult to detect and even more challenging to teach. The general tendency among native speakers of Russian, she discovered, was to omit any optimistic observations in indirect complaints while Americans were much more inclined to include remarks that reveal a hopeful attitude toward the complaint and its expected outcomes. The optimism illustrated in American complaints lessens the otherwise negative effects of complaining on the speaker and hearer, where the absence of optimistic remarks serves to intensify the complaints typical of Russian interactions.

Similarly, Tanck (2004) demonstrated that regardless of what an English learner's L1 is, production of pragmatic indirect complaints in English L2 proved to be difficult. She spent time observing various adult ESL speakers as they conducted Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) and determined their level of native-like speech production by assessing their responses against a list of typical complaint components. Most non-native speakers produced grammatically correct but socially inappropriate responses. The degree of inappropriateness varied depending on the subject's native language and number of years spent studying English. Some of the more obvious differences

included subjects being perceived as too direct, too confrontational, or not polite enough from the stance of native English speakers. These subtle differences in pragmatics illustrate the need to teach pragmatics in the L2 classroom.

Specifically, the application of pragmatic content in second language teaching should incorporate four different behaviors of speech and communication: (1) How to analyze context prior to speaking, (2) how to maneuver turn-taking as both speaker and listener, (3) how to incorporate appropriate kinesics to emphasize content as a speaker and acknowledge content as a listener, and (4) how to respond with other forms of suitable feedback as a listener. Pragmatic competence is achieved when speakers can recognize and produce the socially required speech acts appropriately.

In order to achieve this desired result, learners must understand how the situational, turn taking, nonverbal, and feedback aspects of communication work together to produce interactional dialogue. If language teachers can instruct their students on these essentials, then pragmatic competence is well within reach.

One of the most common social situations where the exchange of indirect complaints takes place is at a public bus stop between two relative strangers. I will examine the pragmatic aspects of this situation below.

Context

The first thing to be considered in an interaction is the situational context, as this will in large part dictate the appropriate use of speech. For our example of the strangers' exchange at a bus stop using an indirect complaint as the speech

act, the exchange would be relatively informal, and the dialogue may look something like example 1:

1) Speaker A: Can you believe how late the bus is?

Although this complaint is formulated as a question, the tone, intonation, and most importantly situation, all play a role in indicating the speaker's displeasure at the bus being off-schedule. A non-native speaker of English may be tempted to simply respond to this with a direct answer, as the complaint sounds like a question "can you believe how late the bus is?". The non-native speaker might respond with:

2) Speaker B: Yes, I believe.

Grammatically, speaker B's response in example 2 might be appropriate, but contextually it is not the response one would expect from a native English speaker. It serves to cut the conversation short, and comes across as abrupt. Second language learners may respond with a direct response to what seems like a question, but it communicates that speaker B did not understand the communicative intent of the question, and essentially concludes the conversation.

Because indirect complaints are a commiserating and relationship building form of communication in North America, the speaker was expecting a certain amount of sympathy and understanding. The listener, through his response, communicated neither of these things, even though he or she may have felt the

same sense of frustration at waiting for the late bus. This exemplifies one of the many easy ways miscommunication can occur cross-culturally.

A better response to this informal complaint would have entailed a certain amount of agreement. Then the listener could potentially offer an optimistic spin on the current situation, emphasize its negative aspect, or even, on some occasions, provide some sort of solution or resolution that the participants could share in. This is illustrated in example 3:

3) Speaker A: Can you believe how late the bus is?
   Speaker B: I know! This bus is always late. Perhaps tomorrow we will find ourselves lucky and it will be on time for once.

This is a contextually appropriate response. Speaker B is empathizing with Speaker A through agreement ("I know") and expanding on the original complaint "this bus is always late". The respondent demonstrates that he or she understands and then adds an element of positivity ("perhaps tomorrow we will find ourselves lucky and it will be on time for once"), typical to a North American indirect complaint.

4) Speaker A: Can you believe how late the bus is?
   Speaker B: Yes, it was even later yesterday and is supposed to be even more off schedule tomorrow. I don't think we can expect to see improvement soon.

In example 4, the response also shows agreement (“yes”) and commiserating (“it was even later yesterday and is supposed to be even more off schedule tomorrow”) through contributing even more negative feedback on their shared situation (“I don’t think we can expect to see improvement soon”).

5) Speaker A: Can you believe how late the bus is?

   Speaker B: It is terrible to wait so long. Perhaps we can call and find out what is causing the delay. Perhaps they are having trouble along the route.

In example 5, the responder exercises the principle of shared resolution and provides a solution the participants could share in. This example demonstrates sympathy “it is terrible to wait so long”, and a possible solution to remedy the shared problem “perhaps we can call and find out what is causing the delay”. This respondent also provides a possible reason for the delay “Perhaps they are having trouble along the route”, further connecting the speakers through a potential shared understanding.

Examples 3-5 illustrate different ways of formulating appropriate responses to indirect complaints in English as an L2. Each demonstrates the necessity for understanding context in order to respond pragmatically and appropriately in the target language.

Turn-taking

The prominent issue of turn taking is also communicatively relevant, and can be observed in numerous daily situations. Turns are taken for the regulating of traffic, serving customers, talking in interviews, in business meetings, courtrooms, debates, ceremonies, and everyday conversation. It is “one of the most fundamental preconditions for viable social organization” (Schegloff, 2000, p. 11), without which discourse would be rendered quite difficult. This phenomenon of turn taking takes place with less than five percent of speaker overlap (Schegloff), so over the course of a dialogue, communicators speak simultaneously very rarely. These turns are influenced by a variety of subtle speech aspects that work together to produce a flow of ideas throughout dialogue. Intensity, rate of speech, inflection, pauses, and duration of speech all play a part in this subtle correspondence of turn taking (Levinson, 1983).

All cultures observe a number of universal turn taking principles. Levinson (1983) outlined that the speaker frequently delineates turn units specifically and obviously. Direct questions, addresses, understanding checks, and confirmations all clearly call for a response from someone in particular. Adjacency pairs -- paired utterances typical of question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance, apology-minimization, (Levinson) etc., -- also make apparent whose turn follows that of the speaker.

But although these universals regarding turns exist, there are also culturally specific cues as to the appropriateness of turn taking. Regular pauses, intensity, rate of speech, and inflection can all vary depending on the culture

examined. Because cultures vary in turn-taking conventions, it is imperative for learners to become familiar with social norms of the target language in this regard. By depriving students of this valuable aspect of language learning, teachers inadvertently hinder the potential progress of their students.

In English, for example, turn taking is negotiated using the adjacency pair of question answer as seen in example 5. When speaker A asks “Can you believe how late the bus is?” the speaker is not asking because he or she genuinely desires to know the beliefs of speaker B regarding the bus being late, but is formulating the complaint in the form of a question in order to elicit a solidarity response from the interlocutor. The expectation is that speaker B will respond with one of the previously mentioned manners of indicating some amount of agreement and commiserating.

By directing the question at a specific speaker, A is directly indicating whose turn is next in the conversation. Additionally there are non-verbal cues emphasizing this same turn change, as discussed in the next section.

Kinesics

In addition to context and turn taking, the role of nonverbal communication (NVC) in forming indirect complaints is equally important. NVC or kinesics refers to physical communicative behaviors as distinct from speech (Searle, 1979). Generally, this includes meaningful body movements, such as eye contact, facial expressions, hand and arm gestures, postures and positions. All such motions

communicate and influence meaning, contributing to any verbal interaction performed when communicators can see one another.

The NVC most likely accompanying example 5 would include eye contact as speaker A communicates with speaker B. This would aid in indicating whom the speaker was addressing, especially if more than one person was present at the bus stop. Likely, the speaker would also use hand gestures to emphasize his or her frustration, either by throwing his or her arms up indicating impatience and annoyance or by raising a hand to emphasize the questioning manner of the complaint.

