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Utah State University

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BEST PRACTICES IN SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING:
A HOLISITIC DOCTRINE BASED ON RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE

by

Tarin Christopher Griswold

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

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

Dr. Karin DeJonge-Kannan
Major Professor

Dr. Maria-Luisa Spicer-Escalante
Committee Member

Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini
Committee Member

Yurika Izumi, M.A.
Committee Member

Dr. Bradford J. Hall
Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2016

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ABSTRACT

Best Practices in Second Language Teaching:
A Holistic Doctrine Based on Research and Experience

by

Tarin Christopher Griswold: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2016

Major Professor: Dr. Karin DeJonge-Kannan

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is an amalgam of the author's teaching philosophy which is deeply rooted in the theoretical foundations of second language teaching pedagogy, and further honed through firsthand teaching and observation experiences garnered during the course of his MSLT program. The target languages focused on in this portfolio are English and Japanese.

The primary components of this portfolio are: 1) the author's teaching philosophy statement (TPS), 2) language, literacy, cultural, and research strand artifacts, 3) annotated bibliographies, and 4) target language lesson plans developed and taught by the author which bring key concepts in the TPS and artifacts to fruition (included as appendices). The author stresses four vital ingredients in effective second language teaching programs including: 1) cultivating motivation, 2) embracing the communicative approach, 3) utilizing culturally relevant authentic materials, and 4) integrating technology.

(199 pages)

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I would like to start by thanking Dr. Karin DeJonge-Kannan and Dr. Maria-Luisa Spicer-Escalante for their tireless devotion to the MSLT program. One of the most memorable courses for me during my program was Linguistics 6350 (Pro-Seminar in Second Language Teaching) which was co-taught by both professors. I am grateful for the rigorous nature of that course and for the solid foundation in the linguistic theories of second language teaching that it provided. I am also very grateful for the assistance of Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini. I was very impressed by his teaching style and professionalism in Linguistics 6010 (Research in Second Language Learning), and for mentoring me in another independent study linguistics course. I am also very thankful to have Professor Yurika Izumi on my committee. Her insights as a Japanese language and cultural expert have been invaluable.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Mayumi, and children Audrey and Andrew for their continual love and support throughout my program. Taking a pause in my professional career for full-time graduate school was not easy for them, but they lent me their enduring love and complete support. I am very grateful for their patience and encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

The following section of my portfolio describes my personal teaching philosophy which has evolved during the course of my MSLT program. It is a combination of theory and practice. The main emphasis of this portfolio is teaching English and Japanese as target languages. My goal was to make the most substantial theories and concepts of second language (L2) teaching the main emphasis of my philosophy, e.g., Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is universally applicable regardless of target language. I also include specific concepts and theories from some of the most significant and up-to-date L2 Japanese acquisition research. Furthermore, I combine knowledge from multiple rounds of self-observation which is distilled into my Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement (SATS), as well as lessons learned from observing a variety of foreign language classes with multiple target languages.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

I began studying Japanese in 1995 during my sophomore year of high school. At that time, I had no idea how time consuming and daunting the study of Japanese would become. At first, students learn some basic vocabulary, the basics of the writing system (*hiragana*, *katakana*, and Chinese *kanji* characters), and some basic grammar principles. Honestly, I don't remember much of the particulars from my high school Japanese classes, but recall some of the vocabulary and grammar constructs, for example, *koto ga dekiru* (ことができる), i.e., 'can do something'. This construct can apply to many things such as, 'I can play tennis,' *tennis o suru koto ga dekimasu* (テニスをすることができます), or 'I can play piano,' *piano o hiku koto ga dekimasu* (ピアノをひくことができます).

After two full semesters of high school Japanese, I went on a summer exchange program to Japan in the summer of 1996. Despite being armed with a few elementary memorized phrases and vocabulary, I remember feeling utterly clueless when I got to Japan. While listening to the spoken language, either casually or during high school lectures, my comprehension was extremely low. However, the words and phrases that I did learn during that program stuck in my mind because they were used for actual purposeful communication in order to convey meaning during naturalistic conversations in authentic social contexts. Examples of such words like *taihen na* (大変な) (i.e., serious, immense or grave) or *mochiron* もちろん (i.e., of course, certainly) are words that I acquired incidentally through conversations and interactions with my host family or

friends from the Japanese high school where I was enrolled. Subsequently, I've observed in all the years of learning Japanese, that target language acquisition developed through naturalistic interaction usually results in the greatest retention outcomes or more 'intake' of language contents.

Over the years, I continued to learn Japanese off and on. I went on to minor in Japanese (along with a Political Science major) at the University of Utah in 2002. My Japanese studies at the University of Utah contained a fair amount of rote drilling classes, especially related to grammar and *kanji*. A few 3000 level courses used more authentic language materials and involved task-based activities in small groups, such as two semesters of 3000 level business Japanese courses or 4000 level courses in Japanese literature. However, the first two years of Japanese 1010 through 2020 exclusively employed non-authentic textbooks characterized by rote drilling and teaching grammar in isolation.

It's sort of counterintuitive, but I actually found my 3000 and 4000 level courses to be easier and more enjoyable than the entry level 1000 and 2000 level courses, even though the actual content in the latter courses was substantially more difficult. The reason for this is that the teaching methodologies and materials in the upper division courses were much better. The upper division courses used a lot more authentic materials which were not only more socio-culturally relevant but much more intellectually stimulating as well. Moreover, the upper division courses involved more naturalistic conversations with the instructor or in small groups. These factors made learning seem like much less of a chore than was the case with the lower division classes.

I was stationed in Tokyo, Japan from 2003 to 2006 with the Air Force. In 2010, I performed a month long language and area studies program in Fukuoka, Japan, sponsored by the Air Force. From 2012 to 2014, I was assigned to U.S. Forces Japan's (USFJ) Information Operations Directorate, as a Reserve officer. During this time, I lived in Hawaii, so often traveled to Japan to perform duty at USFJ for a few weeks or months at a time, which involved tremendous interaction with Japanese government personnel. In 2014, I was selected for the Reserve Attaché program and assigned to support International Relations and U.S. foreign policy within Northeast Asia. Japanese language proficiency has been a vital aspect of multiple assignments in Japan or related to Japan. Just as my high school immersion experience led to positive learning outcomes, so too has meaningful interactions with Japanese government personnel led to further acquisition of the Japanese language. Words that I have acquired through working with personnel from the Japanese Ministry of Defense, such as *kunren* 訓練 (i.e., exercise, training), or *jisshin* 地震 (i.e., earthquake) have also stuck in my mind, because such language served in the act of real communication and fulfilled actual needs.

Being associated with the Department of Defense, I have to meet very specific language proficiency standards. In order to be certified as a linguist a minimum score of 2/2 (Listening and Reading) must be obtained on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). The DLPT assesses listening comprehension and reading comprehension. A third component of the test assesses oral proficiency, but is not always compulsory and depends on specific job requirements. The topics on the DLPT vary widely from science, politics, economics, culture, society, in addition to defense related topics. The lower

range DLPT's score goes from 0/0 to 3/3, i.e., 0, 0+, 1, 1+, and so forth ("DLPT Guides and Information," 2016). Many people like to claim proficiency in a foreign language, e.g., "I am fluent in 26 languages." I usually view these sorts of statements with suspicion. I have been studying Japanese for about twenty years, and while I meet Department of Defense linguist standards at the 2/2 proficiency level, I still wouldn't claim to be 'fluent' in Japanese.

Fluency can be a very subjective concept. Therefore, I believe anyone who desires to be truly accomplished in a foreign language must continually test their fluency against some kind of standardized test, e.g., DLPT, or Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). While the JLPT can be said to assess passive knowledge in a multiple choice format, and does not include an oral proficiency segment, it nonetheless assesses broad spectrum knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and content that would be essential for second language (L2) speakers to function in daily life ("JLPT Four Key Characteristics," 2015), or work within a Japanese company or government agency. Taking such tests can be a very humbling experience, because only then may an accurate idea of true proficiency level or 'fluency' be obtained. I would also recommend taking these tests repeatedly, because language is a perishable skill. Sometimes a dropping score can be just the jolt needed to prompt continuous study.

Without a doubt, the most valuable language strategy I have embraced is the importance of learning a language in context, either through conversations, media, or other 'real language' methods. Memorizing random vocabulary lists in a college textbook, in my view, is basically worthless. I have tried using random vocabulary from word lists

in real conversations. My wife, who is a L1 Japanese speaker often says, “We actually never really use that word,” or “where did you get that kind of word?” By contrast, using words obtained from Japanese pop culture TV shows, or from train or commercial advertisements, are more likely to be words that are commonly used in daily conversation.

One of the best study methods I utilize is taking an electronic dictionary word pad with me while traveling on the Tokyo train system. While on long train rides, I transcribe entire advertisements onto my word pad. This helps me remember *kanji* through the practice of writing them. Afterwards, I go back and translate those advertisements. This technique definitely helps me to maintain my DLPT score. If corporations are willing to pay large sums of money (specifically yen) for advertisements, the words advertising companies select are most definitely going to be part of the living language. Business profits depend on the words chosen, and the psychological effects such words or phrases will create in the minds of consumers. Words that are used often and that are meaningful are the ones that ought to be learned, instead of dry, useless or infrequently used vocabulary words selected by academics. Therefore, authentic and culturally relevant ‘living language’ is the essential focus of my teaching and learning philosophy.

Reflecting upon all of the formal and informal learning environments I have been exposed to since 1995, the most effective employed the use of authentic materials in the target language (TL) created by first language (L1) speakers for consumption by other L1 speakers. My Japanese classes in high school mostly consisted of learning grammar constructs, or grammar for the sake of grammar. For example, the aforementioned construct *koto ga dekiru*, i.e., ‘can do something’ was taught and then students were

asked to make up five to ten random sentences using that structure. This sort of method would be most similar to the Audiolingual Method (ALM) which utilizes drills, repetition and teaching grammar in isolation, or grammar for the sake of grammar.

There is nothing wrong with teaching this sort of grammar construct per se, since it is a perfectly useful tool which could be used in daily conversation. However, it would have been more effective to find an authentic piece of literature like a novel or even a magazine which contained this grammar construct within the backdrop of an authentic or naturalistic story. Therefore, in such an instance, the teacher could have highlighted the grammar construct in the context of an actual story, and then had the students perform some type of task-based activity with partners or in small groups during which the construct would have been used to fulfill an actual communicative objective. This would have transformed the lesson from ‘grammar for the sake of grammar’ to grammar in support of actual language learning.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The emphasis of my language teaching will primarily be with college level students or working professionals, either L1 Japanese learners of English, or L1 English learners of Japanese. My views on teaching are perhaps somewhat less altruistic than some of my counterparts who may be primarily motivated by the joys of teaching. I am motivated by the joys of teaching, but also recognize the importance of profitability. I am choosing the teaching profession after two careers as a military officer and as a consultant for a leading consulting firm. I certainly want to help people and experience the exhilaration helping my clients achieve successful target language acquisition outcomes, but I am also a motivated capitalist who intends to earn a profit by employing effective teaching strategies with highly motivated clients.

My experiences teaching Japanese were part-time while I was working in Japan as an Air Force officer and Regional Affairs Strategist. Working directly with members of the Japanese Ministry of Defense on matters of strategic importance requires a keen understanding of current geopolitical events within the Asia Pacific region, e.g., the ongoing struggle between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands. This has become an issue of increasing importance and political tension in recent years. It is one of many ongoing regional and global events that are fresh in my mind with which I have real-world connection. My point is that I believe anyone teaching in a foreign country should acquire as much contextual knowledge of the society, culture, and politics as possible.

My teaching in Japan focused on working professionals. I taught one gentleman who is an economist in central Tokyo, and a lady who is a professional hair stylist and

beautician in suburban Tokyo. In both cases I used my own real-world knowledge to guide conversation classes. Even with the latter student, I drew upon my years of interest and study of organic foods as well as organic and natural skincare and body products which I use extensively. Once I knew her focus area, I used my research skills to acquire as much information as possible on her interest areas. In this respect, I believe it is important to be able to quickly and efficiently research topics in order to develop targeted lesson materials to meet the student's goals and learning objectives.

In both cases, I drew greatly from my own professional background, but also used real-world authentic materials in the classroom environment. In my view, it is not only important to use authentic materials but to also use authentic teachers, meaning professionals from actual fields that bring real-world knowledge to the teaching environment. Therefore, if and when I open up a school in Japan, I will not employ inexperienced 22 year-olds straight out of college and lacking professional experience. Instead, I would prefer recruiting working professionals who have at least five years of experience in a given field, e.g., economics, medicine, science etc. In addition to having competence in second language teaching, I believe that it is also essential that language teachers possess competence in some type of real-world subject area. In this vein, I believe it is not only essential to use high quality teaching materials but also to employ high quality teaching professionals who can not only relate to but also intelligibly converse about a variety of target subjects.

As a result of teaching an English as a second language (ESL) course to a wide diversity of English learners at Utah State University, I will remain open to the possibility

of teaching English to a wide variety of adult learners. I'd prefer to focus on either working professionals who desire to improve their English for their careers, or learners at the college level. By gaining experience in teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds, e.g., the Middle East, Latin America and the Asia Pacific region, I've learned that any one style or method of teaching may not always be effective, and that it is important to factor in students' cultural backgrounds as well as their English proficiency levels.

The second focus area of my teaching will be with L1 English learners of Japanese. Japanese is a very challenging language for L1 English speakers, as further illustrated throughout this portfolio. One of the major challenges in learning Japanese is acquiring basic literacy skills. Learning thousands of Chinese *kanji* characters which may have dual or even multiple phonetic readings, e.g., Chinese *On'Yomi* (音読み) and Japanese *Kun'Yomi* (訓読み), can make reading a newspaper a very arduous task.

Fortunately, technology can make texts more readable and accessible. For instance, Blake (2013) touts the benefits of "Web-based courses and development apps" (p. 8) in customizing L2 lesson content. I intend to fully employ the use of technological means when teaching L2 English or L2 Japanese with the goal of facilitating sociocultural understanding while increasing literacy skills by utilizing contemporary culturally relevant materials. Literacy is a vital aspect of Japanese proficiency, yet developing it poses many challenges. Therefore, I will use technology to select and modify authentic materials as necessary in order to promote literacy skills of L2 Japanese learners while making meaningful connections with the Japanese culture and society.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

My personal teaching philosophy is a combination of formal education, life experiences, teaching experiences, personal contemplation, and beliefs which have evolved over the course of my lifetime. In terms of foreign or second language teaching, my teaching philosophy has been heavily influenced by the theories that I have been exposed to in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. Fortunately, during my MSLT program, I have been able to apply many theories and concepts acquired from teaching an ESL class at Utah State University for one academic year. This class consists of students from the Asia Pacific region, Latin America, and the Middle East. I have also had opportunities to teach Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) to my peers in the MSLT program, during short ‘micro-teaching’ segments.

Additionally, during my MSLT studies, I have made tremendous advances in my teaching philosophy through observing other second language teachers in a variety of levels, from elementary school classrooms to college classrooms. Consequently, the MSLT program has dramatically built upon my own intuitive teaching ideas and innate abilities. It has provided me with concrete language teaching theories, and ample opportunities to apply such theories in the course of firsthand observations and teaching experiences.

Therefore, my teaching philosophy is an amalgam of the following elements: 1) the theories, concepts and ideas from the applied linguistics and second language teaching fields which I have embraced; 2) concepts acquired through firsthand observations; 3) trial and error from firsthand teaching experiences; and 4) a code of

honor, ethics, and commitment forged through a separate career as an Air Force officer, yet further refined during the course of the MSLT program. Subsequently, my teaching philosophy will contain the following sections: 1) a summary of best second language teaching methods, theories and practices which universally apply to the teaching of any second or foreign language; 2) best practices specifically related to the unique challenges associated with teaching and learning JFL; and 3) an ideal of ethics and commitment as a foundation in the teaching profession.

Best Teaching Methods, Theories and Practices

I believe that correct methodologies provide an essential foundation for good teaching. Nevertheless proper methods and tools (e.g., using technology to enhance literacy) must be combined with other important factors such as instructor charisma and gravitas, and the development of student motivation. Such factors are foundational for optimal learning outcomes. Regarding my teaching philosophy, one of my major goals is to compile the best teaching methodologies available in the field of second language teaching which embody certain universal truths in terms of second language teaching and acquisition. Proper methodologies ought to be the bedrock of any foreign or second language teacher. Some of these include: Content-Based Instruction (CBI); Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); Tasked-Based Activities (TBAs) performed in the target language; and the proper integration of authentic materials into classroom instruction. Other vital factors to include, ways of increasing teacher and student motivation, and methods used to enhance motivation are also essential in sustaining greatest second language acquisition results.

In the domain of correct methodologies, I believe the Mozart example is highly relevant albeit in the realm of music. There is certainly a lot of mystery surrounding the legacy of Mozart, and many theories about where his musical genius originated. There is no doubt that Mozart's raw intelligence was a huge factor in his success, but the methodologies behind his success are probably more frequently unnoticed, just as the influence of Leopold Mozart's methods on his son's (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) success may be too often overlooked.

For instance, Leopold Mozart literally wrote the book on how to play the violin, i.e., "A treatise on the fundamental principles of violin playing" (Mozart, 1756). Leopold Mozart was a known composer and violinist in his day and exposed his famous son, W.A. Mozart to great sources of comprehensible and high quality musical input from birth. Therefore, it is clear that exposure to correct methodologies provided a solid foundation for W.A. Mozart's success aside from astounding intellect. However, even with his amazing brain, had W.A. Mozart been raised by a farmer instead of a great composer, and had he been given a shovel and a plough instead of a piano and violin in childhood, it is doubtful that he would have been able to forge the same musical legacy. In 2013, I visited two Mozart Museums, one in Salzburg (Mozart's hometown) and another in Vienna (Mozart's apartment while he was working in Vienna). The Mozart birth-house museum in Salzburg contains many physical artifacts from Mozart's life. For example, one of his violins is on display and one of the actual pianos he used in childhood. The piano, by itself, is not at all impressive. It's a simple wooden box and looks very barebones, not at all fancy. In my opinion, I think Mozart's genius came from his own

natural ability and intelligence; exposure to his father's methods; and access to sufficient resources, e.g., proper musical instruments, even if meagre by modern standards. While W.A. Mozart had tremendous natural genius, he undoubtedly benefited from being the 'guinea pig' of his father's techniques and methodologies, thus conveying foundational knowledge that became, at least in part, the basis of his son's musical output.

Viewed from the perspective of linguistic theories, it could be said that Leopold's "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1981) provided a foundation which facilitated Wolfgang's subsequent "comprehensible output" (Swain, 1985). Thus in terms of language teaching, correct methodologies must be utilized in order to set language learners up for optimal chances of success, regardless of the extent of their latent potential. Otherwise, it could be said that 'only smart people can learn languages'. However, my teaching philosophy does not take such a defeatist approach. Intelligence and natural aptitude should not be discounted, yet I firmly believe that correct methodologies can assist all learners of various levels of intelligence and aptitude toward successful second language acquisition outcomes.

In beginning my search for best language teaching methodologies, I first turn to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2015). I have created Table 1 which is extrapolated from ACTFL's most up-to-date list of language learning standards. The most essential aspects of Table 1 are the headings of each column, which are collectively referred to as the 'Five Cs'. Below each 'C' or major category are sub-concepts or items which foreign language teachers should remain cognizant of, or

attempt to integrate into target language classrooms. These items are vital and serve as both a reminder and a template to shape the learning environment.

The ACTFL standards are an excellent starting point when looking at best methods. The ‘Communication’ column illustrates the three modes of communication, i.e., interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Foreign language environments which enable learners to perform all three communication modes promote optimal target language acquisition outcomes in learners’ brains from multiple angles. Other aspects of the ACTFL standards include emphasizing greater sociocultural elements of language learning along with the mere mechanical and linguistic forms. Therefore, the ACTFL standards are a tested and proper basis of language teaching methodology which I gladly embrace into my teaching philosophy.

Table 1				
<i>ACTFL Standards for Learning Languages</i>				
<u>Communication</u>	<u>Cultures</u>	<u>Connections</u>	<u>Comparisons</u>	<u>Communities</u>
Communicate effectively in more than one language (many situations and purposes). I. <i>Interpersonal Communication</i> II. <i>Interpretive Communication</i> III. <i>Presentational Communication</i>	Interact with cultural competence. I. <i>Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives</i> II. <i>Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives</i>	Connect with other disciplines; acquire diverse viewpoints; use the language to function in academic and career-related situations. I. <i>Making Connections</i> II. <i>Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives</i>	Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence. I. <i>Language Comparisons</i> II. <i>Cultural Comparisons</i>	Communicate and interact with cultural competence; participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. I. <i>School and Global Communities</i> II. <i>Lifelong Learning</i>

Note. Adapted from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, standards for learning languages, ACTFL, 2015.

Next, finding ways to increase student motivation through making learning both fun and relevant is important. Teachers must believe in their students, and students must believe in themselves, but must also experience tangible acquisition gains in order to sustain motivation. Students must also come to believe in their innate gift for learning languages, but must also be given the proper tools in order to enhance innate abilities.

One of the most essential pedagogical tools is the emphasis on CLT through utilizing task-based activities as described by Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro and Mandell (2001), which must be “learner-centered,” involve some concrete form of “meaningful exchange of information,” and which requires students to present the critical “information shared or gathered” (pp. 76-77). This basically means that learners need to actually use the language to perform meaningful tasks that they would perform in their real everyday lives. It is only then that form-meaning connections will be made and mere linguistic ‘input’ will become ‘intake’ or linguistic constructs that students actually attend to and can actually use (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 31). However, in order for task-based activities to be an effective language acquisition tool, teachers must abdicate a certain amount of absolute control over classrooms to their students. This provides students with a greater amount of autonomy and control over their own learning outcomes.

Ellis (2012) elaborated on the benefits of learner-centered teaching approach, which highlights the L2 learning gains that occur as a direct result of increased naturalistic social interaction in the classroom, in the target language. Ellis (2012) concludes that “Group work provides a context that allows learners to maximize the use of the L2 for learning” by additional opportunities to “negotiate for meaning” or

otherwise “scaffold” L2 input and output in the context of peer exchanges (p. 191).

Therefore, the research is making it clear that learner focused classrooms characterized by task-based activities in small groups provide optimal L2 comprehension and acquisition opportunities. In the context of TBAs, it is also important to reemphasize the role of Content-Based Instruction. Genesee and Lindholm-Leary (2013) define CBI by contrasting differences between L1 and L2 acquisition, pointing out that L1 acquisition happens through meaningful naturalistic social interaction in the context of being raised as a community member; whereas L2 acquisition often involves teaching language in a compartmentalized way using “topics that are trivial or have no serious consequences outside the L2 classroom” (p. 5). By comparison CBI is a more dynamic approach to L2 instruction (than more traditional methods), because CBI uses “the L2, along with the L1, as a vehicle for teaching academic subjects that comprise the core curriculum” (p. 5).

I do not subscribe to the view that the L2 ought to be acquired in the same way that the L1 is acquired, starting from ‘baby talk’ about the simplest topics and over the course of years or decades, and then finally getting to more complex subjects like politics, economics, business and science. If professionals in the medical industry or technology sector go to work in a Japanese company or government ministry, for example, they would have to quickly learn aspects of the Japanese language related to their respective fields. In my view, CBI is a means of using applicable content to someone’s field of expertise while taking advantage of existing L1 knowledge in such fields in order to enhance comprehension of equivalent language content in the L2. Thus, CBI is a tool which promotes optimal foreign language acquisition by teaching the L2 in a different

way than the L1. There is no reason to spend 20 years teaching the L2 in the exact same sequence of progression that the L1 follows. Learners already understand key concepts from their L1. CBI methodology is a way to take advantage of form-meaning connections that already exist in the L1. Therefore, CBI seems like a shortcut to acquiring an L2 from multiple angles, by exploiting existing knowledge rather than marginalizing existing knowledge.

In addition to learner-centered teaching, Ellis (2012) also addresses the importance of the teacher's role in foreign language classrooms by focusing on important aspects of 'teacher-talk' including; 1) [cognitivist approaches] of providing appropriate linguistic input tailored to the specific cognitive abilities and needs of students; and from 2) [socio-interactional] perspectives which includes how teachers talk and interact with students to match particular social contexts, situations and socio-linguistic needs. Thus, I value and embrace both learner and teacher focused approaches that Ellis identifies into my teaching philosophy. While I fully appreciate the importance of promoting a learner centered approach, particularly with the gains which can originate from peer to peer group work, I also recognize the importance of proper teacher-talk which serves as high quality input while also being socially and communicatively engaging.

Expanding on the notion of 'sociocultural theory' Shrum and Glisan (2010) describe its gaining momentum in the SLA field and opine that sociocultural theory asserts "that language-learning processes are as much social as they are cognitive" (p. 11). Moreover, Shrum and Glisan (2010) assert that SLA is headed in a new direction characterized by sociocultural theory as well as "the use of technology to facilitate SLA"

(p. 47). Additionally, Shrum and Glisan (2010) describe foreign language pedagogy which is no longer focused on grammar for the sake of grammar, but instead places an emphasis on promoting greater form-meaning connections in the context of authentic materials “such as stories, folktales, and legends” (p. 217). I am inspired by the contemporary move in the SLA field to emphasize sociocultural theory, the use of technology and the use of authentic materials in foreign language teaching. These are all solid methods that I have used in teaching ESL and JFL, and are foundational methodologies which I consider ‘must haves’ in the context of my teaching philosophy.

My first formal teaching experience was in high school when I began teaching martial arts classes to various ages from children through adult students. I began studying martial arts at a young age and received my first degree black belt during my freshman year of high school. I enjoyed the social interaction and it was nice to see the direct result of my teaching in the physical skills and mental bearing that my students acquired.

From early on, I always had a disdain for sloppy movements/form, or lacking attention to detail or a sense of perfection. I always held the opinion that the martial arts in the United States were easily ‘watered down’ by American students, lacking discipline and wanting quick results with little effort. Since I was somewhat of a perfectionist, one of the main methods I employed was rote drilling. This not only instilled the proper form and muscle memory, but also was a way of purging errors through repetition. From a language teaching pedagogical point of view the martial arts is probably most reflective of the Audiolingual Method (ALM), due to the emphasis on highly teacher-fronted pedagogy, and characterized by repetition, rote drilling, memorization, imitation, and

error-free performance of pre-scripted activities (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Despite the fact that the foreign / second language teaching field has moved beyond the ALM model, there is something to be said about the motivation and discipline aspects of this method.

While the actual mechanics of this method might be outdated, the motivational aspects regarding the time and effort on behalf of teachers and students who utilized this method might still be worthy of use in some contexts. I don't believe in an 'all or nothing' approach in teaching foreign languages, but rather I see myself as amassing tools in a tool bag. The important point is to know when to use a tool and how to use it properly. Certain aspects of ALM might still be useful in certain settings, but should not be over-utilized as the only tool in the tool bag. ALM might help to increase motivation in the very beginning phases of language learning by at least providing learners with a sense of accomplishment, with the mastery of a few short utterances or phrases. As a foreign language teacher I am certainly willing to try a variety of approaches, methods and techniques in order to increase motivation and learning outcomes. In this respect I see the foreign language teacher as sort of a physician. Just as a physician prescribes a certain drug, in a certain dosage and for a certain period of time, but then recognizes when it's time to come off the drug or move to another drug; similarly, language teachers prescribe various learning approaches, but know how to recognize when to change, modify or prescribe other approaches as required.

The bottom-line is that the mastery of most fields of study requires an intense amount of motivation. In this vein, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) assert that:

We take the view that L2 motivation is one of the most important factors that determine the rate and success of L2 attainment: it provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (p. 203).

I agree Dörnyei and Csizér that motivation is one of the single most important factors in SLA. In fact, I believe it is the most important factor. If learners are motivated enough, they won't stop until they have acquired the target language. There is no doubt that methodology is very important as well, but even if less optimal methodologies are employed, if students are motivated enough, target language acquisition will eventually occur, even if longer acquisition timeframes are required.

Learning foreign languages has probably been the hardest yet rewarding activity of my lifetime. Motivation has been the main factor that has kept me going. Despite all of the sweat, tears, and various challenges with learning Japanese over time, I've developed an appreciation for the innate human potential for learning languages. Therefore, Chomsky's (1972) theories on Universal Grammar (UG) and the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) came across to me as an inspirational epiphany, just as a thunderbolt lights up the night sky. While the field of SLA has moved forward leaps and bounds since Chomsky's time, I strongly believe in the timeless truths embodied in Chomsky's concept that humans alone have the special gift for language. I absolutely agree with Chomsky's assertion that the human brain is inherently wired or genetically predisposed for language. All languages on the planet have the same basic elements: they all basically have noun-like and verb-like words; negatives/negation; interrogatives; and masculine

and feminine distinctions or components. The rudimentary components of all languages are essentially the same, even though there are wide variations in details such as orthography, grammar, syntax, morphology, etc.

The point is that most people have encountered at least one naysayer, the person who claims “I can’t learn languages,” or “I’m terrible at languages”. These statements are absurd when stopping to ponder the fact that those very doubting words roll off their tongues and bounce off their lips as effortlessly as walking down the street or chewing breakfast. Speech in the first language (L1) after language is fully formed in childhood is so well ingrained, that it manifests as effortlessly as breathing or blinking.

Philosophically, this means to me that if an L1 is learned, the neuropathways for language in the brain do work. This proves there is no impairment or handicap which prevents the brain from producing language. Therefore, in my view, barriers to L2 acquisition are largely self-imposed. If learners constantly tell themselves they are horrible at language(s), they will be mediocre. This gets to the heart of one of my core philosophical beliefs, i.e., “I am great at languages, and so are you.” Therefore, instilling belief and self-confidence are vital aspects of my teaching philosophy.

The theories of language teaching have areas of overlap with other fields. For example, just as in martial arts learning or music learning, Krashen (1981, 2009) argues that language learning requires ‘comprehensible input’. Relatedly, VanPatten (2002) argues the case for the need for ‘structured input’ to be provided for language learners. In either case, the role of ‘input’ plays a central role in the study of SLA, and teachers are the masters of the input, deciding the type of input, the structure of input, and the amount

of input that students will be exposed to in the classroom setting. Students require guidance by a skilled and competent teacher who can guide them around pitfalls and errors and assist them toward proficiency in a given field. Swain (1985) put it another way, by emphasizing the need for students to not only receive appropriate input but also to produce “comprehensible output” (p. 252). I argue that in order for this to occur, students must have a competent teacher, armed with an effective demeanor, tools, and methods to facilitate the maximum learning potential of students.

Dr. M. Spicer-Escalante of Utah State University articulates three vital elements of good teaching: 1) proficiency; 2) methodology; and 3) knowledge of subject (Lecture, September 22, 2015). I agree with all of these elements and include them as vital components of my teaching philosophy. All three of these elements relate to something that Albert Einstein said: “If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough” (BrainyQuote, 2015). To me, this means that teachers must not only be an expert in the subject they teach, but must also employ correct teaching methods. In fact, the best researchers or subject matter experts may fail as teachers if they lack the proper teaching methods.

Like Albert Einstein, I also play the violin. Certainly music helps to cultivate mental faculties. I started the violin relatively late in life. I was about 21 years-old when I started, at the beginning of my senior year in college. Since that time, I have moved around a lot and gone through many teachers, probably at least ten. Even though I love classical music and the violin with a passion, I must say that each teacher’s skill level, methods, level of motivation, personality and charisma all dramatically influence my rate

of progress, as well as my motivation to practice. There is certainly an 'X factor' with the teacher's overall persona. My best teachers have not only been competent but also highly sociable and charismatic.