Equally appropriate would be the respondents' implementation of hand gestures throughout his or her response. Words alone will not come across as natural or pragmatically correct. NVC is used universally to aid in the encoding and decoding of meaning throughout conversation. But cross-culturally the specifics of hand gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, etc., may communicate and mean very different things. For example, in American English there is frequently pointing with the index finger as an indicator of who is being referenced in speech, while in Latin communities a puckering of the lips with a slight nod in the direction of the subject can be used to communicate the same thing (Hall, 1959). Understanding these NVC techniques in the target culture is an important and often overlooked aspect of language learning. While great emphasis is placed on the verbal use of language, body language should be taught as well. We cannot expect learners to notice and pick up on these variances in cues intuitively, but must draw their attention to them.

Feedback

Lastly, feedback is also a necessary component of communication and the study of language. The behavior of a competent English speaker will include certain feedback such as acknowledgement tokens (e.g., y*eah*, *okay*, *mm*, etc.) throughout a dialogue. These kinds of feedback from the listener can differ by gender but all indicate listening and understanding, not necessarily agreement with the speaker (Trosborg, 1995). Additionally assessments such as *good*, *terrific*, *sounds great*, and *that's a shame* are response devices that serve to evaluate the speaker's utterance, and sympathize with or acknowledge in some way the speaker's utterance (Trosborg, 1995). This interaction between speaker and listener forms bonds between individuals, and helps a language learner establish relationships with native speakers.

Because a large portion of communication is responsive (replying to a form of speech addressed to an individual), learners should be made aware of what is expected of them as responders. This differs significantly for each of the speech acts and from culture to culture. But for the purposes of indirect complaints, English learners need to know the main purpose of complaining in social situations is to build solidarity between interlocutors. Once this is understood, learners can develop situationally appropriate response behaviors. The examples provided above illustrate three different yet socially acceptable responses that conform to the social expectations of native English speakers.

By teaching the cultural significance of speech acts we can aid our students in understanding how they are expected to respond. Pragmatic competence with English indirect complaining requires exposure to native-like complaints and responses. It also requires effort on the part of teachers in pointing out social and cultural differences, drawing the attention of learners to those particularly difficult English speech behaviors.

A key element of becoming a fluent speaker is, just like my language teacher taught me, thinking like those from the target language and culture. Therefore, in the case of indirect complaints, as with all speech acts, it simply is not enough to speak well, be grammatically correct, or even pronounce like a native speaker of the target language. The production of appropriate indirect complaints demands pragmatic competence. Language teachers must incorporate the instruction of situational and contextual impact, suitable turn taking strategies, and the effective implementation of kinesics and appropriate response behaviors in order to aid students in achieving this aspect of communicative competence.

LITERACY STRAND ARTIFACT

A Technology-based Approach to Teaching Second Language Literacy

INTRODUCTION

In the following artifact, I explore the use of technology in developing L2 reading and writing literacy, cultural literacy, and digital literacy. I believe that technology is an invaluable tool language teachers can and should implement in the language classroom to help students develop the necessary L2 literacies. This artifact contains the research and theories in support of this belief.

A Technology-based Approach to Teaching Second Language Literacy

One of my first and fondest memories as a child was being read to aloud. This was just the first of many interactions with literature throughout the years I spent learning to read and write in my native language. Similarly second language learners will need to experience frequent exposure to authentic literature in order to cultivate L2 literacy. People learn to read and write *by* reading and writing. Therefore, it is imperative that language students are immersed in and become acquainted with authentic target language texts. Students increase their second-language literacy skills by reading and studying TL literature. Many authors and linguists have struggled over the definition of literature but Basnet and Mounfold assert that in its broadest sense literary texts include products that reflect different cultural aspects of the society in which they are produced (1993). They are cultural documents that offer a deeper understanding of cultural communities (Basnet & Mounfold, 1993). Thus, students increase their second-language literacy skills by reading and studying the literature of the target language (Marckwardt, 1978).

But the face of literature is quickly changing; where once a child would be read to aloud from a purchased book of ink and paper, now it is equally likely that such a ritual would involve a downloaded book read aloud from a kindle or an ipad. Likewise, in the classroom, we see the introduction of such things as YouTube, Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), Blogs, Wikis, and I even observed (in a beginner level Chinese class) the in-class use of TL texting to

native speakers. Technology, it seems, is affecting the very process of attaining literacy. This paper explores a technology-based approach to teaching second language literacy and the incorporation of authentic (written by and for members of a language community) L2 literature into this process.

Second Language Literacy through Literature and Technology

Because communication is the goal of language acquisition, language students come to class to learn how to communicate “and at the same time, by communicating, students learn the language” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p.32). Consequently, a language classroom must include and encourage both social interaction and communication. This is the very basis of the communicative approach to language teaching (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & Van Patten, 1995), which was developed with both the goal and method of language teaching being communication. This reinforces the concept that a rich linguistic and sociocultural environment is essential tor second language acquisition (Celce-Murcia, 2007). The sociolinguistic approach to language learning reinforces the idea that social interaction triggers an internal process for the learner in which language acquisition occurs, claiming that students are typically their own best teachers (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Dalgarno, 1996). This method provides students with numerous opportunities for L2 input and output.

The communicative method can be supported by using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), which is any computer-based process by

which learners improve their language skills (Arnold & Ducate, 2009). Because ours is a socially connected and technology driven generation, the implementation of Web 2.0 applications, such as social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing, or those applications that facilitate participatory and collaborative interaction between users (Arnold & Ducate, 2011), can encourage communicative language learning outside of class (Thorne, Black, & Sykes, 2009). This can promote the formation of L2 learning communities outside the classroom giving learners additional opportunity to interact socially and participate in the L2. Collaboration then, and not competition, becomes the focus of our L2 learning environment. These tools also allow language learners to interact and socialize with members of the target by using such technologies as skype, blogs, facebook, wikis, etc., which serves to motivate learners in interacting using the target language within a culturally rich social online environment.

When used appropriately such technologies, because they are prevalent and widely used social tools, can also help increase learner motivation outside of class and draw students back into the TL even outside of the classroom. Due to the nature of portable technology devices and smart phones, many students now have unlimited online access and can be reminded, throughout the day, of the target language. Implementing into the language curriculum those things that already interest language students can increase both participation and motivation (Dupuy, 1997).

CALL is an invaluable tool in assisting language students in developing certain L2 literacy such as, in order of importance: reading and writing literacy, cultural literacy, and digital literacy.

Reading and Writing

CALL offers an increased potential to access input in the form of authentic literacy text. The Internet affords language teachers and learners easy access to virtually limitless sources of authentic TL texts and genres of literature. Studying this authentic literature is an important element of successful second language acquisition (Dupuy, 1997) as it gives language learners a glimpse into authentic language production (Shanahan, 1997) and provides a living example of how language is done (Hymes, 1962).

The ability to read is the first ingredient in cultivating literacy, and writing is the second. Both are linguistic necessities for second language acquisition and literacy, but reading in particular serves as a valuable motivator because it increases the overall confidence of language learners as long as it remains comprehensible and below frustration level for the student (Dupuy, 1997). Arnold (2009) argues that in the case of target-language reading the desired difficulty should be kept at an i-1 level to sustain this confidence within students. Reading at an appropriate level can provide learners with the required comprehensible input which lowers their affective filters and can encourage output, class participation, and enthusiasm for the language, thereby improving students' language skills (Dupuy, 1997).

Written literature serves as a positive motivator and traditionally has been introduced in the language classroom in the form of print, but more recently has been introduced via YouTube, blogs, wikis, and other digital media. Genres of authentic literature include story-telling, personal narrative, prose, poetry, short stories, novels, drama, and even song lyrics. Each of these can provide valuable L2 reading material for language students and can serve as the basis for lessons, activities, and homework assignments. Because many of these genres are quite colloquial in nature, it may be useful to stick to works that were created for a younger demographic. Because of the nature of younger-age literary works, they work well with those learning a second language. Incorporating a combination of both children's and adolescent L2 literature into the language curriculum can improve students' grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension (Ho, 2000). Frequently these samples provide a simplified yet authentic introduction to the attitudes of a society as well as the intricacies of basic sentence and paragraph structure in the target language.

Children's and young adult literature offer simple frameworks, explanations, illustrations, and plot formats, all of which aid in the scaffolding (the contextual support of meaning through simplified language, modeling, and cooperative learning) and teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension (Shrum, & Glisan, 2010). Additionally, stories with more than just written text (such as drawings, photos, and graphs), help students to better understand and retain TL vocabulary (Huckin & Cody, 1999). Short and simple books and

literature can be quickly read and easily understood thus providing language students a strong sense of personal accomplishment upon completion.

In an adult ESL class comprised of Chinese speakers, Ho (2000) found that the overall cultural and linguistic confidence of the students was increased greatly through the implementation of authentic teenage literature. Using such literature in the classroom allowed students to better understand general western values and issues illustrated throughout these books (Ho, 2000). I think the same results would be manifest in any language classroom as students are given the opportunity to identify cultural and pragmatic norms through exposure to authentic documentation of such interaction in reading materials in the L2 curriculum.

The nature of literature is also much more interesting and engaging for language students than language explanation alone (Swaffar, 1992). When educators allow students to select their own reading materials, students can choose literature that is interesting to them and specific to their personalities. Not only is student choice of reading material positively correlated with motivation to read (Arnold, 2009), but students who are allowed to choose their own reading material are also more likely to end up with material that meets the criteria for comprehensible input for them (Arnold, 2009). Because students come with unique levels of L2 proficiency, it is difficult to select only one text to best meet the needs of all the students in a class. When teachers provide a selection of material for students to choose from, each learner is more likely to select the material closest to his or her reading comprehension level (Arnold, 2009).

Although individual student selection can aid in student motivation and appropriate reading level, it is still important that educators screen reading material to ensure that it is culturally and linguistically rich while avoiding unnecessary and complicating references. If, for example, a book is selected that references specific historical events or uses a particular dialect, it may be more difficult for a language student to decipher and therefore more intimidating and overwhelming (Kramsch, 1993). Reading material in a second language classroom should consist of current contemporary written works that are free from such historical references or the use of extreme dialects or dated/archaic vocabulary (Marckwardt, 1987).

It is important that educators select texts that are recent, authentic, and of appropriate length for the individual needs of their students. And, according to Kern (2003), exposure to written language through authentic texts is the first and most important element in advancing foreign language literacy.

Cultural Literacy

But L2 literacy is not the only ability improved through the application of authentic literature, cultural literacy is equally enhanced through its use in the language classroom. Literature inherently reflects the perspectives, values, ideas, and culture of the society by which it was produced (McCarthy, 1999). Through literature, students are made aware of the social application of linguistic knowledge and then come to recognize the symbols and norms of the target community reflected in those authentic texts (Barnes-Karol, 2000). Contemporary

literature provides a sample of the living language that reflects the values of the society in which it was written (Shanahan, 1997). Through familiarity with authentic TL texts, students perceive subtle differences -- in language, thought, structure, and organization -- between those within the target community and their own native community (McCarthy, 1999).

Such an application of literature in language classrooms is called applied literature, a specific term used to by Barnes-Karol identifying the integration of authentic L2 literature into classroom for teaching language and culture (Barnes-Karol, 2000). Because authentic literature is culturally specific and can provide a better understanding of themes that are universal but are also culturally different, its application is invaluable. Unique cultural concepts such as how families share a meal, how friends resolve a conflict, how to react to an insult or feelings of anger, and the social and communicative expectations of bus stop or street side conversations can all be demonstrated through authentic literary works (Swaffar, 1992). These are culture-bound notions that are difficult to explain to language students but are best understood through experience, or, the next best thing, by observing or reading about such experiences through authentic literary representations of culture and society (Swaffar, 1992).

These cultural representations not only reflect the ideals and notions of a society but also help form them. Throughout the ages, poets and authors have had significant impact on the shaping of society and its language (Swaffar, 1992). Influential authors contribute to and comment on common societal knowledge and perspectives of their communities. It follows then, that as students familiarize

themselves with TL literary works they are simultaneously familiarizing themselves with a cultural network of information and bank of community knowledge (Swaffar, 1992).

Digital Literacy

Increasingly tied with cultural literacy is digital literacy, which is the ability to navigate digitally within a society (Arnold, & Ducate, 2011). Digital Literacy can significantly aid language students in what is becoming an increasingly digital world (Dalgarno, 1996). Digital practices are more and more social in nature as social networking becomes increasingly popular, making it just as important for language learners to be able to navigate the pragmatic and social norms of a culture's digital world, as it is to navigate the physical world around them.

By integrating culturally relevant technological tools into the curriculum, a language teacher provides the necessary exposure a student will need to develop digital literacy according to the norms of the speech community. It is important for educators to be familiar with a wide variety of such technologies and include them, in an assortment of ways, in the curriculum both inside and outside of the classroom. The basic assertion of using CALL for language skills is that language teachers must first determine their own goals and objectives for the class, and then they are able to conclude which tool can best be used, according to research, for their implementation.

After the rationale is determined for which technology to implement, CALL can prove very successfully in aiding language learners as they work to obtain

digital and other necessary literacies. In fact, CALL is increasingly relevant in developing L2 reading and “can contribute greatly in developing a student’s overall digital literacy by expanding it to include multiple languages” (Dalgarno, 1996, p. 160).

Literacy is a necessary component in language development, and technology tools can be implemented to help students achieve L2 literacy. Through the consistent use of available technology language teachers can best help students acquire the necessary competencies of reading and writing literacy, culture literacy, and digital literacy. Some of the greatest potential for technology use can occur outside of class, pulling students back into the target language. I have included here an introduction to and outline of one such technology-based assignment for a final project dealing with literacy.

Final Project Overview - How to Write a Book Review

For this final project, students will be able to develop a written book review for their selected reading material in the target language of English that will be posted to and published on Blogger and eventually on GoodReads. This will advance student comprehension of self-selected, teacher approved reading material. It will also demonstrate student ability to summarize a novel, identify the main themes, recognize the elements of the plot, characters, and settings, and then organize these into writing outlining the main ideas supported by details from their reading. It will also demonstrate student understanding of main cultural themes found within the text and their ability to use a blog to publish and share

their finished product with peers as well as read and comment on the projects of others.

This unit will begin with an introduction of the available reading material and allow students the opportunity to select an authentic text that interests them. Throughout the unit, students will participate with in-class and at home reading of their selected text and will be provided with supplemental texts in the form of example book reviews. Special attention will be drawn during class time to the vocabulary specific to each novel, and activities such as small group work and total physical responses will be incorporated to encourage memorization and retention of the vocabulary.

As the unit progresses, students will participate in the group analysis of sample book reviews and will identify the main elements of such a review while developing an outline for the review they will complete at the end of the unit. They will also be given the opportunity to draw a picture, photograph a scene, or select a target language song that can help readers better understand both the setting and mood of their individual novel which will be included with the final book review, targeting the students' multiple intelligences and preferred learning styles.

An outline, explanation, and rubric will be available very near the beginning of the unit so that students will have a clear understanding of teacher expectations and know exactly what will be required of them along the way and at the end of the unit in order to do well on this final project. Students will also be required to complete a self-evaluation as well as a peer assessment on the

projects of two of their classmates. These, coupled with the teacher's assessment, will determine the final project grade for each student.