One of best teachers I've had so far was during an eight month assignment in Stuttgart, Germany. This particular teacher is a fulltime member of the Stuttgart Philharmonic. She had me playing intermediate to advanced concertos which exceeded my ability, and had me going beyond fifth position and playing various scales all the way up the neck of the violin. I couldn't believe how quickly my skill improved with this particular teacher. What is even more surprising is that she made the material seem so easy and effortless. In terms of Einstein's abovementioned quote, I believe she was able to explain the techniques simply because of her exceedingly high skill level. Whereas, other teachers made much easier material seem much more difficult. When I came across Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) "Ten commandments for motivating language learners," I began to recognize that certain elements of good teaching hold true across multiple disciplines, whether music, linguistics or many other fields. Essential components of these 'commandments' include: creating "a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom," providing clear instructions, selecting interesting tasks, and choosing tasks with personal relevance to students (pp. 221-222). In any event, I believe that the role of motivational teachers is paramount in language teaching, and often makes the critical difference as to whether learners continue their language learning endeavors or just quit.

Relatedly, I believe factors such as motivation and self-discipline can overcome deficiencies in other areas, like resources. Certainly, a minimal amount of proper

resources are necessary, but there can certainly be a point of diminishing returns. In American classrooms, funding and resources are often a grumbling point for many. New books, new computers, an iPad for every student, and new gymnasiums are all nice, but in my view they can't replace proper methods, nor can they make up for a lack of student motivation. Despite the money that is allocated for the purpose of having more 'stuff' in the American educational system, the United States often lags far behind other advanced countries. For example, the U.S. consistently places poorly in the world in terms of math (30th), science (23rd), and reading (20th) (Chappell, 2013). The United States is often surpassed by countries with far fewer economic resources apportioned towards education. Subsequently, in my teaching philosophy, I have adopted the belief that intelligence, while extremely important, as an isolated factor divorced from sufficient tools and methodologies is not enough to promote optimal language learning outcomes. Correct tools and methods must also be incorporated into foreign language pedagogy, and they must be combined with a sufficient amount of teacher and student motivation.

Best Practices Related to Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language

Proficiency in the Japanese writing system for second language (L2) learners involves a long-term commitment to tackling thousands of characters, each of which can have multiple readings depending on the context. Therefore, mastery of the Japanese language requires not only intense and sustained motivation over a long period of time, but also to a certain extent, repetition and rote drilling to instill essential elements of the written system. To a large extent, even when using authentic materials, or task-based scenarios, elements of rote drilling and repetition are unavoidable. Relatedly, Harbon and

Rose (2013) point out that for L1 English speakers learning L2 Japanese, it take three times as long as learning German or a Romance language to have comparable language acquisition gains. Harbon and Rose (2013) also address motivation challenges that such learners of Japanese face and described various self-regulation, i.e., motivational strategies that such learners may employ to sustain Japanese language learning over the long haul. Relatedly, Krashen (1985) describes the “affective filter” (p. 3) and various psychological hindrances such as self-doubt and apathy which “prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition” (p. 3). Therefore, I believe a vital role of the target language teacher is employing a range of strategies to increase student motivation.

One thing I observed during my high school exchange program experience in Japan in 1996 was the motivated and disciplined demeanor of my Japanese high school counterparts related to learning in general. I was placed in a college preparatory high school in Matsue, Japan. Despite the school’s high reputation, the actual facilities in the school were pretty Spartan. The buildings, facilities, and resources were far worse than my high school in Roosevelt, (rural) Utah. In my Utah high school, there were many computers, fancy whiteboards, an impressive gym, and many other amenities that my school in Japan did not have. The school in Japan looked rundown, with old chalkboards and few computers. Despite this, student discipline was very high. Uniforms were mandatory. Students went to school half-day every other Saturday, and students were required to clean the school for thirty minutes each day after school ended. While funds were not directed to facilities, they were directed to teacher pay. For example, the high

school English teacher in Matsue had published a dictionary and there was greater emphasis on teacher education and skills. Also, the math level of the students was far more advanced than in my Utah high school, despite fewer apparent resources. This brings me back to proper methodology as one of the central tenets of my teaching philosophy. Resources are certainly important, but in my view the proper mindset, sufficient levels of motivation and a pedagogy which combines sufficient resources with appropriate teaching methods is even more important.

In my own study of the Japanese language, I have found that the use of authentic materials is a critical component of effective target language acquisition methodology. When I minored in Japanese in college, I remember slugging through the first two years in the program with boring standard textbooks, rather than using authentic materials, such as news, advertisements, songs, comic books, etc. In my view, my minor in Japanese did not prepare me well for standardized proficiency tests, such as the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT), or the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT).

In the context of authentic materials used in JFL learning, Kondo-Brown (2006) examines learning outcomes from the use of authentic materials compared to standard textbooks. Kondo-Brown (2006) finds that L1 English speaking learners of Japanese were more effectively able to learn *kanji* (content vocabulary) words when “appearing in an authentic narrative text significantly better than when the same words are tested in isolation” (p. 130). This study demonstrates that a pedagogy which incorporates the use of authentic materials is a valid means of the teaching and learning Japanese. I also believe it is important to carefully select lesson materials to appropriately match student

proficiency levels. For instance, Krashen (1985) articulates “*i + 1*” (p. 2) which means input which is just above the learner’s “current level of competence” (p. 2). I like this model because it reminds me to carefully select target language materials for my students which are sufficiently challenging, yet without overwhelming them by providing unreasonably difficult target language input or tasks.

Since I received my minor in Japanese in 2002, I have mostly abandoned the use of textbooks for the use of authentic materials, primarily in the form of current events and news. I have noticed this is the best way of maintaining my proficiency on the DLPT. Conversely, I have also used authentic materials when teaching English to L1 speakers of other languages. I usually prefer to have the student read an article, followed by free conversation and communicative tasks based on the article’s content. Subsequently, I believe the use of authentic materials is an essential component of target language teaching.

Ethics and Commitment in the Teaching Profession

A teacher may be technically skilled, but that will never surpass the importance of personal ethics and commitment. I have been very impressed with the MSLT faculty members in terms of professional development, character building, and preparing students to join the ranks of foreign language teaching professionals. For example, I have been very impressed by the emphasis that Dr. Spicer-Escalante places on personal integrity and accountability. Such guiding principles of integrity, commitment and dedication to one’s students are vital concepts of my language teaching philosophy. This reminds me of a quote from the University of Utah’s first president: "always remember in

your teaching that the grand purpose of your labors is to make citizens - active, thinking, intelligent, industrious and moral men and women" (Park, 1885). In this regard, the moral integrity and overall character of teachers are important, as it is their responsibility to be good role models for their students.

In this vein, I cannot divorce my teaching philosophy and style from the traits I have cultivated over many years as an Air Force officer, yet have been further honed in the MSLT program. In this respect, the leadership style that I've developed over the years also critically applies to my teaching philosophy. In my 2014 Leadership and Command segment of my Air Command and Staff College program I mention four critical virtues of my leadership style as: 1) integrity; 2) competence; 3) strength; and 4) compassion (Griswold, 2014). I described the selection of these principles as follows:

These concepts are not a simple checklist or combination of fancy words. They are time tested theories were pondered by ancient military strategists, and they are just as applicable today, as I have seen successful commanders employ them. In this way, the theories I have studied have been reinforced by seeing them in action (Griswold, 2014, p. 2).

Therefore, I don't believe in a philosophy of leadership or a philosophy of teaching should simple be pulled out of the air. Probably the most important thing is to implement a process of critical thinking and continuous improvement, and relentless dedication to one's students and teaching profession as a whole. In the spirit of relentless dedication, I continue to draw inspiration from the founder of one of the most prolific talent education methods of the 20th Century, created by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. Suzuki

(1983) advocates for the relentless dedication of teachers by nurturing the abilities of students while simultaneously cultivating their hearts and minds. The development of the total person rather than simply focusing on technical ability in isolation is one aspect of the ‘Suzuki Method’ which continues to inspire me.

Moreover, it is important to always look to history and philosophy for inspirational people and examples. Likewise, it is just as important to look for contemporary examples, from experts in the field to teachers, mentors and colleagues. It is valuable to use the experience of others to find out what works and what doesn’t instead of simply learn from the school of hard knocks. This reminds me of a quote from Otto von Bismarck: “Fools learn from experience. I prefer to learn from the experience of others” (Goodreads, 2015). In my own experience, I’ve learned so much from good leaders and good teachers. Even so, I’ve probably learned even more from bad leaders and bad teachers, because they really reinforce, in my mind, what not to do.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

During the course of my MSLT program I have had the opportunity to formally observe six foreign language classes. I observed each class for approximately one hour, so it is important to note that my observations do not necessarily reflect a comprehensive representation of the curricula or teaching approaches observed. Two of these classes were Dual Language Immersion (DLI) classes at elementary schools in Logan, Utah. The remaining four classes were college level foreign language classes at Utah State University. The target languages I observed were: Portuguese, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, French, and German. I consider myself very fortunate to have access to such a diverse set of foreign languages. One of the requirements for MSLT program observations is to observe at least a few classes where the target language is unknown to the observer. In my case I've had formal instruction in both Japanese and German, but I've had no concrete training or exposure to the remaining four languages. In retrospect, I am glad that I was able to observe such a wide array of foreign language classes. I am grateful that I was able to witness so many examples of fine teaching. Even regarding the classes offering instruction in languages that I don't know, I was able to glean so many valuable details regarding: classroom design, the incorporation of authentic cultural artifacts, teacher demeanor, and outward level of student motivation.

Regarding student motivation, there was no greater example than the Chinese DLI class that I observed. The classroom environment was well designed with numerous culturally relevant decorations adorning every wall and corner of the room, which seemed to place the students in a culturally authentic immersion environment, short of

actually being in China. The teacher was fully in command of the classroom and effortlessly led students from one activity to the next. At the same time the teacher's demeanor was calm and pleasant. Student motivation appeared to be extremely high despite a lack of ethnic connection to the Chinese language or culture. A cursory look of the demographic makeup of the classroom revealed a vast majority of Caucasian students. There were probably only two to three students who were Asian in the classroom. Nevertheless, student motivation for learning Chinese appeared extremely high. Every time the teacher asked a question in target (the entire class was conducted in Chinese) at least 25 out of 30 students immediately raised their hands so high to the point of jumping out of their seats. The level of excitement in the classroom was clearly evident, even though the subject being taught was math, which is normally not a favorite topic among students. In fact, I have never seen a math class, including the ones I attended as a student, which exhibited even a fraction of the level of student motivation as this Chinese DLI class. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was not the math by itself that caused the enormously high level of student motivation. Instead the motivation appeared to originate from excitement to learn Chinese.

The main takeaways from this class are that it is essential that foreign language teachers design a classroom environment in order to maximize student motivation. By making learning fun and stimulating, the students' curiosity and desire to learn the target language and culture increases, and students can successfully tackle even the toughest target languages and tasks, e.g., math in Chinese.

The second elementary DLI class I observed had Portuguese as the target language. The classroom environment was similar to the Chinese DLI classroom in that there were many culturally relevant decorations adorning the classroom. The entire class was taught in Portuguese and the topic was language arts. The Portuguese teacher exhibited similar characteristics to the Chinese DLI teacher in that both had a very pleasant demeanor which seems most fitting for elementary school students. The level of motivation seemed reasonably high but not quite as high as observed in the Chinese DLI class. The Portuguese class appeared to provide high quality intelligible input in the target language and provided ample opportunities for meaningful interactions in the target language, as students engaged in several dialogues with the instructor and task-based activities in small groups.

Transitioning to the college level foreign language classrooms, firstly I was very impressed by the Russian class I observed. The teacher had a very competent and well poised demeanor, and not only provided high quality verbal input to students but also employed culturally relevant authentic materials. For example, the teacher used an authentic target language video which showed a reporter interviewing various people in a Russian city. The teacher directed the students' attention to various topics in the film and alternated between collective classroom discussion about the film and work in pairs or small groups. Grammar instruction might have played a small role in the classroom, but only in support of discussion about the class material. The vast majority of the utterances or discourse in the class was naturalistic and unscripted wherein the teacher engaged in open-ended discussions with students and students engaged in naturalistic discussions. I

thought this class was an excellent example of building content around a specific theme. In this case, a particular video not only provided students with comprehensible input, but also provided a theme which provided the basic ideas for the free flowing dialogue that followed. Lastly, I was impressed by the teacher's ability to keep students in the target language for the entire class.

I consider the use of the target language in the classroom as much as possible to be very important. There will be times when the use of student's first language (L1) is okay. For example, if there is an essential concept that students must understand but their L2 is completely inadequate, it might be okay for the instructor to briefly use the L1 of students for essential instruction or clarification. However, the L1 should not be allowed to turn into a crutch, nor should it be used rampantly in the foreign language classroom, especially in the high intermediate or advanced level classrooms.

I found one example of excessive use of the L1 in a 3000 level Japanese literature course, during which multiple students would utter a few words in the target language and then transition to lengthy utterances in English, as occurred during the first half of class. In the second half of class it got to the point where the students skipped the target language altogether and simply made long utterances consisting of streams of multiple sentences in a row in English. In my view, when this happens it is essential that the teacher do everything possible to steer students back into the target language. This doesn't have to be a punitive process, but could simply be done through recasts, solicitations for information, or requests for clarification in the target language. Over time this sends an indirect message to students that the teacher will only communicate in the

target language and reinforces target language use in the classroom. If the teacher too readily uses English whenever students use English, this only reinforces English as a crutch, instead of English as a tool (only to be used when required).

Another element that I found lacking in the Japanese course was a complete absence of any discussion or task-based activities in pairs or small groups. This resulted in a very teacher fronted classroom during which all utterances only came in response to teacher initiation, which resulted in the same students making utterances while other students tended to remain silent. There was definitely a lack of the three modes of communication. Most of the class involved the interpretive mode of communication, as students had to interpret the teacher's question or comments. However, there was little interpersonal communication other than responding to questions from the teacher, but there was no apparent presentational mode of communication. More optimal learning outcomes might have resulted from putting the students into small groups, assigning each group a section of the literature, and then requiring each group to present their portion to the rest of the class in the target language.

The material used in this classroom was an old piece of literature, probably at least a hundred years old. While this might be considered a classic, the actual language in the text seemed to be very outdated. Therefore, it was probably more useful in exposing students to a particular genre of Japanese literature, but it was probably not very useful at teaching the students relevant language or culture in a modern Japanese context. Despite the age of the text one student responded very positively because it was one of the only authentic language materials she had been exposed to in her studies to date. I would

probably save esoteric literature topics for more advanced students, but for 3000 level students I would probably focus on contemporary literature and current events in order to build contemporarily relevant target language capacity. Using more contemporary materials would also more likely allow students to transfer their L1 background knowledge to subjects in L2 texts. In my classroom I would also employ information technology tools to make the texts more readable and accessible. Subsequently, I'd probably move this sort of class to a computer lab where students would have more ready access to information technology tools for enhanced digital collaboration of the article during class. While there are things about this class I would have done differently, I was impressed by the teacher's pleasant demeanor and outward level of commitment to student learning and achievement.

Regarding the college level French class I observed, I was extremely impressed by the instructor's exclusive use of the target language throughout class, to include responding in the target language even when students asked questions or made statements in English. The instructor's demeanor was very positive and appeared to be highly motivated. The instructor employed a learner centered approach and put students to work in pairs or small groups multiple times during the class, and employed a variety of task-based activities which encouraged students to collaborate naturalistically in the target language. Subsequently, the class appeared to incorporate the three modes of communication. It also provided students with ample comprehensible input and opportunities for negotiation of meaning.

My final observation was a college level German class. I was impressed by the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom. Even on the few occasions when students reverted to English the instructor was able to steer them back into German by means of recasts or solicitations in the target language. The class period seemed to be about evenly distributed between teacher presentation and dialogue with students as a collective group, and small group work or work in pairs. Students performed a variety of task-based activities, e.g., ordering food from a menu, and analyzing an authentic language biography of a famous Germanic historical figure (Ludwig II. van Bayern). The teacher did some small lessons on grammar but they appeared to be performed in support of the task-based activities, and not teaching grammar for the sake of grammar. The level of motivation of the students appeared to be very high, and there seemed to be many connections made to the German culture in class by means of the thematic course content. Overall, I was quite impressed with this class in terms of class design, use of the target language, and a high level of motivation from both teacher and students.