There will also be integrated teacher instruction throughout the unit reviewing the use of Blogger as the required hosting site (which is free), providing the required digital comprehension necessary for students to complete the task. Ample opportunity will be given for students to ask and answer each other's questions, with teacher feedback as necessary. Students will post these mini-assignments as completed and have opportunity to log in, view, and comment on peer progress. Through this out of class interaction in the target language, students will not only be able to edit and revise to create a better overall finished project, but will also engage in social TL interactions outside of class by using blogger comments to stimulate dialogue and conversation.

By breaking up this final project into a series of small manageable tasks to be completed, both in and out of class, students can work slowly and steadily toward the final product without feeling overwhelmed or frustrated with the assignment. It will also help students stay focused on the ultimate goal of this reading assignment and keep them attentive and motivated with out of class reading participation.

How to Write a Book Review

Final Project Overview - continued

Lesson Objective: Develop the ability to summarize a novel, identify the main themes, recognize the elements of the plot, characters, and settings, and then organize these into writing, outlining the main ideas supported by details from the reading.

Communicative Goal: Students will be able to develop a book review summarizing an authentic TL text.

Level: Adult learners in a college Advanced-level English language class.

Time Line: This reading and writing unit will take place over the course of a month, with the reading list and homework for the unit outlined here.

Book List: The intention of this book list is to provide language students with a list of short TL reads which can serve as gateway books into longer and more challenging literary texts.

1. The Old Man and the Sea (Ernest Hemmingway, 1951 – 106 pages)
2. The Pearl (John Steinbeck, 1947 – 122 pages)
3. Lord of the Flies (William Golding, 1954 – 248 pages)
4. Anthem (Ayn Rand, 1938 – 256 pages)
5. The Giver (Lois Lowry, 1993 – 179 pages)
6. The Big Wave (Pearl Buck, 1986 – 64 pages)

Requirements:

1. Write a review (see examples handed out in class).
2. Proof read and edit your first draft.

3. Proof read and edit the draft of two classmates using checklist.
4. Post final draft of book review to your blog.
5. Read and comment on the final drafts of two peers (assigned in class).
6. Post finalized draft to good reads.

Due Date: _____

Length: The book review should be at least 300 words in length and no longer than 500 words. Please use 12 point times new roman font and 1 inch margins.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

In this reflection on my teaching, I analyze a twenty-minute video taken as I was instructing a group of fellow MSLT students on constructing an English (L2) oral personal narrative. This opportunity to watch myself teach was a beneficial exercise for me to observe the connections between theories behind my personal teaching philosophy and the actual practice of teaching. It was interesting to observe my application of certain pedagogical theories while also unintentionally overlooking other principles. This video highlighted both my strengths and weaknesses as a language instructor.

By watching this video of myself teaching, I was able to learn how my teaching style demonstrates certain parts of my teaching philosophy. I began the lesson with a clear introduction to the topic and by outlining the language objective for our class, creating from the start a low-anxiety environment by outlining clear expectations so students affective filter is kept low. I also engaged with both the material and the students as I taught by demonstrating enthusiasm for the material and engaging students in classroom dialogue, displaying the attributes of a communicative approach throughout my lesson. I maintain a learner-centered environment by talking with each and every student, and engaging them in discussion rather than just lecturing at the class.

Additionally, as students responded to my questions, I was quick to praise them for their contribution to the class and model correct responses when a response was off-base, demonstrating the kind of positive and corrective feedback I value in a language classroom. Because this is something I value in

effective language teaching I worry that I don't do this enough, but in review I successfully maintained a good level of positive reinforcement.

The lesson I developed incorporated an authentic verbal demonstration of the objective (personal narrative) in the form of a short and humorous clip from StoryCorps, a digital oral history project sponsored by NPR that records American stories nationwide. It exemplifies the very definition of an authentic L2 text, and models the desired task for my students. Afterwards I required students to write down an idea for their own personal narrative and then participate work in pairs as they participate as storytellers, engaging them in meaningful and relevant communicative tasks that crop up frequently in everyday dialogue. This variety of activities (individual written dialogue and interpersonal story sharing) not only allows students the opportunity to formulate written *and* oral output, but also addresses the needs of a variety of multiple intelligences and learning styles by incorporating visual, verbal, and written output opportunities, while encouraging meaningful social interaction through personal narrative storytelling.

The most rewarding part of re-watching my video was getting a chance (since the camera was closer to the students than it was to me) of hearing and watching the learning activity as it was in play. I was pleasantly surprised to see that it was, in fact, much better received than I originally thought, and I was pleased by the conversations among students that were funny, entertaining, and genuinely engaging. Standing at the front of the class made those 5 minutes seem quite lengthy, but when observing this part of the class on video it actually flew by quickly.

I also observed some teaching weaknesses by watching this video, such as the fact that I could have allotted more time for students to participate in this valuable and socially interactive activity. As a teacher I sometimes find it difficult to manage my time while in front of a class and to know exactly how much time students need for an activity. Going back and re-teaching this lesson would also allow me to be more involved with this student driven segment of the lesson. For example, instead of standing and observing (for the most part) from the front of the class, I would get down to the student's level and pull myself unobtrusively into their group in order to hear what was being discussed, and then to facilitate where and when necessary.

And, despite being well prepared, I would have allotted my time preparing to teach this lesson differently. Instead of spending so much time collecting and organizing the content of the lesson, I would have focused on the delivery of the material and transitions between topics so that they could be a little more cohesive. More familiarity and better-rehearsed delivery would have helped the flow of ideas to run more smoothly. This could have assisted me as the teacher in being more present for my students, rather than juggling back and forth from them to my notes to my computer.

Overall, I demonstrated a very communicative approach to language teaching and a sincere interest in my students, and those are the things most important to me as an educator. But for the future, I have also learned not to be afraid to insert myself in the student's learning, and to manage classroom time to better accommodate the needs of the learners.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

This annotated bibliography represents the literature that most interested and impacted me throughout my time in the MSLT program. This bibliography is organized thematically beginning with entries dealing with pragmatics, and then those concerning literacy, and finishing with the cultural resources. All of the annotations come from my personal experience throughout this program and have helped shaped my portfolio in meaningful ways.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Summary

A series of essays, this book by Searle introduces his breakdown of Austin's illocutionary speech acts and addresses some of the controversies typically associated with the speech act theory. Not only does he point out what he sees as weaknesses with the theory and categorization of Austin, but he also addresses some common questions about the same topic. He also describes the indirect speech act, and gives an anatomical breakdown of what is included in that particular speech act. His definitions are concise and precise, and serve as a strong basis for communicative structures.

A large part of his discourse focuses on what these illocutionary speech acts are not, and delineating the subtle and covert differences that exist between them. It is an enlightening look at the way we use language, and reintroduces everyday language in such a unique way, opening an entirely new view into human communication.

This reference serves as a valuable overview of the speech acts themselves as well as what constitutes the specifics of and classic differences between each. It also offers numerous written examples in English to illustrate the different acts being discussed.

Reaction

Because this was an author I became familiar with during my undergraduate studies, I was excited to reread and refresh myself with Searle's viewpoints on speech acts. It has been a strong foundation for how I understand and perceive language, and was a huge resource for my research paper on indirect complaints as a speech act for language learners. Even though it can get heavy and complex at times, it is one of the fundamental reads for communication, linguistic, or language professionals in my opinion.

Holtgraves, T. (1986). Language structure in social interaction: perceptions of direct and indirect speech acts and interactants who use them. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*(2) 305-13.

Summary

The different social aspects such as status, relationship, closeness, intimacy, and context are all explored in this article. Holtgraves addresses the fact that face management and speaker/listener status play a large part in what communication is socially acceptable. He also explores the role of politeness and politeness theory on speech acts, and the perceptions of observers as they watch examples of them played out.

His basic method included two experiments with 216 undergraduate subjects observing situations and rating their perception of the appropriateness of their replies. He also addresses the coding and decoding that go into such human interactions, and determines that these nuances are actually encoded into our language. Influences such as status, liking, closeness, and perception

were all determined to have a roll in speech act production. This delineates that fact that cultural backgrounds are not the only factors that contribute to speech formations and expressions.