In summary, I am grateful for so many wonderful opportunities to observe foreign language teaching firsthand. I am also impressed to see the actual application of so many theories and concepts that I've been exposed to during the course of the MSLT program. It is one thing to learn various language teaching theories, yet it is quite another to see them applied in reality. Teaching is a process characterized by continuous improvement. Subsequently, I am glad that I've been able to learn from the experience of observing so many professional teachers in action.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STATEMENT

Introduction and Context

This Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement (SATS) examines three lessons which I taught at Utah State University during the Fall Semester of 2015. The SATS approach to observation is a model developed by Spicer-Escalante (2015) that merges both peer and self-evaluations. The first two lessons were 50-minute ESL classes (See Appendix A). The final lesson was a JFL class taught to my Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) peers in Linguistics 6400, in the form of a 20-minute JFL micro-teaching session (See Appendix B).

Every year the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) at Utah State University selects one MSLT student to teach an introductory IELI 1000 course titled “Conversational English” for two semesters. This provides the MSLT student an opportunity to work as a graduate instructor, thus applying the theories and concepts from the MSLT program to an actual classroom environment. For the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters, I was selected to teach IELI 1000. I was closely mentored by a faculty member from the IELI staff who was my professor for two credits of independent study (Linguistics 6940) which applied to my MSLT program of study, and provided structure to my teaching methods and course development. The demographic composition of my class was quite diverse. The class was comprised of nine students from multiple regions including: the Middle East, Latin America, Northeast Asia, and Southeast Asia. Teaching English to such a diverse linguistic and cultural group was a rewarding experience. This allowed me to gain experience in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) instruction,

incorporating Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-Based Activities (TBAs) with students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and first languages (L1s).

In close coordination with my IELI mentoring professor, I used a 'needs assessment' in order to identify the language learning desires of my students at the beginning of the semester. The needs assessment helped me to select and develop the topics for the course syllabus. Due the fact that this is a conversation course, I had a lot of leeway in designing the curriculum. Subsequently, I took advantage of this opportunity by selecting a wide range of themes and matching authentic materials with an emphasis on using materials which are current and appropriate. It was not sufficient simply to present my students with thematic authentic materials. I also made concrete 'can do' objectives for each lesson plan, thus requiring that students actually use the language in dynamic real-world scenarios, in order to increase comprehension, retention, and proficiency.

The course design employed a theme for every week of the semester, which allowed for learning objectives and knowledge throughout the week to compound and culminate during the final lesson of the week. Thus, the lessons from three class periods per week tended to build upon each other sequentially with a scaffolding approach. To a certain extent, the level of scaffolding varied based on the topic or themes of each week. Generally, more complex topics required greater scaffolding. The weekly themes for the entire semester were the following: 1, hobbies, interests and current events; 2, culture shock, cross-cultural communication; 3, world cultures; 4, food and cuisine; 5, science, space and technology; 6, popular culture; 7, health and beauty; 8, globalization; 9, art and

music; 10, recreation and entertainment; 11, sports; 12, family, friendships and being social; 13, history; 14, medicine and emergencies; and 15, global agriculture. The course content was designed to meet the diverse interests and language abilities of the class, since student abilities spanned the range from beginners to advanced learners.

This SATS examines two formal observations of my ESL class by a professor from the Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies on September 28th and October 30th, 2015. The class observed on September 28th was titled 'The Climate Change Debate,' and the second class she observed on October 30th was the final class in the 'Art and Culture' week which culminated in a lesson titled 'Blending Art with Music in Dynamic Ways' (See Appendix A). My independent study professor also made two informal observations of my class on September 30th (lesson titled 'Earthquakes and Natural Disasters'), and October 19th (lesson titled 'The Pros and Cons of Globalization'). While the informal observations are not the main emphasis of this SATS report, it is noteworthy to mention that one benefit of being a graduate instructor at Utah State University is that there are so many opportunities to observe and be observed, which inspires a process of continual self-improvement.

Improving one's teaching is an ongoing process involving self-observation and self-reflection, as well as being observed by others, receiving their feedback, and making subsequent improvements to one's teaching style and methods. Therefore, I am glad that this SATS contains the self-reflection and observation feedback from three lessons. My final round of self-critique and peer critique in this SATS comes from my JFL micro-teaching session conducted on December 1st, 2015. Since the JFL micro-teaching lesson

contained various differences from the other classes (i.e., class length, target language, and prior level of student exposure to the target language), it provides contrast to the ESL classes factored into this report. Subsequently, the inclusion of the third class observation is a very useful means of examining a wider range of my teaching abilities.

Guide and Protocol

The same steps were adhered to for the first two ESL classroom observations. Coordination with observers was made weeks in advance in order to schedule the precise class that they would observe. I used the basic guide and protocol template developed by Spicer-Escalante (2015). Lesson plans were provided to the observers at least 24 hours in advance of each class. I digitally recorded both lessons since I routinely record all of my lectures. Within a few days of the observations I provided my observer with a copy of my own self-reflection or self-assessment concerning how I thought the classes went, and subsequently received written feedback from my observer.

The protocol for the JFL micro-teaching segment followed a slightly different format. By contrast with the 50 minute lectures for the two earlier ESL observations, the JFL lesson was only 20 minutes. The target audience was composed of my MSLT peers in Linguistics 6400. None of these students have any background with Japanese. With this micro-teaching segment lesson plans were not provided to my classmates in advance of the class. Instead, I provided them with the materials they needed in the actual class which consisted of a double-sided form with key terms and phrases for each activity, in addition to mock business cards with essential information written in both English and Japanese (used during Activities 2 and 3). I digitally recorded the lesson, and it was also

digitally recorded with USU's in-class technology and posted on Canvas. Subsequently, I was able to watch both recordings for my self-evaluation.

Objectives of ESL Class 1: Climate Change Debate (28 Sep 2015)

Objectives for all of my classes take the form of 'can do' statements, since the focus of my classes are student-centered learning in the context of real-world applications of the language in ways that are not only applicable but also useful in daily life.

The objectives for the climate change debate class on September 28th were the following: 1) Students can discuss the issue of 'Climate Change' at the strategic level, meaning they can demonstrate intelligible knowledge of the issue, including the basic science and political aspects; 2) Students can demonstrate understanding of major positions on Climate Change, i.e., economic growth vs. climate change mitigation; and 3) Students can debate pros versus cons on specific climate change plans at local levels.

Self-Evaluation of ESL Class 1

I have reviewed the digital recording of the ESL class I taught on September 28th, 2015. First, I thought my topic was good, as well as the two short videos I showed. I assess my teaching methods and delivery style was good judging from a closer examination of my slides, lesson plan, and observing the digital video recording of my class. My enunciation and voice projection were a decent form of comprehensible input. The style of my delivery was good, in terms of a flowing, confident, and articulate presentation.

The main weakness of that class was that I crammed too much in terms of lesson material or content and objectives into a single 50-minute class. This resulted in more of

a teacher centered class than I would have preferred. Realizing that time was burning at a much faster rate than previously anticipated, I found myself cutting the peer-to-peer and small group work short, or ending up eliminating segments of the small group discussions altogether. For example, in the last half or even final one third of the class, my goal was to have the students prepare their own local climate change policies in small groups and then present those to the class (in an effort to include all three modes of communication (i.e., interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational). Subsequently, due to a lack of time, I presented a sample policy, and asked students to simply agree or disagree with the policy by standing on one side of the room or the other. Afterwards, there was a brief question and response period when I just asked why they agreed or disagreed with the notional policy.

Another weakness of the class came in the first ten minutes when I explained different presentation styles in different countries, e.g., what it means to give an opinion and offer support for an opinion in North America compared to other regions. It was clear that some students misunderstood and thought I was simply describing differences in introducing oneself in North America versus other countries. Although after the initial small group discussion, I think some students were able to grasp the intention of stating an opinion. This is also a challenge in having multiple skill levels in one classroom. Having students of various skill levels attending on different days, it can be a challenge to know how to adjust the level of difficulty of lesson materials for any particular day.

Objectives of ESL Class 2: Blending Art and Music in Dynamic Ways (30 Oct 2015)

The objectives from the culminating lesson in Art and Music week were the following: 1) Students can describe various art and music genres and their preferences for specific genres; 2) Students can evaluate various art and music genres by describing positive and negative aspects; and 3) Students can design unique blends of specific types of art and music for a variety of venues: e.g., café, fancy restaurant, shopping mall, super market, private law firm, public park, museum exhibit, government building, wedding, university art gallery.

Self-Evaluation of ESL Class 2

This self-reflection captures my thoughts about the ESL class I taught on October 30th, 2015. After watching the lesson again and with further reflection, I am very pleased with how the lesson transpired. One of the challenges with a scaffolding lesson across multiple days is inconsistent attendance. The theme for this week (i.e., Art and Music) contained three lessons (Mon-Wed-Fri) that were intended to build upon each other sequentially in preparation for the final lesson on Friday, October 30th.

The lesson on Monday dealt with Art, particularly focusing on an article which discusses how each US President changes the genres of art within the White House (Shear, 2015). During that lesson various genres of art were explained to the students and the final task-based activity for Monday was for students to design three separate rooms of the White House, where each room had to include two distinct genres of art.

The class on Wednesday focused on genres of music and included a matching exercise during which students had to match the genre title with its corresponding

definition. This class culminated with task-based activities which required the students to build sound tracks for various venues, e.g., road trip, café, etc.

The class that was observed on Friday was a culmination of the scaffolding throughout the week with a final lesson called, ‘Blending Art and Music in Dynamic Ways’. This lesson contained a warmup activity and four additional activities. The warmup included reading a very short two paragraph article on how a janitor at an Italian art museum mistook an avant-garde exhibit which displayed empty wine bottles and confetti as garbage and disposed of the exhibit (“Art binned by cleaner in Italy ‘restored,’” 2015). I subsequently asked the students to discuss and reflect on what occurred and think about the subjective value of art, e.g., art or garbage?

The first activity was a matching exercise during which both students each received five art genre descriptions. I took turns reading descriptions with my assistant and the students had to match definitions also written on small pieces of paper with their descriptions. I was pleasantly surprised that the students were able to figure out eight to nine out of ten. Despite the difficulty of some such as expressionism, or abstract art, I was pleasantly surprised by their ability to match the descriptions with definitions. In cases like Renaissance art or Medieval art, this exhibited their knowledge transfer from their L1s to application in an L2 task, assuming they learned such topics in their L1s.

The next activity involved selecting the appropriate type of art for the following venues: 1) café, 2) fancy restaurant, 3) super market, 4) shopping mall, 5) private law firm, 6) public park, 7) museum exhibit, 8) government building, 9) wedding, and 10)

university art gallery. During this activity the students appeared to comprehend the task and negotiate meaning in order to successfully complete the task.

The next activity involved termed a 'brain-soaking' exercise was designed to get students back into the musical mode. Using descriptions of music genres that were introduced in the previous class, students were asked to listen to four different music genres and give a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down'. This was followed by a brief solicitation, asking students their rationale for each rating.

The last activity of the day was a task-based activity which required students to add a music genre to each of the venues for which they had already selected an art genre. They basically were asked to match a music genre with an art genre for each venue. This appeared to go well and there seemed to be an actual comprehension for matching genres appropriately, e.g., Renaissance art with classical Baroque music at a fancy restaurant. This activity required the two students to discuss and negotiate in order to select and match art and music genres with specific venues.

One of the main limitations with this class is that there is a variation of student attendance from one class to the next. Had the same students shown up for class all three days of the week, I believe there would have been a greater culmination of baseline knowledge for key terms and concepts for the final TBA on Friday's class. Despite this challenge, I feel that the class went well, particularly in light of the students' ability to perform the 'can do' objectives of the class. Another limitation is always time. I think a longer class would have allowed greater negotiation and discussion and perhaps more creative and dynamic outcomes. Nevertheless, desired outcomes were achieved in this

class. A potential solution may be to add an additional week for this topic, thus continuing to build upon knowledge and performance gains.

In summary, I feel that this lesson went very well, and although there is certainly room for improvement, this is the type of scaffolding model and lesson plan template which I plan to use, play around with, and improve over time.

Observations from ESL Class 1 and 2

Table 2 contains some of the feedback from observations of two separate ESL classes. The purpose of the table is not to include every comment the observer made, but includes all of the major suggestions for how my teaching may be improved. This sort of objective feedback is an essential part of honing one's teaching abilities.

Inclusions, Reflections and Takeaways

The most impactful takeaway I have from the two observations is the need to limit the scope of content and activities to fit within a 50-minute class period. When approaching far-reaching, complex or thorny topics such as climate change, it is almost certainly necessary to scaffold or build up the content knowledge, key terms, and key concepts across multiple classes. Subsequently, I have implemented a scaffolding model for complex subjects. In fact, even the lesson that I did on October 30th was a culmination lesson from scaffolding and building of content in the previous two classes of that week.

For example, the Monday class on that week was devoted to art in which students were exposed to a wide range of art terminology and performed a task-based activity to design three rooms with two matching genres of art per room.

Table 2	
<i>Observer Feedback and Recommendations for ESL Classes.</i>	
Observer I. ESL Class 1 (September 28th, 2015)	Observer I. ESL Class 2 (October 30th, 2015)
<p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Perhaps T could work on scaffolding topic knowledge & vocab development with more steps, fewer words, and more images to explain difficult concepts. This was a dense topic requiring much vocab knowledge. Need to build background knowledge slowly – they may not have it in the L1. If PPT had contained more images, it might have been easier for Students to process input & build background knowledge. <p><u>Interesting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The person who seemed most engaged is the student who comes from Indo-Eur L1 background and chatty culture. I'm not saying she understood what was going on, just that she seemed most engaged. 	<p><u>What I liked:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The topic is relevant to real life; most everyone has a connection to at least several types of music; most everyone has seen samples of various art genres. ✓ Conversing about art and music in class will help Students handle conversations in the real-world. ✓ T has carefully planned all activities and what is needed for them. <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I would design future activities in such a way that students cannot use just a word or a phrase to accomplish the activity; I would focus on designing activities that require interaction at the sentence level. ✓ I would have stuck longer with the prompt “What is art, what is garbage?” This is the ONE activity where output beyond the word or phrase level was naturally required, but it ended up fizzling out.

Wednesday's class was devoted to learning music terminology and various genres, and students performed another TBA to design music soundtracks for various venues. The class on Friday combined both art and music concepts introduced prior in the week to a culminating task-based activity in which students blended art and music in dynamic ways by selecting art and matching music genres for the adornment of multiple venues.

At the beginning of the class I asked the students to more carefully reflect when they are in a public place like a government building, a café or even an airport and pay closer attention to how such locations may be decorated, e.g., with a modern or abstract art sculpture, as well as what kind of music may be playing in the background. The abstract art sculpture that adorns Abravanel Hall was one of a few ad lib examples. Even though my lesson plans are carefully prepared in advance, I feel it is important to have a certain level of unscripted or naturalistic language (as most people don't bring presentations and talking points to routine daily conversations). For instance, daily conversations can suddenly make dramatic changes as spin off questions are asked and interlocutors must be adept at thinking on their feet. To a certain extent, I try to simulate real conversation in class. Therefore, I try to have pictures displayed for most of my examples, but I occasionally go off script. Sometimes when I go off script I'll take the time to pull up a definition or photo from the internet. Other times I leave it to students to take the initiative to look up words or terms from their notes after class.

I have a different philosophical position than my observer who stated: "T says twice that there are no right or wrong answers – then why bother interacting to determine what decisions to make?" I intentionally made this comment in order to encourage more output. In my opinion, this is an example of 'teacher-talk,' but perhaps more similar to how an adult would speak to a child. When a child is given a piece of paper and a coloring brush a parent may gently encourage by emphasizing that there is no right or wrong. If a parent is too critical a child may develop a complex which may in fact lead to a lack of confidence or a lack of production for fear of being 'wrong'. This is exactly

what must be avoided. As a second language teacher, I'd rather have my students produce any output or even poor output rather than no output at all. I made this comment in order to encourage students to use their free flowing uninhibited artistic mind to start producing and uttering their ideas.

Another observation indicated a deficiency in students' verbal output quantity, i.e., short one or two word utterances. This has made me reflect more carefully about how I can increase the length of utterances and stimulate more robust dialogue. I assess that silence could be partially rooted in culture or personality rather than actual ability. Many of the students in this class are women from the Middle East. After interacting with them over the course of the semester, I've been able to assess small segments of their actual linguistic ability which is quite impressive. Despite the ostensible ability, one Middle Eastern student, for example, who was present for the lesson on October 30th, is quite passive and frequently hesitates to offer opinions. This appears to be a personality trait or cultural trait. This is one challenge a language teacher may have, i.e., finding ways to encourage students to break out of their shells, or break their silence. Relatedly, this reminds me of an article by Morita (2004) who examines reasons behind the silence of Japanese women (L2 English learners) attending university in Canada. Morita asks: "What are the thoughts, perspectives, and feelings of L2 students who remain relatively silent in the classroom?" (p. 578). Morita suggests that silence or a lack of output in the classroom is not a factor of intelligence, ability, or degree of student interest in topics, but are often rooted in factors such as gender, perceptions of power, and views of social identity. Similarly, I've heard from my Middle Eastern colleagues and students that in

their region/culture, teacher and student relationships are quite different than in the United States, i.e., in the Middle East teachers do most of the lecturing and students usually remain silent.

Even so, I am grateful to my observer for getting me to think more carefully about what I can do as a teacher to increase student output. I have given this a great deal of thought. I assess that one way of soliciting greater verbal output from students is to give them activities in which solicit responses to open-ended questions and require a greater degree of ‘negotiation of meaning’ with their instructor and peer interlocutors. This highlights the fact that learning is a social, fluid, and dynamic process. For instance, Vygotsky (1986) describes the “social and cultural” (p. 189) aspects of learning in terms of the “zone of proximal development” (p. 187) which means the range of ability from a completely autonomous mode to being supported in a social context, i.e., when assisted learners “can do more” (p. 187). In the classroom environment such social learning processes involve dialogue with the instructor, with peers in small groups, or with the presentation of opinions or utterances to the entire class. I’ve learned that maximizing the learning outcomes from a social educational environment involves a great deal of flexibility. For example, depending on the proficiency level and output of the students, a single lesson could be covered in one day, or it could take multiple days. To this extent, the pace of the class curriculum ought to be specifically tailored to the exact abilities of the students, and the quantity and quality of target language output produced.

Nevertheless, despite some of the apparent silence in the room, I was pleased with the actual outcomes. At the end of the day my students were able to successfully carry

out the objectives of the class. They were able to match most of the art labels with the correct definitions with between 80-90 percent accuracy. In addition, they were able to successfully negotiate the venue design and produced intelligible output, e.g., matching classical Baroque music and Renaissance art with a fancy restaurant venue. The remainder of the venues showed skillful matching that was clearly deliberate and not random. At times it was hard to make out exactly what the students were saying as they were carrying out the activity, and there was some quiet giggling. Therefore, it was hard to make out how long their utterances were. However, I believe that any output is better than no output at all.

Each student is at a different level linguistically and in terms of social output or presentational confidence. If students only start out with a few words of intelligible output, that is at least a starting-point. I view this as a 'glass half full'. As a foreign language teacher I see it as my purpose to accept whatever proficiency level the student has and then build from there. At the same time, I appreciate the feedback regarding finding ways to prompt students to create longer utterances. This is something which I will give greater reflection, even though many students will lack the ability to create longer utterances regardless of how well activities are designed. This may be the case until students' linguistic repertoires increase, or until they become socially confident in a North American classroom environment.

This class is somewhat of a challenge due to the broad range of linguistic abilities and background of the students. The content has a lot of variability. During the semester we covered a broad range of topics. The idea behind the course design was to put a theme

or topic in to suite a wide range of interests and linguistic abilities. The first main takeaway that I have is to continue to be mindful of the broad cultural diversity of the students in the class, and carefully design course content with a scaffolding approach so that the content may be grown and developed organically within the class. The second main takeaway is that I need to create activities or pose questions to my class which require students to craft longer (conversational) opinion responses, and that also require a greater degree of interaction and negotiation of meaning with their partners. I believe this is the key to developing their abilities to create longer and more nuanced utterances.

Objectives of JFL Micro-Teaching Class: Linguistics Conference in Japan

I provided my peers in Linguistics 6400 with a crash course in Japanese on December 1st, 2015. None of these classmates have had any prior instruction in Japanese. The theme for my JFL micro-teaching segment was attending a linguistics conference in Japan, more specifically preparing my peers to be able to successfully carry out basic networking using the Japanese language. This was a realistic scenario which I based on an actual linguistics conference which I applied to on December 30th, 2015. The scenario I presented was that all of my peers had been notionally accepted to present papers at the linguistics conference in Japan, and my goal was to give them a crash course in networking in Japanese, e.g., uttering greetings and exchanging business cards and contact information. Since English is compulsory in Japan from primary school to the college level, many foreigners can easily rely on English. However, the Japanese language has many levels of formality and perhaps relies on polite formulaic phrases to a great extent in professional business settings. Knowing polite phrases related to greetings,

salutations, proper introductions, and the exchange of personal information for networking can be extremely important. Subsequently, the ‘can do’ objectives related to providing students with the most fundamental language constructs which would be useful for networking purposes at any large meeting or conference. The actual objectives of the class were as follows: 1) can utter basic greetings; 2) can ask for another’s name; 3) can ask which college another came from (or utter where oneself came from); 4) can ask for which languages another speaks (or state which languages oneself speaks); 5) can exchange business cards; 6) can say ‘thank you’; and 7) can utter closing greetings.

Self-Evaluation of JFL Micro-Teaching Class

Upon watching the digital recording of my micro-teaching class and with further reflection, I am very pleased by the lesson materials, delivery, and outcomes. During the lesson I divided the target language constructs into three segments consisting of: 1) basic introductions; 2) solicitation for language skills; and 3) exchanging of business cards and uttering closing salutations. At the end of the class the students put all three segments together into a single presentational roleplay in front of the entire class. Thus, I was able to have students carry out all three of ACTFL modes of communication (ACTFL, 2015). The interpretative mode came at the beginning of the lesson when I introduced key terms and concepts. The interpersonal occurred during exercises which occurred in pairs, and students frequently changed partners. At the end of the class, students took turns employing the presentational mode of communication when they acted out entire networking roleplays in front of the class, while the remainder of students practiced the interpretative mode as they watched and listened to their classmates.

The only shortfall of the class was the limited amount of time, i.e., 20 minutes. This created a dilemma in that I wanted to teach the students useful language constructs that could be employed during one of the most realistic scenarios. Since all of the students are linguists it is very likely that they could find themselves presenting papers at linguistics conferences in various countries. No matter what country one finds oneself in, it can be very worthwhile to learn even a little bit of the target language or dominant language of the country for specific purposes like networking. Despite the time constraints I feel that the lesson was a success and I did leave students with a handout which contains all key terms and phrases taught in the lesson.

Observations from JFL Micro-Teaching Class

Table 3 contains the feedback and suggestions from observations of three observers who were also learners in my 20-minute JFL micro-teaching class for Linguistics 6400. Each observation contains general observations as well as suggestions for how my teaching might be improved.

Inclusions, Reflections and Takeaways

I greatly appreciate the abundant feedback from my peers. It is extremely helpful. I'm glad to see that they all enjoyed the lesson. It seems as though the common thread from all three observers is that I should be more careful about the amount of material covered in the span of a single lesson. The main challenge I had with this lesson is that on one hand I really wanted to give the learners all of the applicable language skills that they would need for this type of scenario, e.g., networking at a conference or meeting.

Table 3		
<i>Peer Feedback and Recommendations for a JFL Micro-teaching Class, December 1st, 2015.</i>		
Observer I. JFL Class	Observer II. JFL Class	Observer III. JFL Class
<u>Things I liked:</u> I. I really liked that you had the handout with English, Japanese and the Japanese alphabet English form. That was very helpful as a LL with English background. II. Good activities. They were very real-world applicable.	<u>Things I liked:</u> I. Spells out communicative goals with English (PPT). II. The handout was more than helpful, it was necessary. III. Role playing with actual business cards.	<u>Things I liked:</u> I. I liked that you included the Communicative goals in English. II. You were confident and composed while teaching. III. Good patience. Willing to use short English moments, accept unexpected questions. IV. The activities were fun.
<u>Recommended changes:</u> I. Watch for the typos – it happens ☺ II. I wish I had more practice asking more people than just my partner. Maybe you could create an information gap activity.	<u>Recommended changes:</u> I. Too many things were taught – not just vocabulary but many sentences. Smaller chunks please. II. Taking into account the formulaic nature, spending more time on each phrase would help.	<u>Recommended changes:</u> I. I would have tried to include more pictures. II. I would put a few less words on each slide. III. I would have taught them a few less phrases so that they can remember more.
<u>General Comments:</u> I. It was a little long to go through all of the learning objectives. Could you condense them a little bit, or just say them instead of reading? Just an idea. II. Good job! ☺	<u>General Comments:</u> I. Very engaging and enjoyable (very challenging). II. Though it was more English than I use, it was well measured and useful.	<u>General Comments:</u> I. Slides were well organized and concise. II. Very formal and professional. III. Good explanations. IV. The handouts were very helpful.

However, on the other hand I was constrained by the 20 minute time limit. In order to meet the 20 minute time limit I could have either condensed or eliminated some of the phrases or activities. I chose not to do that because I wanted to present a stand-alone lesson that would provide them with the basic tools they would need for this scenario.

I feel confident that had I had a full 50 minutes I could have left the students with much greater learning outcomes, so they would have felt a lot more confident in their ability to use this material in a real-world context. However, if this scenario were real, the students could use their handout for additional self-study, and I would have had more time to collaborate and answer follow-up questions before the student peers left for the linguistic conference in Japan.

Final Thoughts and Future Actions

I am grateful to the observers who provided so many useful insights and recommendations for my teaching, both formally and informally throughout my MSLT program. The main lessons I have learned are that it is vital to delicately balance the amount of material covered in a single lesson with the desire to have students perform a range of ‘can do’ abilities in the target language. This simply means that as a teacher I may have the tendency to push my students too quickly or cover too much material at a given time. Good second / foreign language teachers should remain mindful of the scope and pace of their lessons in relation to the current abilities of their students. On one side, a teacher should not bore students by progressing too slowly, and on the other should not overwhelm students by moving significantly beyond their current ability levels. In essence, good target language instructors must continually perform self-assessments of their own teaching and self-reflection to determine if their expectations are realistic. This ought to be a continual process, not simply a one-time endeavor.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

Dual Language Immersion Education in the United States:
Plus a Closer Examination of Motivational Factors in the Utah Model

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

I originally wrote this paper for Linguistics 6700, Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Education. I chose to make the focus of the paper motivation, both in terms of student motivation, but also greater motivational factors in the form of parental and community involvement, as well as local and state government support which is essential for making such programs a success. Motivation is a key element of my teaching philosophy, and I believe it is the single most important factor in second / foreign language learning. Subsequently, I felt it was appropriate to make motivation a central theme of my language artifact.

Even in the age of ubiquitous computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools and various technological applications for learning languages, motivation remains an essential component of effective language learning, whether using high tech or low tech study materials. This artifact highlights the importance of student and community motivation required to sustain foreign language programs in schools. Motivation is a significant factor which has helped DLI programs succeed in Utah when they have failed elsewhere. Since motivation is such a vital component to sustaining successful second language acquisition, I include this artifact first in my portfolio.

Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the development and challenges to Dual Language Immersion (DLI) education programs in the United States. It examines historical obstacles such as ignorance and politics. Research-based evidence which makes a compelling case for DLI is described, i.e., cognitive, cultural, social, and academic benefits for children in DLI programs. Evidence indicates that DLI students consistently outperform their monolingual counterparts in all measures. This paper describes the history and development of DLI programs in Utah, including challenges and successes. An overview of factors which contribute to student motivation in DLI programs in Utah is provided, chiefly among them, grassroots community and political support. Essential components found in the Utah DLI model are summarized, and Utah's DLI program is illustrated as a concrete model for the rest of the United States.

Introduction

The topic of bilingualism and multilingualism in primary and secondary educational environments remains nuanced, complex and controversial. Despite the overwhelming body of research-based evidence, which clearly shows the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism, tremendous systemic resistance to DLI programs remains in the United States. However, it is noteworthy to mention that not all bilingual education programs are created alike. Perhaps the resistance to immersion programs stems, in part, from confusion over what bilingual programs actually represent. Subsequently, bilingual programs are frequently misconstrued by the public. For instance, as Christian (2011) states "instruction in dual language education must always respond to,

and keep in mind, the goals of bilingualism, bi-literacy, and multicultural competence” (p. 14). Public opposition to DLI may stem from concerns that multilingualism leads to a loss of English ability. However, if carried out properly, DLI programs do not degrade students’ first languages (L1s). In fact, when properly designed DLI programs are only additive in nature, promoting the acquisition of a second language (L2) while not degrading the L1. Successful bilingual programs must be modeled on clear goals and have the resources necessary (including qualified native-like speaking teachers) which provide the greatest odds for successful outcomes. Relatedly, Fortune and Tedick (2008) advocate for continual striving to identify and implement the best practices and strategies at all levels in order to give such programs the optimal conditions for success (p. 18). If proper methods are consistently implemented and quality results sustained over time, perhaps then, the public of the United States will be further swayed toward greater support for bilingual immersion programs in public schools.

Why Bilingual Education is So Unpopular

The U.S. public writ large often mistakenly associates the issue of illegal immigration with DLI programs. Additionally, misplaced concerns that the introduction of Spanish or other target languages in schools will impede the development English fluency and literacy often fuels opposition to DLI programs. In this sense, Crawford (2007) insinuates that resistance to DLI programs is caused by fear. Such fear-based opposition ought to be replaced with fact-based policy debates and subsequent fine-tuning of DLI programs for optimal outcomes.

Popular support for bilingual education in the United States has ebbed and flowed. Undeniably, the issue of bilingual education, for better or worse, in the United States has most likely been inextricably linked to thorny political issues of illegal immigration and immigration reform. Many level-headed Americans may not oppose multilingualism per se, but may feel that Spanish is being thrust upon them by force because of illegal immigration. Crawford (2007) contends that a multitude of factors may influence public opinion of DLI programs, including: racism against Latinos and, ignorance of the benefits of DLI programs. By contrast, in Canada, French immersion programs are essentially divorced from thorny issues like immigration reform and receive wide-ranging public support. This fact probably lends some support for Crawford's argument. Christian (2011) sets forth a concurring argument:

The tension of language and culture diversity manifests itself in disputes over the value of bilingual forms of education for students from minority (immigrant and indigenous) communities, as well as a general lack of support for learning languages other than the majority language (p. 6).

Therefore, it seems clear that in order for bilingual education programs to receive greater support, a larger proportion of the population must value such programs.

Four Models of Bilingual Education

Several varieties or models of bilingual education programs can be identified. The type of model or models used largely depends on the ethnic or linguistic composition of the class and the goals that each program aims to achieve. Understanding the various

programs is essential in selecting the correct model for each situation. Christian (2011) describes four models of DLI programs as thus:

- 1) Developmental bilingual programs, where all students are native speakers of the minority language that is one of the languages of instruction; 2) foreign language immersion programs, or 'one-way' immersion, where all of the students are native speakers of the majority language and are learning another language;
- 3) Heritage language immersion programs, where all of the students are from the language minority community though they may have little or no actual proficiency in the heritage language; and 4) two-way immersion programs, where approximately half of the students are native speakers of the minority language and half are native speakers of the majority language, and all receive instruction through, and learn, both languages (p. 4).