Reaction

This paper helped to solidify a large part of the basis for my research project. It identified some of the nuances of particular scenarios in which speech acts play a part. Because it deals so much with perception, this is a pertinent article that can easily be applied to pragmatics and teaching pragmatics in the second language classroom. Because pragmatic competence deals equally with perceptions of language learners by those in the target language community, educators can better understand those perception, how to notice them, and draw the attention of their learner to them. Professor Lackstrom refers to these social norms as covert. By studying perceptions as they relate to social norms, Holtgraves makes them less so. At least for those who read his article.

Dale, A. (1989). Pragmatic competence and adult L2 acquisition: Speech acts in interlanguage. *The Modern Language Journal, 73*(3), 279-289.

Summary

In this article, the author conducts pragmatic competence research looking at adult US native speakers of English as they begin to learn Spanish while studying in their own country. He breaks down pragmatic competence into the two key parts of appropriateness and politeness. These two components, he argues, make up the ability of an L2 learner to achieve pragmatic or social

competence. He analyzes a variety of speech acts as he discusses the results of a listening and production test administered to each of the twenty-seven beginner student participants participating in two separate Spanish classes. He contrasts these results with authentic native speaker responses in Spanish.

The students were assessed using written and verbal responses and the author's results support his original hypothesis: adult language learners both readily recognize and attempt to communicate speech acts in the L2, but less than half of them are able to translate the politeness rules into their l2 speech acts, and this only on the less complex situation of the two presented. The author attributes this to the students' fulfillment of the rule of clarity above the rule of politeness, rendering them communicatively but not necessarily pragmatically competent.

In his study, the author observes how the large majority of these students have no outside interaction with or observation of the language, culture, or native speakers of Spanish. Because these opportunities are scarce, the author attributes the lack of pragmatically appropriate output to the assumption by students that pragmatically appropriate responses are grammatically too complex for them to express. He also acknowledges that results might be different if the tests were *administered* verbally as well as in written form.

Reaction

The findings here are consistent with what one would assume to be true, that students can recognize pragmatic language use beyond what they are able to produce. This is consistent with Chomsky's theory that competence outweighs

performance. This article demonstrates some of the reasons that language learners exhibit difficulty in L2 production in the classroom until they are able to experience and participate in communicative experiences in and among the target language and culture. Future research, I hope, will take this one step further and examine ways we can improve pragmatic competence inside the language classroom for students who do not have ready access to the target language and culture.

Paradis, M. (1998). The other side of language: Pragmatic competence. *Journal of Neurolinguistics, 11*(1-2), 1-10. doi:10.1016/S0911-6044(98)00001-3

Summary

This article summarizes the preexisting concern and preoccupation of language pathologists with what the author refers to as left-hemisphere-based linguistic competence. He lists syntax, semantics and phonology, among others, as belonging to this category. And yet, he asserts, linguistic competence is not sufficient for L2 verbal communication. Right-hemisphere-based pragmatic and social competence is at least as necessary. And, according to his research, the latter suffers from significant deficit among second language learners. Only with the two working together can a language learner become truly fluent and functional in a target language and culture.

More than half of what we say, the author claims, is not literally what we mean. Most of the time we mean so much more than what we say, relying instead on how we say it. This is his premise for the increasing importance of

pragmatic competence. Discourse structure and nonliteral meanings are the two categories Paradis uses to break down pragmatic competence in this article. He uses these two categories and analyzes them in the context of dysphasic disorders so show which parts of our brain we use to formulate and use sentence grammar versus verbal pragmatics. This is where he comes up with the right versus left-brain distinction. He concludes with the claim that grammatical competence is just not enough, but must be paired with the equally important pragmatic competence.

Reaction

This article emphasizes the combination of right-brained and left-brained language mastery. It serves as a beneficial reference for language teachers as they continue to struggle with this balance in language classrooms. Because linguistic competence frequently gets the most attention in language learning, this article helps to remind professionals of the equally important and less utilized part of language learning, that of pragmatic competence. It also provides relevant support for addressing conversational speaking as we teach a second language, breaking down the different mental processes used in formulating both pragmatic and grammatical structures.

Fukuya, Y. (2008).The interactive effects of pragmatic-eliciting tasks and pragmatic instruction. *Foreign Language Annals, 41*(3), 478-500.

Summary

These authors look at the means of pragmatic instruction (explicit versus implicit) and their effects on different assessment strategies in the language classroom. The research was designed to reveal a correlation between instruction methods and the pragmatic performance of students in life-imitating social situations such as email and phone message requests. Although the results did not line up with the original hypothesis, there were interesting discoveries made regarding assessment in language teaching.

Their research shows a significant variance in how well students perform using these two different assessment tasks of email and telephone use. Students instructed using an explicit mode of instruction preformed much higher using the telephone as a post-test to the study. Although they do not attribute this discovery to any one reason (instead they discuss and analyze various input and output explanations for their findings), the fact that such an inconsistency exists between the assessments emphasizes the need for L2 teachers to use multiple means of assessment in the classroom in order to ensure greater accuracy of results. No one means of measurement would be as precise as multiple means of evaluation.

Reaction

Although the researchers responsible for this article did not find exactly what they are looking for, their analysis made on the use of assessment in the language classroom makes some excellent points about using a variety of methods. Their perspective on assessment strategies strengthens my belief that

assessment should be varied in order to be accurate. Using only one tool or means of evaluation can greatly alter your perception of how a student is doing.

Bodovi-Harlig, K., & Dornyei, Z. (1998). Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(2), 233-262.

Summary

Bodovi-Harlig and Dornyei conduct research to gauge the pragmatic and grammatical awareness among three different sets of language learners. They observe the results of learners in Hungary, the United States, and Italy. Each group of learners consists of adults learning English as a second language, the variable being tested is whether ESL learners differ in their competence compared to EFL learners.

The results from this study support the hypothesis and conclude that EFL learners had significantly higher awareness of grammatical errors when exposed to them than they did of pragmatic errors. The exact opposite was found true of ESL learners, who were shown to be mush more attentive to pragmatic incorrectness than they were of grammatical flaws. These researchers also suggest that these results could be a direct result of teaching techniques, and that students learn and imitate the sensitivities of their instructors to certain parts of language, while overlooking or being unaware of others.

Reaction

I appreciate the support presented in this article for the idea that

grammatical recognition is higher among foreign language learners, and pragmatic recognition among second language learners. Because pragmatics is an area of particular interest to me I believe it is important for language teachers to read this article and be aware of the tendency (depending on their respective perception) to influence their students one way or the other. By recognizing inclinations in our own teaching we can then correct for any weaknesses in teaching practices.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA. MIT Press.

Summary

In this book, Chomsky takes a look at the phenomena of syntax and the role it plays in human communication. He makes an essential distinction between competence and performance, which is fundamental to the successful language teacher. He illustrates throughout how even native speakers in their native tongue continue to make mistakes, require corrections, and miscommunicate with one another. His overall analysis is that errors give insight into an individual's performance at that particular instance in that specific circumstance, not in to their overall ability and competence in that language. His theory is summarized in the idea that competence outweighs performance.

Reaction

This book is relevant because it serves as a reminder that assessments are not always accurate. Generally people understand more than they can

execute, and by understanding this I can better understand when students exhibit difficulty in producing material or principles covered in class. Tests may not accurately reflect of knowledge, especially after the anxiety associated with testing and assessment is factored in. Observation itself, especially with language production, can also often limit a learner's ability to produce or produce accurately.

Rava, S. (2000). The changing face of the intermediate language curriculum. *Foreign Language Annals, 33*(3), 342-348.