Choosing the appropriate model based on the demographic and linguistic background of the students is vital. For example, a class which is mostly made up of speakers of the majority language who are attempting to learn a global language such as Spanish or Chinese would be totally different from a class of heritage speakers attempting to preserve an endangered language such as Hawaiian or Welsh. Heritage immersion programs, in fact, differ significantly from other programs. Heritage programs seek to restore languages which are becoming extinct, e.g., Fishman (1996) addresses Navajo, and O'Duibhir (2009) discusses Irish.

Each teaching situation is different and each program must be custom made to fit the unique circumstances and cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented in the

classroom. Therefore, the four main models are great templates, but should be combined, modified or adjusted as needed to fit the situation.

Benefits of Dual Language Immersion Education

The benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism are numerous, as extensive research demonstrates. Frustratingly, opposition to bilingual immersion programs is often fueled by ignorance. Perhaps, more Americans should look at bilingualism as an asset instead of as a liability. For example, Spanish is a global language with tremendous cross cultural and potential economic benefits for learners.

The justification for DLI programs is that the research is compelling; the cognitive and linguistic development of DLI students is particularly persuasive. Evidence shows that DLI students not only acquire their first language (L1) more efficiently than their monolingual counterparts, but they also acquire proficiency in a second language. Christian (2011) describes the benefits of language immersion programs as follows:

Thus, the overall academic achievement of participating students is relevant along with their second language development, and it has been important to build a literature that demonstrates that academic progress is not impeded (but may in fact be enhanced) by additive bilingualism and other features of a dual language program (p. 7).

However, such statements only scratch the surface in describing the benefits of language immersion programs. In places such as Finland where multiple languages (i.e., L2, L3, L4 and even L5) are introduced over the course of grades one through nine. The evidence from Finland illustrates that the sooner students begin foreign language training

the better. Students enrolled in DLI (Swedish and Finnish) programs in kindergarten and first grade consistently outperform monolingual counterparts in acquiring additional foreign languages in later grades, and regularly outperform their monolingual counterparts in the shared first language (L1), i.e., Finnish (Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2009, 2011). Moreover, while gaining proficiency in Swedish (L2), astoundingly, the Swedish Immersion students also performed better in the acquisition of an L3, L4 or L5 (namely English, German, other European Languages) than their non-immersion counterparts (Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2009, 2011). These findings are captivating. This sort of research should be presented at town-hall meetings in American communities where DLI programs for primary and secondary schools are being considered.

Challenges Associated with Bilingual Immersion Education

Two primary obstacles stand in the way of bilingual immersion education, relating either to perception of value (e.g., from communities or parents), or to structural approaches (i.e., pedagogical methods leading to positive or negative learning outcomes such as additive or subtractive bilingualism). Each of these obstacles has several subcomponents. Relating to perception of value, there are many facets such as: the extent to which teachers, policy makers, and families value bilingualism and multilingualism, and their willingness to advocate for bilingual and multilingual programs. One example of a structural obstacle is the extent to which best practices and methods are implemented or ignored when creating course / classroom design.

In terms of perceptual obstacles, May (2008) provides a sober analysis of the lack of support for bilingual education in the United States by pointing to the body of research

which overwhelmingly demonstrates that reference to the benefits of bilingual education has been missing from policy debates. Many Americans likely oppose bilingual immersion programs out of the simple fear, or the false notion that children have a finite cognitive potential for language, and that adding more languages to the curriculum may impede a child's successful acquisition of English, thus setting them up for failure academically and professionally.

May (2008) dispels these concerns by citing evidence from the Ramirez Study which demonstrates that “subtractive bilingualism” or monolingual teaching methods such as “English only” dramatically reduce the academic performance, and lead to higher dropout rates for minority students (pp. 28-29). Relatedly, Cloud et al. (2000) attempt to garner greater public support for bilingual education by pointing out the benefits from dual immersion programs in Canada:

The findings are clear and consistent. Students in immersion programs achieve the same levels of competence in their subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, and social studies) as comparable English-speaking students who attend regular all-English programs. At the same time, immersion students acquire advanced levels of functional proficiency in French (p. 3).

In terms of structural obstacles, May (2008) illustrates differences between “additive bilingualism” and “subtractive bilingualism:” additive maintains the first language (L1) and second language (L2); while subtractive leads to an atrophy of the L1 or the L2. Moreover, Genesee (2008) describes the benefits of bilingualism, and advocates for additive bilingualism from two vantage points: 1) from the majority

language students, that it would not impede their L1, and 2) from the minority language students vantage point, would “not detract from the full acquisition of the societally-dominant language” (pp. 29-30). Therefore, proactive measures must ensure that DLI programs are not subtractive in nature, by intention or accident.

Structural challenges to DLI in the United States may include a lack of popular and political support (and subsequent funding). By contrast, DLI programs in Ireland mainly suffer from a lack of qualified teachers; only 20 percent of teachers have enough proficiency in Irish to teach it properly in schools (O’Duibhir, 2009). The United States is fortunate to have enough L1 Spanish speakers to adopt more ubiquitous implementation for Spanish DLI programs. It might have a large enough talent pool for other strategic languages like Chinese, Portuguese and Arabic, but greater implementation will require greater advocacy not just sufficient talent.

A major structural challenge in Canada pointed out by Swain and Lapkin (2005) is that growing demographic diversity in urban populations has spawned dramatically more diverse classrooms in which there are multiple L1s present, which makes “the main goal of additive bilingualism” an increasingly prickly endeavor (pp. 177-178), particularly when trying to maintain the L1 of each student. For example, Cummins (1986) advocates for the maintenance of the L1 on the basis that it is a vital tool which facilitates acquisition of the dominant language (as cited in Swain and Lapkin, 2005, pp. 177-178). However, maintenance of the L1 is not confined to the classroom environment. Students must receive adequate exposure to their L1 at home as well. Therefore, parental desire for maintaining the L1 is vital, despite various pressures to learn English as

quickly as possible. In terms of family support Swain and Lapkin (2005) assert that when “families choose to maintain the home language and culture and value multilingualism, their children thrive in immersion; they transfer reading skills across languages, tolerate ambiguity well, and succeed academically” (p. 181). This reinforces the importance of exposure to the L1 at home or in the community.

Understandable concerns in DLI programs are: whether L1 English-speakers will be able to keep up academically with their peers who are not enrolled in DLI programs, and whether L2 English-learners will successfully acquire sufficient English skills to perform well academically. Regarding closing the achievement gap, Collier and Thomas (2008) assert that “our longitudinal research findings from one-way and two-way dual language enrichment models of schooling demonstrate the substantial power of this program for enhancing student outcomes and fully closing the achievement gap in second language (L2)” (p. 1). This provides even more evidence in support of DLI programs. The main challenge is to get educators, policy makers, and families onboard in valuing the L1 maintenance for each student.

The Utah DLI Model

Regarding the Utah DLI model, motivation factors span several domains and indicate broad-spectrum public support. This means that Utah does not face many of the obstacles that DLI programs face in other parts of the United States. On the contrary, Utah’s DLI programs enjoy support at all levels, beginning with the State of Utah government, school districts, communities, parents, and students. All of these facets of support are essential for DLI programs to thrive. No matter how much communities and

school districts may desire these programs, if lacking government support and funding, they are not likely to succeed. Conversely, government support and funding may quickly fade in the face of broad community and constituent opposition that would pressure elected officials to abandon support in the face of constituent opposition (which has occurred in California). Furthermore, having enough qualified teachers is essential. Lastly, parental involvement and support are critical to program support at the local level, and equally important for student motivation.

Utah DLI Evolution and Motivations

Utah began its first Spanish dual immersion program in 1979; the results demonstrate that the immersion students learned Spanish without any detriment to their math or English reading proficiency scores (Leite, 2013). Moreover, according to Leite (2013), major challenges early attempts at Spanish DLI programs from 1979 through the early 1980s were an insufficient pool of qualified Spanish teachers and student attrition. Also, when qualified teachers quit or moved away, commitment to the programs suffered.

From the late 1970s to today, Utah's DLI programs have dramatically evolved in terms of multifaceted support and the refinement of pedagogical methodologies (Leite, 2013). Utah DLI programs have enjoyed tremendous state governmental support along the way. For example, former Governor Huntsman and other key politicians such as Senator Stephenson paved the way for key legislation and funding (Leite, 2013). In 2007, Senate Bill 2 provided \$100K in funding which enabled Utah's Office of Education to employ a full-time language specialist to draft and implement language education policy at the state level (Leite, 2013). Particularly, in the past decade a series of legislative

initiatives has been adopted to grow Utah's DLI programs. For instance, Senate Bill 80 provided the first six years of funding for experimental Chinese and Arabic immersion programs in twenty Utah schools (Leite, 2013). Utah's DLI programs rapidly accelerated from the mid-2000s. In fall 2006, Utah's first 50/50 whole-school Spanish immersion program began at Dixie Sun (Leite, 2013, p. 50). This program has implemented superior methodologies using the 50/50 immersion model, and serves as a successful 'case study' for Utah's DLI programs.

Instead of being met with popular opposition, in fact Utah's DLI programs continue to garner popular support and increased demand. Roberts and Wade (2012) report that Utah had the following inventory of DLI programs: "40 Spanish (18 two-way, 20 one-way, two secondary), 25 Chinese, 10 French and two Portuguese programs serving over 14,000 students across 18 districts from every corner of Utah" (p. 11). Moreover, "long wait lists" demonstrate that supply has not kept up with demand (p. 11). Today, Utah's DLI programs are strong, which is a stark contrast to early programs of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Senate Bill 41 established a revamped state-wide pilot program and adopted the following "critical languages" established by federal National Security policy: "Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Farsi, Hindi, and Korean" (Leite, 2013, p. 58). In this sense, language priorities were not just created on an ad hoc basis. Instead, they were based on strategic economic, political, social, and cultural relevancy. This has likely helped to further legitimate DLI programs and goals.

Fortunately, Utah's current Governor Gary Herbert has not only continued to support existing DLI programs, but has pushed for expanding DLI programs throughout his tenure. In 2010, Governor Herbert established a goal to "implement 100 programs involving 30,000 students by 2015," and by all estimates this goal has already been met (Leite, 2013, p. 76). By 2013 Utah DLI programs were implemented in 17 school districts across the state (Leite, 2013, p. 75). Correspondingly, Governor Herbert reaffirmed this vision, and based on wide-ranging success bumped up the goal deadline to 2014 (Roberts & Wade, 2012, p. 11). The latest data from 2016 shows that Utah DLI programs service 138 schools and over 28,000 students, including the following numbers of programs by target language: 73 Spanish, 38 Chinese, 19 French, 6 Portuguese, and 2 German ("Utah DLI Schools," 2016). The continuation of political support as new politicians take office has been an important factor in the solid success of Utah's multilingual education efforts.

In order for DLI programs to be successful, the communities where they reside must value multilingualism and multiculturalism. Roberts and Wade (2012) emphasize the importance that "multicultural skills" and "cultural competence" play in the global workforce of today, and praise Utah's immersion programs as accessible means for a broad demographic range of Utah's children to develop essential language and cultural skills (p. 10). Roberts and Wade claim that Utah's K through 9 DLI programs culminate in advance language proficiency in terms of "listening, speaking, reading and writing;" giving graduates a competitive advantage at university and the international job-market (p. 11). The research makes a compelling fact-based argument for DLI programs. For instance, "Research conclusively shows that students who are instructed in two languages

have improved cognitive abilities including problem-solving, creativity, enhanced cross-cultural understanding, and multi-tasking” (p. 12). Even more impressively: “Standardized test scores show that dual language instruction boosts academic learning in all content areas” and DLI students demonstrate significantly higher propensity for attending college (p. 12). Among many other benefits, Utah’s DLI programs are designed to increase college enrollment and subsequently increase education rates for Utah’s adult workforce, in order to increase its economic competitiveness.

Another important aspect of successful programs is the support of the families of children in these programs. In fact, Utah’s DLI model is set up in such a way to garner and maintain family support. According to Roberts and Wade (2012) “Schools presently implementing dual language education also emphasize that this is a ‘family friendly’ program which enables parents and grandparents who are limited in their English proficiency to be full and active partners in their children’s instruction” (p. 12). This parental and extended family support is particularly important for L2 English speakers to maintain their L1 or heritage language.

Filling DLI classrooms with linguistically proficient students helps their classmates while strengthening the programs. For example, “Dual Language Immersion Initiative is a win-win undertaking for Utah because it builds our capacity for economic prosperity, gives parents choice in education, better meets the instructional needs of ELL students” (Roberts & Wade, 2012, p. 12). The bottom line is that the more time goes by and the more entrenched these programs become, the more deliberate and incidental benefits seem to be uncovered.

Many practical benefits of these programs (e.g., economic competitiveness) are reflected by broad support from the community, government, and business leaders for increasing Utah's economic and business aptitude (Roberts & Wade, 2012, p. 11). Economic and educational performance are probably easier to observe than other more nuanced emotional and psychological benefits which have yet to be fully researched and quantified.

The 50/50 model that Utah has implemented means that "students spend half of their day in English and the other half in the target language" (Roberts & Wade, 2012, p. 10). Among the many merits of the 50/50 model is simply that it's more resource efficient, meaning that a foreign language teacher can teach twice as many students as they could in a 100 percent immersion model by contrast. Moreover, since students still receive instruction in English half of the day, it helps to dispel any anxiety over losing proficiency in English.

Utah's DLI model features several key attributes. Throughout the entire program certain factors remain constant. For example, students continually receive 50 percent of their instruction in English and 50 percent in the target language (TL) throughout the program, kindergarten through sixth grade ("Utah DLI," 2015). Students receive all TL instruction through content, i.e., Content-Based Instruction (CBI). Grade appropriate modifications are made to content proportion throughout the program ("Utah DLI," 2015). For example, in Grades 1 through 3, more students receive more math instruction in the TL, whereas from Grade 4 and above, there is a shift and students receive more math instruction in English ("Utah DLI," 2015). However, math overlaps throughout the entire

program, and the content must be carefully coordinated between the English and TL teachers. By contrast, other subjects such as English language arts or TL language arts are taught in only one language. Lastly, other subjects shift entirely from being taught in English or the TL as students grow up through the grades, e.g., in Grades 4 and 5 social studies are taught only in English, but social studies moves entirely to the L2 in Grade 6 (“Utah DLI,” 2015).