Summary

Because one of the major issues facing language teachers today is the striking the balance between covering the required institutional curriculum and preparing students for real life communicative interaction, Rava's article is made particularly relevant. She outlines how the arena of pedagogy, as it concerns intermediate language learners, is ripe for change. Historically an emphasis on grammar has been commonplace among language classrooms, and a reliance on dated textbooks for the curriculum. One of the main points made throughout this article is that the emphasis is beginning to shift, albeit slowly, and to focus on communicative competence and the needs of the learner.

She contributes a large portion of the responsibility for this shifting paradigm to the extensive research conducted by ACTFL research on learning and teaching strategies. She presents guidelines such as integrating multimedia supports and materials into teaching, implementing student centered activities

and the use of authentic language material as some of the ways professional can implement positive changes in their teaching environment. She also insights educators to be rigorous in their teaching and integrate language forms into their course content. To conclude her analysis she maintains that incorporating a few of these five points is not sufficient, but that the best results will be seen when classrooms provide all of these things simultaneously.

Reaction

I can relate to the old paradigm referenced in Ravas article, as this is the teaching method I experienced in the language classroom as a student of Romanian. Because I have experienced it first hand, I can appreciate even more fully the impact of a more communicative approach to language teaching. It makes more sense to me from the viewpoint of both the student and the teacher, and seems so intuitive that I am surprised that this has not been around for ages. As she talks about current research and it's impact on language classrooms, I can't help but think that this will positively influence teacher's experiences in the classroom as well as students. Communicative and pragmatic language teaching is a large portion of my approach to teaching language, and you can see that influence from Rava in my teaching philosophy. I think her outlook will be a breath of fresh air (as far as perspectives) for learners and teachers.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Authentic assessment of teaching in context. *Teaching and Teacher Education. 16*(5-6), 523-545. doi: 10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00015-9

Summary

Darling-Hammond outlines the current assessment techniques frequently used in teacher education classrooms, and delineates how the evaluation of learning can be improved by implementing more diverse context-oriented assessment opportunities for future teachers and therefore for their future students. Teachers, he contends, need to learn to exercise their ability to evaluate teaching situations and develop a variety of appropriate responses that are effective in different circumstances.

His argument is grounded in the fact that teaching is becoming much more complicated as curriculum expectations rise and diversity increases. Teachers now are juggling so many more concerns, differences, backgrounds, and cultures among their students and this is making contextual and authentic assessment much more difficult but also much more necessary. In order to meet these higher demands educators need to get educated on assessment practices, therefore becoming better able to meet the needs of their students, and those growing demands.

Teachers of teachers, much like K-12 teachers, face the ever-present difficulty of balancing the state-mandated assessments and in-class authentic assessments. This becomes especially difficult when these standards are mismatched or in conflict, and so the more assessment alternatives a teacher has, the better able they are to juggle those complexities.

Reaction

Although this article addresses the specifics of teaching teachers, a lot of what is covered can apply equally to potential language teachers and their L2 students. It brings issues such as diversity and curriculum management to the forefront of the readers' minds, making them more aware of how to juggle and respond to a variety of situations and how to contextualize classroom assessment. This article reminds me that the more I can react effectively to my students in context and provide a variety of assessment procedures to the class, the better I will prepare my students for the variety of experiences they will encounter in a new culture and context.

Gulikers, J., Bastiaens, T., & Kirschner, P. (2004). A five-dimensional framework for authentic assessment. *Educational Technology and Development, 52*(3), 67-86. doi: 10.1007/BF02504676

Summary

This article begins with the researchers outlining their definition of authenticity for the purposes of this study. Authentic assessment, they sustain, is "any assessment requiring students to use the same competencies, or combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, that they need to apply in the criterion situation in professional life." The authors of this article then present two important reasons for using authentic competency-based assessments in the classroom. First, is the construct validity (authentic assessments measure what

they are supposed to measure) and second the impact on student learning, or consequential validity (the positive impacts of assessment on student learning).

These motivations form the basis of their five-dimensional framework for authentic assessment. The five dimensions are the assessment task, the physical context, the social context, the assessment result form, and the assessment criteria.

The author reminds readers that this authentic assessment should naturally be aligned with equally authentic instruction and that authenticity is measured on a continuum, and a task is never entirely authentic or not authentic.

After clearly defining terms and laying out a model, the authors discuss the results of a computer-based two-hour study using both teacher and student participants. Participants were given some basic definitions of construct and consequential validity and then responded in small groups to case descriptions rating authenticity of each in order of most authentic to least authentic. They also participated in specifying the ten most important statements (from those generated during the group brainstorm) for designing authentic assessment. This study resulted in the task, the result, and the criteria being ranked by participants as the most important criteria for authentic assessment.

Reaction

Although the actual research conducted seems to lack credibility due to participants being led in advance with the researchers' distinct definition of terms and being asked to respond as a group rather than individually, the rest of the article is compelling. The authors' five-dimensional framework for authentic

assessment rings true to me, and the table illustrates how these five dimensions work together in the classroom. I think this is a valuable article to reference when developing my own construct of language teaching, and keep in mind the role of assessment as it works with all other aspects of a language classroom.

Gregersen, T., & Horwitz, K. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal, 86*(4), 562-570.

Summary

The authors of this study suggest that anxious and non-anxious learners differ significantly in their personal standards, procrastination, fear, and self-evaluation. They suggest a link between these behaviors and the leaner's anxiety levels. They also suggest that educators should implement a wide variety of procedures and assessments in order to help alleviate anxiety in the language classroom. This consequently will also increase the accuracy of classroom assessments, as one cannot determine accurately, according to these authors, a student's progress through one form of assessment only.

Reaction

This opinion is relevant to modern language teaching as it helps teachers understand the need to alleviate the pursuit of perfection as a goal for their students. By understanding that a variety of factors influence the language output of students, we can help to eliminate these outside factors in order to more accurately judge the language level of students. Once we alleviate the goal of

perfection in the classroom our students will learn for the sake of learning, and not learn to a test or in order to receive a certain grade.

Shrum, J., & Glisan, E. (2010). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction.* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary

The premise of this textbook is a real-world communicative approach to language teaching at all levels of proficiency. Shrum and Glisan offer a contemporary perspective on language teaching and acquisition as they focus on the blending of interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational forms of communication with an emphasis on culture and a communicative pedagogy.

The text serves as a broad overview on what language professionals can and should implement into L2 classrooms in order to foster acquisition at a meaningful and communicative level. It's purpose, as stated by the authors, is to synthesis for readers the vast research for language teachers, and aid them in understanding and implementing the principles found therein. Because research is constantly expanding our understanding of the language field, this text serves as a valuable resource for educators as it presents in concise and applicable ways the very latest updates as far as the world of linguistics. It also offers valuable illustrations of the principles discussed, and methods of incorporating them into a real-life classroom.

Reaction

This book was introduced at the perfect time in the MSLT course, and truly

does give a general look at the many facets of language teaching. It served to introduce me into the world of linguistics, and was an overarching summary of language as it develops in a classroom. It was a strong basis for most of the principles used in my teaching philosophy, and can be a huge asset to even the most practiced language teachers due to its relevance.

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

The authors provide an in-depth exploration of the PACE story-based approach to teaching grammar. They provide a stark contrast between traditional forms of grammar presentation in a standards-based language classroom, and this contemporary approach, which emphasizes communication as the target goal. A PACE structured lesson focuses on language production using grammar principles, rather than memorization of those principles. Memorization alone does not guarantee improvement in acquisition and speech production.

A large facet of this method has to do with providing opportunities for output for the learner, and opportunities for reflection on that output. They tackle the implicit versus explicit debate among language professionals, and endeavor to illustrate that a focus on form is a necessary component to language learning.

Essentially these authors view and present the PACE model as a reformation to typical grammar instruction.

Reaction

After first hearing of the Pace approach to grammar teaching, I was immediately intrigued by this revolutionary method. It is such a drastically different approach than that I have experienced as a learner in the language classroom, and makes so much more sense to me as a future teacher. It was particularly meaningful as it broke down the elements and purposes of this method, addressing the reasons behind why it is a more pragmatic approach to grammar. It was a great resource for articulating my view on grammar instruction in my teaching philosophy.