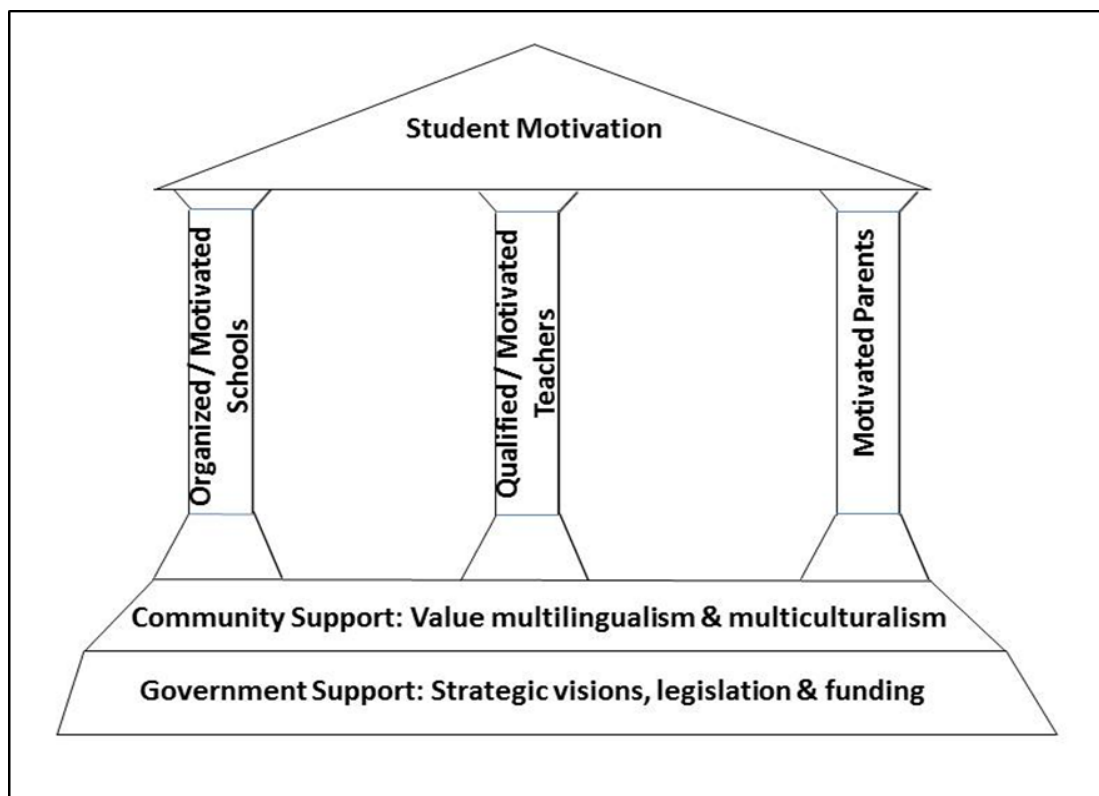
Cache Valley Utah DLI Model

At the end of 2012, “Cache County, Logan, and Uintah School Districts announced that they would be adding the state model of dual language immersion for the 2013–2014 school year” (Leite, 2013, pg. 75). The implementation of the Utah DLI model in Cache Valley is relatively new but incorporates the same sound methodology and best practices already implemented elsewhere in Utah. Currently, four elementary schools in Cache Valley School District have DLI programs: Sunrise in Smithfield, Heritage in Nibley, North Park in North Logan and Providence Elementary (Christensen, 2013). Two elementary schools offer DLI in the Logan School District, Bridger and Hillcrest (Christensen, 2013). Currently, four target languages are offered in Cache Valley schools: Mandarin Chinese, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (Christensen, 2013). According to Christensen (2013), the format of the program is divided teaching, where each class has two instructors. Half of the day is taught in English and the other half in the TL; and certain subjects (e.g., math) is taught in the TL, while other subjects (e.g., language arts) are taught in English.

Personal observations of two Cache Valley immersion classrooms revealed the need for student and teacher motivation as a vital component. High levels of support from politicians, business leaders, communities, and parents are needed for vibrant immersion education programs. Additionally, robust programs depend on the availability of competent and motivated teachers. Just as important, however, is the motivation of students in the classrooms, ready and eager to participate and learn the respective target languages.

Based on a holistic examination of the various factors that contribute to motivation presented in this paper, I developed the pantheon example as Figure 1.

Figure 1. Contributing Factors to Student Motivation in Utah DLI Classrooms.



This simply illustrates that student motivation doesn't spontaneously develop in a vacuum. Various factors, both within and outside of the classroom, lay the foundation and set the stage for student motivation. For instance, government support is vital, particularly in terms of funding and coordination with education departments and school districts which design and develop the critical program architecture. Also, community support is crucial. When communities strongly oppose bilingual and multilingual initiatives, this often creates political pressure on elected officials to abandon support for these programs, as happened in California. At the school level, programs must be implemented well, involving meticulous coordination of overlapping TL curricula with English classrooms, which requires solid organizational management and motivation. Teachers must not only be competent linguistically but also be highly motivated. Finally, parents must be motivated and encouraging of the target language and culture at home.

Fortunately, for Cache Valley, all of these vital elements which support student motivation in the classroom are now in place, despite some degree of initial angst and anxiety before the programs came to full fruition. According to Dr. Spicer-Escalante (Comment, April 17, 2015), some initial angst was voiced at school district town hall meetings before programs were fully implemented. A vocal minority of parents had reservations about the target languages selected; some expressed a particular aversion to Spanish as the target language (due to perceptions of low prestige). Some monolingual teachers voiced anxiety about the possibility of losing their jobs.

In such circumstances it is vital for the proponents of DLI programs to be able to successfully advocate for DLI programs to various stakeholders (communities, teachers,

parents etc.). Successful advocacy strategies include “demonstrating to others why changes you are proposing to make are desirable, feasible, affordable, and appropriate” (Cloud et al., 2000, p. 8). In essence, it is important to be able to have the hard data readily available at such town hall meetings to help quell fears or mistaken notions about DLI programs. The fact that successful DLI programs have been established and are thriving in Cache Valley is a healthy sign that successful advocacy is possible.

In terms of motivation, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) put forth “Ten commandments for motivating language learners” (p. 203). These “commandments” can be briefly distilled as follows: 1) “Teacher – prepare for lessons properly” 2) “Climate – create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom” 3) “Task – give clear instructions” 4) “Rapport – develop a good relationship with your students” 5) “Self-confidence – give positive feedback and appraisal” 6) “Interest – select interesting task” 7) “Autonomy- encourage creative and imaginative ideas” 8) “Personal relevance – fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students” 9) Goal – help the students develop expectations about their learning” 10) “Culture – familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, pp. 221-222). This describes a critical relationship between teaching methods and student motivation; and these elements seem to be replicated in Cache Valley DLI programs.

What appeared to be high levels of teacher and student motivation was observed at Grade 1 Portuguese immersion classroom (observation, February, 6, 2015), and at another Grade 1 Chinese immersion (observation, February, 25, 2015). High levels of student and teacher energy and enthusiasm were observed in both classroom observations,

based on body language, bearing, and the robust nature of discussion, questions and answers, between teachers and their students. The two immersion classrooms observed contained a large amount of cultural artifacts, such as posters, decorations and pictures related to the TL culture. Teachers in both classrooms appeared to create a caring and motivational environment in which students appeared to freely engage in teacher-student and student-student dialogue. Both classrooms had a variety of cognitively stimulating activities. The Portuguese immersion classroom showed culturally authentic videos in the TL with follow on question and responses in the TL.

In the case of both classrooms the majority of students appeared to be of Caucasian ethnicity, and did not appear to have an ethnic or heritage connection with the TL. Despite this feature, enthusiasm appeared exceedingly high. Particularly, in the case of the Chinese immersion classrooms approximately 25 of 30 students appeared to be Caucasian. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau data, approximately 84 percent of Logan, Utah is Caucasian, while only 3 percent is Asian (“U.S. Census Bureau,” 2016). Needless to say, the Chinese DLI program embedded in a public Cache Valley elementary school is not a heritage program. Despite this lack of ethnic or heritage connection, every time the teacher asked a question or solicited feedback, the vast majority of students (~25-28 of 30) instantly raised their hands high into the air to the point of almost jumping out of their seats. They also freely spoke in the TL (Chinese), and appeared extremely motivated to speak in the TL. The bottom-line is that whatever strategies are being implemented to increase student enthusiasm seems to be working. Based on my observation, I assess that making cultural connections between to target

language and culture is probably one factor. Another factor could be the sense of accomplishment that students experience from actually being able to do things with the TL, e.g., the ability to discuss and make mathematic calculations with monetary currency.

Relating to motivation, Shrum and Glisan (2010) point out that: “students with high positive attitude toward a task were more engaged in the task and produced more language;” and “students with a low attitude toward a task still performed well if they had a positive attitude toward the course in general” (p. 33). This helps account for the need to have a genuine and persistent interest in the TL culture in sustaining student motivation.

While funding and logistical support are essential to the maintenance, growth, and success of immersion programs, these observations indicate the absolute importance of teacher and in particular student motivation. The type of greater culture of the Cache Valley and probably Utah as a whole which seems to value foreign languages could be an important subject for future research.

Conclusion

The evidence overwhelmingly supports the case for DLI programs. Such programs have been implemented and observed in a multitude of countries with a multitude of languages, and the outcomes are uniformly positive. The benefits of DLI far outweigh the resources involved in their implementation. The United States really needs to wake up and get on the DLI bandwagon. Collier and Thomas (2008) made an appeal for such a ‘wakeup call’ as follows:

This is not just a research report, this is a wakeup call to the field of bilingual education, written for both researchers and practitioners. We use the word astounding in the title because we have been truly amazed at the elevated student outcomes resulting from participation in dual language programs (p. 1).

It's hard to create a more compelling argument for DLI programs. The evidence is so strong in favor of DLI – it makes the ubiquitous embracement and implementation of DLI an easy decision. Utah has become a bastion of DLI and is creating the way forward for the rest of the United States. Roberts and Wade (2012) invoke the Utah pioneer spirit by stating: “Thus, in the pioneering spirit of its history, Utah is undaunted in its quest to mainstream dual language immersion for all students!” (p. 12). In this way Utahns are once again courageously moving forward in a spirit of innovation and hard work.

LITERACY ARTIFACT

Considering the Efficacy of Authentic Materials in
Foreign Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This artifact is based on a paper that I originally co-authored with Nadiya Gifford for *Linguistics 6500 (Second Language Acquisition)*. Nadiya and I worked together on this paper because we both agreed on the importance of using authentic materials in foreign language classrooms in order to increase literacy and sociocultural competence. In the original paper, we completely co-authored the introduction and conclusions, while the body of the paper was divided between a focus on using authentic materials in teaching the target language of Russian and Japanese, respectively. Since Nadiya is the language and cultural expert with respect to Russian, she researched those portions of the paper, while I did all of the work related to Japanese. I was proud of the work we did, and excited by the corroboration of positive literacy outcomes in both target languages.

I believe the comparison and contrasts of two foreign languages made the conclusions in this paper much stronger. Nevertheless, for purposes of this portfolio, I have made significant revisions to the paper and removed the specific sources which exclusively focused on Russian. However, an original version of the paper may be found in the second volume of *Selected Papers from the Lackstrom Linguistics Symposium* (forthcoming, 2016).

This artifact expounds on important features in my teaching philosophy such as the use of appropriate L2 teaching theories, concepts, and strategies. Furthermore, it illustrates how the multimodal use of authentic materials in FL classrooms increases motivation through making meaningful cultural connections, and promotes L2 Japanese literacy by making texts easier to read, access, and comprehend.

Introduction

This literature review primarily focuses on the importance of using authentic materials (i.e., made for fluent speakers of the target language [TL] for consumption by the TL population) as a primary source of developing literacy, fluency, and cultural competence. This paper explores various aspects of authentic materials as pedagogical tools for teaching and learning foreign languages. I primarily explore this idea by examining first language (L1) English students in the acquisition of Japanese as a foreign language/second language (JFL/JSL). However, one English as a second language (ESL) study is examined which helps to corroborate findings, thus bolstering the case for authentic materials.

In this paper, the terms *authentic materials* and *authentic texts* are frequently used. The former is more of an all-inclusive term which refers to both written and non-written materials such as video news broadcasts, radio broadcasts or song lyrics. According to Crossley, Louwse, McCarthy, and McNamara (2007), authentic texts are written materials “originally created to fulfill a social purpose” (p. 17) in the TL environment. Therefore, I characterize anything created by L1 speakers for consumption by other L1 speakers of the TL, containing written or oral language, as authentic materials. Some examples include: journals, newspapers, magazines, comic books, poems, or advertisements.

I also refer to *adapted authentic text* which denotes to some type of modification that is performed to enhance readability, accessibility and comprehension. I characterize simplified texts described in some of the literature I examined as modified texts.

Simensen (1987, as cited in Crossley, et al., 2007), defines simplified texts as written texts that illustrate “a specific language feature, such as the use of modals or the third-person singular verb form” (p. 16). I subscribe to the positions that adapted authentic texts can be used for teaching second language (L2) learners at a variety of proficiency levels.

In terms of second language acquisition (SLA) theory, Krashen (1982) argues that: “comprehensible input – is the true cause of second language acquisition” (p. 34). In a general sense I feel that authentic materials (whether original or modified) are an ideal form of comprehensible input. However, in my view Krashen’s concept alone certainly falls short of compellingly making the case for authentic materials. Thus, I turn to the multi-literacies approach which expands the definition of literacy from simple reading and writing capability toward “dynamic, culturally and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse written and spoken texts to fulfill particular social purposes” (Kern, 2000, p. 6). Willis and Paesani (2010) claim that the potential benefits of a multi-literacies approach in college level foreign language (FL) teaching are so great that multi-literacies pedagogy ought to be implemented even in “introductory FL instruction” (p. 122).

It is my view that authentic materials not only facilitate language acquisition, but in the context of a multi-literacies framework also expand knowledge of related cultures and societies. Therefore, I argue that authentic materials promote “translingual and transcultural competence” (Geisler et al., 2007, p. 237) and provide cultural context for mechanical linguistic constructs otherwise learned in isolation.

Background

Japanese is a very difficult language for L1 English learners. For example, various United States Government agencies have methodologies for rating and stratifying foreign language difficulty for first language (L1) English speakers. The Defense Language Institute (DLI) rates difficulty from Category I (easiest) through Category IV (hardest). DLI rates Japanese as a Category IV language (DLI language categories, 2015). On the other hand, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) classifies languages in five categories (I to V). FSI rates Japanese as the most difficult Category V language (“Effective Language Learning: Language Difficulty Ranking,” 2015).

In the case of Japanese as the TL, basic literacy is one of the primary challenges faced by L1 English speakers when learning Japanese as the L2. Japanese combines the following three writing systems: *hiragana* (Jpn. ひらがな), *katakana* (Jpn. カタカナ), and *kanji* (Jpn. 漢字). The first two are phonetic systems. *Hiragana* is used for Japanese words and grammar constructs, while *katakana* is used for words of foreign origin (modified to facilitate Japanese pronunciation). Finally, over the past millennia, Japanese has incorporated several thousand *kanji* characters from Chinese. *Kanji* were placed on top of an existing language. Each *kanji* character has a Japanese reading (*kun-yomi*) and Chinese reading (*on-yomi*), thus adding more complexity to the language. For example, Harbon and Rose (2013) cite evidence that English speakers learning Japanese as an L2 take at least three times as long to acquire basic literacy in Japanese as English-speaking counterparts learning German or a Romance language. Different methodologies may create variant labels or may split hairs. Needless to say Japanese is a decisively

challenging language for L1 English speakers. Therefore, this paper evaluates the benefits of utilizing authentic materials in the context of L2 Japanese teaching and learning.

Evidence for Authentic Materials

Before going any further it is important to present the case for authentic materials by examining the literature with a particular focus on empirical evidence. I begin by looking at evidence that shows better learning outcomes from authentic materials.

A variety of sources indicate that authentic materials (both modified and unmodified) have a positive impact on FL teaching and learning. In the Japanese L2 learning context, Kondo-Brown (2006) made a contribution to JFL pedagogy by comparing the effectiveness of authentic materials in learning *kanji* with rote memorization or mnemonic strategies used in isolation. This study involved “42 English L1 learners of advanced Japanese at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM). All 42 participants claimed English as their strongest/native language” (p. 121). Participants were tested by means of “a decontextualized *kanji* test (a test of *kanji* words in isolation);” and well as parallel *kanji* tests by means of authentic passages from a fiction novel and a newspaper (p. 122). According to Kondo-Brown (2006), authentic passages were only “slightly modified,” merely changing character names, genders, and some basic facts (p. 122). Thus, texts did not appear to be modified to enhance readability but simply to obfuscate text origin (so that participants who were familiar with such texts wouldn’t be at a greater advantage). Kondo-Brown reports that: “English L1 nonnative readers of Japanese in advanced-level Japanese courses can identify the meanings of advanced-level *kanji* words appearing in an authentic narrative text significantly better than when the

same words are tested in isolation” (p. 130). Regardless of the difficulty level of the authentic passages, “students were able to identify the meanings of *kanji* words appearing in the text significantly better than when the same words were tested without context” (p. 142). This research bolsters the case for authentic materials by demonstrating that *kanji* characters are more readily absorbed when learned in their relevant and authentic contexts, even in practically unmodified texts. Moreover, it demonstrates that learning with some kind of real-world context can produce superior results rather than drilling or rote memorization of decontextualized characters.