Arnold, N. (2004). Online extensive reading for advanced foreign language learners: an evaluation study. *Foreign Language Annals, 42*(2), 340-366.

Summary

Arnold designed this study around advanced learners of German as a foreign language to determine if an online extensive reading program could improve on traditional extensive reading programs. The main differences between the program Arnold developed and pre-existing programs is that students read online and were not monitored by instructor in order to maintain the desired I minus 1 reading level.

The fact that students read online allowed them access to infinite

possibilities of authentic texts that were of interest to them. Each student had the ability to self select their material and was directed to read at an i minus 1 level in order to maintain the reading flow and avoid the use of dictionaries or translators. Results showed that students documented an increase in motivation due to their ability to self select reading texts and that their confidence in, ability to, and desire for out of class reading in German all increased. This article outlines the importance and value of reading in second language acquisition, and emphasizes the need for students to self select within their individual preferences the authentic texts that most interest them.

Reaction

I have always been a strong believer in the importance of reading in education and this article further makes that point as it specifically relates to language learning. Because reading can be an unsavory task for many students I think it is important for professionals in this field to make themselves aware of different ways they can improve reading levels of their students and help to motivate an increase in out-of-class reading. Implementing this same kind of reading program in a language classroom could greatly improve motivation and aid in lowering the anxiety of required textbook readings.

Pfeiffer, P.C. (2002). Preparing graduate students to teach literature and language in a foreign language department. *ADFL Bulletin, 34*, 11-14.

Summary

The author argues throughout this article that the graduate programs in second language teaching and linguistics should make mandatory some sort of literature course training them to properly teach and analyze authentic content in the target language. Because literature plays such a vital role in teaching language and the educational process of acquisition, the author maintains that graduate school is the best opportunity for students to glean this kind of vital information. Literature training can help prepare students for the impending responsibility they will face of facilitating literature analysis in their own L2 classrooms after graduation. Her research shows that professionals rarely, if ever, again have such great access to and opportunity for learning as they do while they are students themselves pursuing a graduate degree.

Not only will such a requisite better enable graduate students to use and teach authentic literature, but its inclusion will also subliminally enforce the importance of literature in the context of language acquisition. Simply by incorporating such classes into the curriculum, she affirms, departments will demonstrate for students and teachers within the program, the very importance of literature in language learning. And by excluding it from the required course list, department heads are essentially sending the exact opposite message, that training in literature analysis is simply not important enough to require in the college curriculum.

Reaction

After reading this article I realize even more the importance of literature in a language-learning environment. Not just as a source of reading practice, but

also in the use of analysis and stimulating critical thinking processes in the minds of L2 students. The author makes an important case not just for the use of literature, but for the actual preparation of graduate students to lead and guide future students of their own in interpretation of text and analysis of meaning. Without a solid background in literature use in the L2 I am convinced that most teachers, especially new and less experienced teachers, would struggle with facilitating this process. This text helps me as a teacher understand the relevance of training myself as a current grad student in literature analysis, and demonstrates the importance of knowing how to teach literature in a foreign language. This sort of training at the graduate level would also provide valuable time in which students could develop not only familiarity with the process of literature analysis, but the confidence to execute it well.

Reagan, T.G., & Osborn, T.A. (2002). *The foreign language educator in society: Toward a critical pedagogy.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Summary

The authors connect the topic of language to the current attitudes, practices, political and economic influence it holds. They acknowledge throughout the text that society in the U.S. A. today lacks an appreciation for the true value of foreign language study. In their view, this general apathy toward languages stems from misconceptions about language, the role it plays globally, and how it functions in society. Despite popular attitudes of disinterest toward foreign language study in North America, the authors hold that foreign language

education is an integral and necessary aspect of education and necessary for a "democratic society" (xii.)

Generally, most language scholars focus solely on the pragmatics of speech and communication, but language, according to Reagan and Osborn, is much more. They focus on a critical pedagogy, bringing social and political concerns to the forefront of the language classroom, and encouraging critical perspectives and relevant real-world views among language students and teachers. "Language is at the core and heart of the human experience" (xi.). This text examines the relationship between language study and the American society, with the lofty goal that professionals in the field of linguistics might broaden their own perceptions and that of their students and peers.

There are a total of nine chapters dealing with various under-emphasized issues such as constructivism, activism, human rights, and the history and current standing of language policies. Each chapter also includes questions inviting reflection and discussion.

Reaction

Because this book takes a unique view on language acquisition, I find it particularly interesting and relevant. Where most texts focus on the interaction between individual and language *inside* a classroom, these authors place emphasis instead on the interaction between society and language *outside* of the classroom. And because society plays a large role in academic development, a comprehensive study of language and culture learning must include Reagan and Osborn's valuable viewpoints. By taking into consideration the stance toward

language study of the society in which we live, we can better understand our students and the influences impacting their motivation and ability to acquire a second language. This book can help educators in developing a more relevant approach to language teaching.

Reagan, T. (2005). *Non-western educational traditions*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Summary

In this text, the author builds a theoretical foundation for the study of a variety of educational traditions that are significantly different from those found in North America. He then moves on to develop the concept of culture in general, and how that concept plays into the role of education. The following chapters outline an overview on a variety of non-western educational traditions beginning with African educational thought and moving through Islamic educational practices. The final chapter summarizes the main concepts of the text and leads into potential areas of exploration for the future.

By understanding the diverse methods used globally in education, Reagan attempts to broaden the scope of how readers view and implement educational practices in our western society. He takes the reader on a journey through both historical and cultural development of education, emphasizing the role that values and beliefs play on the development of educational practices. Understanding the fundamental methods other cultures use to educate their children not only broadens the understanding and definition of what education

means, but also forces the reader to take a more honest look at their own assumptions and values of education. The author encourages a reexamination of education as a whole.

Reaction

The most valuable aspect of this text is the author's ability to cause readers to reexamine their definition of education and all that entails. As he explores the various non-western approaches to educational practices, he allows readers, through contrast, to examine and evaluate their own personal and cultural approaches to education. The structure and organization develop in progression, working up to what the authors claim is the most important chapter in the book, the second to last chapter, which covers Islamic education. This allows readers time to become more receptive to alternative ideas about education. This text also serves as a valuable base of understanding of a wide range of cultural differences teachers are sure to encounter in the language classroom. Readers are given a sample of different cultural perspectives that can serve as a springboard for further insight into cultural and educational differences.

DeCapua, A., & Wintergerst, A.C. (2004). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Summary

The authors of this text introduce the numerous elements of culture and how culture directly relates to the language classroom. The authors explore

issues such as culture shock, acculturation, the pragmatics and societal expectations of everyday speech, and the role of nonverbal language in communication. They place an emphasis on the value of self-analysis in the investigation of cultural norms, encouraging readers to draw cross-cultural parallels between their own native languages, values, and behaviors with those of others. By comparing and contrasting their heritage culture and another distinct culture, learners can come to understand both.

DeCapua and Wintergerst balance theory and practice as they outline language-learning principles and teaching concepts.They emphasize the cross-cultural element of language teaching in the hopes that readers will participate in analysis and self-reflection.

This book begins each chapter with a quote and a story as an introduction, leading into a more thorough discussion of its topic in short subsections for ease in comprehension. Possible activities and lesson material are included at the conclusion of each chapter along with discussion topics that can easily be tailored to nearly any language proficiency level.

Reaction

Included in this book are numerous aids for any language teacher. Because language and culture are intricately intertwined, it is impossible to separate the two when dealing with second language education. By understanding and implementing the target culture's practices, perspectives, and practices into the language classroom, I can help students increase their internal motivation for learning the target language. This text helps me as a teacher

better understand the role of culture both generally and specifically in the language classroom. Additionally, the theory and material presented here will serve as a valuable resource for lesson ideas in implementing this cultural aspect of language study. When appropriate I will definitely incorporate particular activities and material into my L2 lessons.

Moran, P.R. (2001.) *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice.* Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary

Moran wrote this text so that educators would be better able to help students “make a transition from one world, one way of life into another” (p. 11). He divides the text into two large components: learning about culture and teaching others about culture. His emphasis is on the importance of students participating in continual self-reflection and critical thinking as they analyze their own native culture. He asserts that this sort of analysis will increase students’ self-awareness of their own cultural lens by which they view the world, and will enable them to appreciate the differences of the views of those around them. His main emphasis is on integrating language and cultural instruction into one cohesive classroom experience.

Moran focuses on the practical application of learning activities and the implementation of continual adjustments of these activities based on the needs of individual students and classes. The author provides ample support for the idea that language and culture go hand in hand and should be taught together. He

acknowledges that culture can be seen as an integrated whole, such as a shared national culture, or as a small group, like the specific culture that manifests itself in families or communities. A look into all of these levels affords the most comprehensive view of an overall cultural standpoint.

Reaction

The framework of this text outlines products, practices, persons, perspectives, and communities. It works hand in hand with the language standards presented by ACTFL urging students and teachers to draw comparison, make connections, and ultimately understand the very nature of culture itself. Where these written standards offer a guideline by which to navigate, Moran provides an inclusive methodology for implementing the five C'S into the language classroom. He delineates how teachers can introduce culture into the classroom without sacrificing valuable language input/output time. By encouraging teachers to bring culture to the students, he is also encouraging the idea that learners are more than tourists amid a foreign country or culture, but can become active members and sojourners of the target culture and country.

Nault, D. (2006). Going global: Rethinking culture teaching in ELT contexts. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 19*(3), 314-328.

Summary

Nault introduces the idea that English language teachers need to drastically alter the way they are incorporating culture into their classroom. Typically English culture is based around the culture specific to the United States and England. Because English is not isolated to these two nations alone but is spoken nationally in countries like Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, English classes need to reflect this diversity in their culture teachings. The author argues that English is a language that belongs to the entire world and we need to be culturally inclusive and specific in our lesson material, from a more global standpoint and not just from a largely western perspective. The author even goes so far as to say that the culture of English is a global culture, and is not specific to any one or few countries alone.

Despite his acknowledgement that America should in fact maintain relevance in the English language classroom due to a great "economic and political influence," his overarching view is that educators need to be more globally aware in their teaching. This seems somewhat contradictory to his earlier arguments, but he reconciles these differences in concluding that American and other English-speaking countries should play a small role in culture teaching and can be used as examples, but should not be used solely to define the entirety of culture when teaching English.

Reaction

Even though the idea that many countries globally speak English as a nation, I had never really thought about the influence this could potentially have on a language classroom. It makes sense that cultural teaching should include

cultural aspects from all the different English-speaking nations so as to present an accurate and un-slanted picture of culture from a global perspective. But more specifically I think the cultural role should be taken from the individual students and their needs, location, and desires for English acquisition. If all learners are attending class in preparation for relocation to India, then that culture should be the emphasis in that language classroom. Likewise, if students are learning their L2 in order to move to other English speaking countries those societies should be the emphasis of culture teaching. A teacher's material, I believe, should be a reflection of the needs of the students.

LOOKING FORWARD

LOOKING FORWARD

Over the course of this MSLT program, I have been provided the necessary tools to be able to confidently jump off of the academic starting block and into the open pool of the job sector. Although I recognize that my education will never be entirely over (because I know I need to stay up-to-date on current second language practices), I feel adequately prepared to step into a career.

Looking forward I see myself taking all that I have learned about second language acquisition throughout the course of this program and putting it to work in an EFL classroom in a foreign country. I picture moving abroad and putting my language teaching skills to work for my students in a second language classroom. I look forward to not just teaching a second language, but advancing my own Romanian language skills as well as learning an additional foreign language. Eagerly I anticipate the opportunity my next adventure will give me to immerse myself in a new culture, participating as part of a new and exciting speech community.

Eventually I see myself returning to North America and teaching English and Communications at a University. And someday, because I have always loved academia, I might even continue my studies and pursue a PhD in language and communication.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Final Project Overview - How to Write a Book Review

Guidelines:

1. Introduction – Include the title and author of the book. Tell us why you selected that book and what genre of book it is (fantasy, adventure, biography, etc.)
2. Body – First, describe the main parts of the story such as theme, plot, setting, and characters. Then you can give your opinions about the book.
    a. Theme: The main idea of the story. For example, the theme might be the importance of friendship or how to be brave in a tough situation. Explain what you think the theme is and why.
    b. Setting: The time and place of the story. When and where does it take place?
    c. Plot: This is the storyline. Give a brief summary of what the story is about. Include details about the main event or conflict, what events lead up to it, and what happens as a result. You may want to avoid spoilers or giving away the ending so readers can still enjoy the book.
    d. Characters: Who is the story about? The main character is called the protagonist but also mention who the other important characters are and their relationship to the protagonist.

3. Personal Response: Tell the readers what you thought about the book. You can write about your personal opinions and response to the book. Questions to think about are:
    a. Did you like the book, why or why not?
    b. What was the best part and why?
    c. How did the story make you feel and did you feel differently at different parts in the book?
    d. Would you recommend it to your classmates and friends?
    e. Would you read other books by this author?
    f. Did you learn anything from this book?
4. Conclusion: Give your overall thoughts about the book and summarize your experience with it in a short paragraph.

Appendix B

Book Review Rubric

A good review should express the reviewer's opinion and persuade the reader to share it, to read the book, or to avoid reading it.
– Rod Philbrook, professional writer

Introduction ➢ Begin with an **interesting lead** that grabs reader's attention. Consider using a quote from the book as a lead. You might also give a brief summary sentence to explain the basic plot of the book. ➢ End with your **thesis**—your opinion of the book. Remember: avoid listing your main points in your thesis.	**How do I write a thesis?** _____'s _____ _____ (Author) (book title) (action verb) + _____. (your opinion of book) Example: Zusak's *The Book Thief* mesmerized me with its haunting tale and unique style.	**10**
Body ➢ Use **one paragraph for each point** you want to make about the book. ➢ Begin each paragraph with a **topic sentence**. ➢ **Explain your ideas** thoroughly, and include **specific examples from the book** to support each point you make. ➢ Use **transition** words/phrases to glue together your ideas throughout the review.	**What can I say about a book?** ➢ Explain a **theme** of the book. What life lesson does the book illustrate? ➢ Talk about the author's **style**. What do you like or dislike about the book's writing style? Is it funny? Does it give you a sense of the place it's set? What is the author's/narrator's "voice" like? ➢ Talk about th**e characters**. Does the writer make you believe in them as people? Why or why not? As you write about the characters, use examples of things they've	**60**

	said or done to give a sense of their personalities. ➢ ➢ Talk about the **setting**. How does it compare or contrast to the world you know? Does the author make you feel like you're a part of the setting? As you write, try to pass on to your reader the sense of the setting and *place* that the author has provided. ➢ Talk about the **plot**, but don't give the surprises away. Readers want to know enough about what happens in a book to know whether they'll find it interesting. But they never want to know the ending! Summarize the plot in a way that will answer some questions about the book, but leave other questions in the reader's mind. ➢ Make **connections**. Can you compare this book to another? Does this book relate to current events or issues? Does this book connect with you on a personal level	
Conclusion ➢ End with your recommendation.		**10**
Mechanics ➢ Spelling ➢ Punctuation ➢ Capitalization		**10**
No-No's/Grammar ➢ Pronoun Antecedent Agreement ➢ Use of Participial Phrases		**10**

Source: Modified from Book Review Tips offered by Rod Philbrook on Scholastic site, http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/bookrev/index.htm