Furthermore, Gilmore’s (2011) study at the University of Tokyo compares the effectiveness of standard textbooks to authentic materials for L1 Japanese ESL students. This study involved a “ten month longitudinal investigation, exploring the potential of authentic materials to develop Japanese learners’ communicative competence in English” (p. 786). The results indicate that students using authentic texts “did far better than the control group on five out of eight posttest exams” (p. 786). In this study authentic materials were not modified. The pretest and posttest exams were broad in scope and included: listening, pronunciation, cloze, grammar, vocabulary, discourse completion, oral interview, and role-play.

Just as L1 English JFL learners struggle with Japanese, so do L1 Japanese students struggle with the acquisition of English; they face several mirror image challenges to their L1 English JFL learners. Gilmore’s study is particularly insightful when overlaid on Kondo-Brown’s study. Together, these examples strengthen a general position which values the utilization of authentic materials in FL pedagogy.

Adapted Authentic Texts

Next, I examine relevant literature for evidence that authentic texts can be improved by some type of modification with the goal of making authentic texts more readable and comprehensible for L2 users. In this area, Sandom (2013) examines the role that modification can play in making authentic materials more readable and accessible for English L1 students of Japanese. The following definitions are provided: “unmodified texts used were original texts written by native writers for native readers, whereas modified texts were re-written with the aim of reducing the difficulty of the original” (p. 289). Sandom summarizes the “authenticity debate” by addressing two sides of the argument: “one favors the predominant use of unmodified texts while the other promotes the efficacy of modified texts” (p. iii). Particularly in the case of JFL learning, original texts are often inaccessible to L2 learners, especially at the beginning and intermediate levels due to the high frequency of *kanji* characters without phonetic markings.

Through the examination of learning outcomes from authentic texts and modified authentic texts, Sandom concludes that modified texts play an important role to in paving “a way for developing such learners’ reading fluency;” while providing “learners an authentic reading experience” (p. 298). The contribution of this article is notable by characterizing potential benefits of authentic text modification for enhanced comprehension for L2 learners of Japanese.

Text modification may come in a variety of forms. The insertion of phonetic markings as previously described is one form. Employing a different application, Crossley, Louwse, McCarthy, & McNamara (2007) examines differences between the

linguistic structures of simplified texts and authentic reading texts to provide a better comprehension of the linguistic qualities of these kinds of texts. The authors analyzed supporters' and critics' theoretical points of view about the use of simplified and authentic texts in L2 teaching/learning. For example, the proponents of authentic texts in L2 teaching support their views by claiming that authentic texts provide students with more natural language, and they argue that the simplification of texts may create unnatural discourse. Supporters of simplified texts argue that L2 beginners "benefit from texts that are lexically, syntactically, and rhetorically less dense than authentic texts" (p. 18). According to the authors, neither side can provide sufficient proof to support their arguments.

Crossley et al., (2007) probe the differences between various linguistic structures of simplified and authentic texts to provide explanation of the linguistic features of these types of texts and their influences on L2 reading. One hundred and five texts were used in this study from seven textbooks for beginning learners of English as a L2. In addition, reading samples from grammar textbooks were included because they helped learners in reading materials related to "human interest stories," (p. 21), science articles, biographies, and children's literature that are similar to the authentic reading.

The results of this study showed that the authentic and simplified texts differed as "authentic texts were more likely to have a higher ratio of causal verbs to causal particles than were simplified texts" (p. 22). The authors suggest that simplified texts offer students more "coreferential cohesion and more common connectives and rely more on frequent and familiar words than do authentic texts" (p. 27). In addition, simplified texts

showed less diversity in the parts of speech. On the other hand, comparisons show that “no significant differences exist between simplified and authentic texts in their abstractness and ambiguity” (p. 27). This study helps to better understand the different roles of reading simplified texts and authentic texts in L2 teaching and learning, and how each type may benefit students at different levels.

Fisher and Frey (2012) investigated L2 teaching through leveled texts, which are divided by complexity according to students’ levels of reading comprehension. The authors investigated different studies about teaching reading through leveled texts and concluded that learners “learn more when taught with texts that were above their instructional level” (p. 348). The authors also found that learners read and understand increasingly complex informational texts. They suggest that teachers have to support learners as they progress in increasing levels of complexity of texts. The practice of “limited access to complex texts ... may oversimplify what readers are able to do even when decoding accuracy and comprehension is not nearly perfect” (p. 348).

The authors also describe ways of working with complex informational texts to support the learning of students and the small group work that will allow increasing students’ comprehension and critical thinking. According to the authors, complex informational texts are texts that require “a wide range of instructional routines” (p. 349). During reading of such texts a teacher should provide additional help to students to comprehend the texts and develop their vocabulary, and increase students’ cultural, emotional, and intellectual understanding. For example, a teacher should read aloud such texts and explain to students how to think about text structure, word order, and meaning

so that students will build their language skills and habits. This study illustrates how the employment of texts at various difficulty levels can assist diverse learners in attaining higher stages of reading comprehension proficiency.

Skills Development from Authentic Texts

Technology is undoubtedly changing the way learners acquire languages, not only second languages, but also as children interact with technology at earlier ages, technology is even shaping the way that first languages are acquired. To illustrate how important the use of technology is becoming in FL teaching, Blake (2013) points to “the internet as an ideal tool to use to allow students to gain access to authentic L2 materials” which allows for at-home L2 learning while providing a “sense of authenticity” (p. 4). The internet is a rather broad term, which can be broken down into a multitude of facets or different tools which have FL learning potential, e.g., TL newspapers, videos, social media, blogs, and academic forums. Therefore, web-based learning provides not only the opportunity for authentic input, but also for meaningful interaction and TL output.

Pertaining to one of many technological tools, Dixon (2010) opines that “computer-assisted text input” might have significant implications in that it “could be of benefit to the field of literacy in Japanese as well as the field of JFL pedagogy” (p. 34). Dixon argues that written output in Japanese is becoming increasingly computer-based with significantly less hand written output (which applies to both L1 Japanese speakers and L2 Japanese learners). Therefore, computer-assisted text input simply refers to the ability to use a keyboard with Roman letters assisted by computer software that allows the user to create any variety of Japanese writing. While computer-assisted text input is

more of an output tool, Dixon advocates for its value in promoting literacy in Japanese, and elaborates on the potential benefits for JFL learners in the following ways: “the ability to produce text without having to memorize the orthography;” “greater exposure to the written system as a whole;” and “more incidental vocabulary and *kanji* learning” following “increased exposure to authentic text” (p. 33). Dixon’s work is interesting because it examines the emerging field of computer-based technology on de-obfuscating written Japanese text, since attaining basic literacy in Japanese for L1 English-speakers can be an extremely daunting task.

On one side of the technological coin is the computer-assisted text input, which allows the user to easily write and recreate complex *kanji* characters with ease using alphabetic keys on a keyboard. On the other side of the coin are computer-based tools such as Google’s ‘rikaikun’ (“rikaikun,” 2015) which allows users to get an instant reading and translation by simply hovering the pointing icon over a character. Another tool called ‘IPA furigana’ inserts phonetic *furigana* (ふりがな) over the top of every *kanji* character on an entire webpage, which allows users to instantly insert the phonetic reading of the characters for an entire webpage (“IPA furigana,” 2016). These tools dramatically increase the readability of online media (See Appendix C, which shows a lesson plan containing a modified text with inserted *furigana*).

Dixon’s work sheds light on an emerging area of study, which is the use of technological means to facilitate communication in the target language (both reading and writing). Computer-assisted text input allows JFL students to engage in blogs and various social networking forums with L1 Japanese-speakers. In this way, Dixon (2010)

illustrates that: “in the typed domain, there are overall fewer errors, and the readability of this production is considerably higher, something that could be of benefit for both the writer as well as the reader” (p. 42). This reinforces the notion of computer-assisted text input as a means of enhancing communication in the TL. In short, Dixon’s article illuminates ways that emerging technological capabilities may assist learners in working with authentic texts.

In addition to technology which helps students to read and write in the L2, audiovisual authentic materials made more accessible through the Web can be an increasingly more valuable resource for L2 language learners. In this domain, Gruba (2006) studies the role of authentic videotexts and digital media as pedagogical tools to enhance JFL students’ media literacy, and urges “language teachers and researchers to adopt media literacy perspectives in their use of electronic media” (p. 77); and further argues that, “adopting a literacy perspective towards student interactions with digital media can extend and develop views of second language (L2) listening comprehension” (p. 77). For example, qualitative analysis of twenty-two Australian JFL learners identified grappling with the content of the videos to essentially modify and “fool around” with the linguistic content (p. 77). It seems that web-based digital media at a minimum offer a means of gaining more exposure to the TL, which can be even more important during periods of home-country learning.

Gruba (2006) argues that “Bringing in a literacy perspective (or, indeed, literacies) the classrooms opens up refreshing possibilities for teaching and research with video-mediated L2 listening” (p. 88). Gruba’s concept of media literacy seems to fit quite

nicely into the multi-literacies concept which helps to move emphasis beyond mere authentic materials toward an expanded definition of literacy. Including a media literacy focus opens an aperture to an array of visual and audible input with applicable sociocultural contexts. Therefore, the importance of media literacy in FL learning will likely increase, especially in light of the continuous proliferation of smart phones combined with information technology that make a vast array of authentic TL media increasingly accessible.

Cultural Benefits of Authentic Materials

Next, I explore the tremendous cultural insights that might be gleaned from authentic materials. For example, certain materials not only provide an expanded knowledge of culture, but may also increase student motivation by making learning not only intellectually stimulating but also fun.

In the dimension of making learning culturally relevant and fun, Armour (2011) focuses on JFL teaching and learning through the use of '*manga*' (Jpn. 漫画), i.e., Japanese comic books. This article sheds light on the effectiveness of non-traditional authentic material's potential as an effective teaching and learning tool in JFL pedagogy. Armour touts his extensive background as a JFL teacher since 1980 and asserts that authentic materials are superior to non-authentic teaching materials such as textbooks written specifically for JFL students. Armour cites the following as an example of *manga* as an effective tool for Japanese learning: "more recently I have had students who, though they have only formally studied Japanese language for two or three weeks, come out with some pretty impressive Japanese" (p. 128). Armour implies that learners find

these passages unique and fun, or as material that could be used cleverly later on in actual conversation. Thus, it appears that comic book material seems to resonate with students in important ways.

Moreover, pertaining to the use of *manga* as a pedagogical tool, Armour (2011) cites the development of cultural competency. For example, students can use *manga* to learn about “Japanese popular culture in and out of the classroom” (p. 125). Relatedly, Huang and Archer (2012) subscribe to the view *manga* is a valuable tool in promoting literacy and sociocultural competence. They assert that “the literacy practices involved in reading *manga*” are “multimodal social semiotic” in nature, and that “as students read across cultures they come to develop new notions of literacy” (p. 45). Connectedly, Armour argues that: “the notion of authenticity embedded in *MANGA* helps with the development of a L2 learner’s quest for cultural and communicative competence” (p. 132). These assertions appear to advocate for reaching beyond the mere mechanical aspects of JFL learning toward opening a larger gate to Japanese society and culture.

There are probably a variety of reasons that *manga* are a great JFL learning tool. One reason might be that the utterances or passages are much shorter than most standard literature, so the material would be much more comprehensible and accessible for beginners. This does not mean that the strategy of memorization is by any means exclusively derived from the use of authentic materials. What it does mean is that phrases from authentic comic book texts tend to captivate learners, thus prompting any variety of content acquisition strategies spawned from heightened motivation. In short it seems that *manga* have many benefits for JFL learners. Generally their content and linguistic

features present a low entry barrier for beginners, and provide learners with enhanced cultural knowledge through socially relevant language.

Conclusion

In this paper I have examined the efficacy of authentic materials as pedagogical resources in the foreign language classroom. I have provided a brief overview of many of the challenges associated with JFL learning which is arguably the most difficult target language for L1 English learners. Moreover, I have illustrated how authentic materials may facilitate foreign language acquisition, in addition to promoting sociocultural understanding. In this sense, I believe that the evidence supports the argument that authentic materials facilitate target language acquisition. The literature examined also supports the notion that authentic materials cultivate an expanded definition of learning, which moves FL pedagogy beyond CLT toward a multi-literacies framework (Willis & Paesani, 2010).

It is not my conclusion that multi-literacies or authentic materials ought to be the only pedagogical resource or method. Correspondingly, Willis and Paesani (2010) state: “Although a multi-literacies approach does not prescribe specific content appropriate for introductory FL courses, it foregrounds the role of authentic texts of all types – both literacy and non-literacy – as the core element of instruction” (p. 129). In this regard, I do not advocate a total abandonment of traditional textbook-based approaches to language teaching, particularly in the beginning phase of learning. For instance, it would be unreasonable to assert that an unmodified newspaper would be an appropriate method of teaching the ABCs to kindergarteners. Even though the newspaper article may contain

all twenty six letters of the English alphabet, it would be seen as unreasonable to use that type of material for that level of instruction. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that the acquisition of TLs (particularly with difficult orthographic systems), requires a suitable foundation to be laid prior to tackling even rudimentary-level authentic material.

However, I share the sentiment of Willis and Paesani (2010) relating to pedagogical instruction related to college FL learning, particularly that “multi-literacies instruction is not just feasible but essential to the relevance and intellectual rigor of undergraduate FL programs” (p. 137). Kern (2005) similarly asserts that FL teaching must meet “contemporary multicultural and multimodal literacy needs” (p. 384), implying that an expanded definition of literacy is not a mere luxury. Kern (2005) also emphasizes the importance of learning the “sociocultural and political contexts in which texts are situated” (p. 384). This is a task which naturally emanates from the consumption of authentic materials, as questions about the sociocultural and political realms naturally spawn from the topics and ideas which they contain.

I also explored the merits of modified and simplified authentic materials and texts. While the debate of modified versus non-modified is still ongoing, there are certainly clear advantages of text modification which when used appropriately can de-obfuscate texts, or otherwise making them more accessible and more comprehensible. However, that is not to say that there aren't advantages of using unaltered authentic materials, as I also highlighted.

In short, after digesting relevant literature, I do not approach an ‘all or nothing,’ or ‘either or’ approach to using non-authentic materials, authentic materials or modified

authentic materials. Instead, the evidence strengthens the conclusion that authentic materials are indeed a valuable resource that should be employed with all modalities, and should be readily employed in tandem with the full spectrum of language teaching materials and methods.

A topic for subsequent research that I would like to explore would be increasing the amount of culturally relevant authentic materials in the context of CLT pedagogy for four-year college FL programs. This approach would not only be a ‘middle way’ approach merging CLT and authentic material pedagogy, but would establish a crawl, walk, and run method. This means that, while authentic materials would be used from the very beginning, the content would at first be very elementary, shortened, and modified for enhanced readability. As students’ linguistic skills develop, the content difficulty level would increase and the amount of modification would be decreased.

I believe that the ultimate goal of an effective FL program is promoting native-like characteristics, but I do not imply that authentic material pedagogy will churn out L1 level speakers. For example, adult L1 speakers are generally expected to be able to read a newspaper or novel with little or no assistance, aside from looking up an occasional word in a dictionary. I contend that at some point in the advanced stages of FL programs, the proverbial ‘training wheels’ should be removed, and student proficiency should be assessed by measuring ability with unmodified authentic texts. Subsequent assessment scores would help determine the appropriate level modification. I am intrigued by the potential implications of such research in the JFL context.

CULTURE ARTIFACT

Contrasting Pragmatic Elements of L2 Japanese and L2 English Learning:

A Closer Look at Refusals and Indirect Opinions

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

I originally wrote this paper for my Linguistics 6900 course (Pragmatics: Culture Teaching and Learning). This class was very enjoyable and opened my awareness of the sociocultural dimensions of language. Language contains much more than literal meanings. Individual words and short phrases have literal meanings in addition to various contextual cultural meanings. This paper was very helpful to me in gaining greater awareness of the pragmatic challenges which L1 English learners of Japanese face and the mirror image challenges which L1 Japanese learners of English experience. As a foreign language teacher, gaining such pragmatic awareness of the target languages that I teach was very helpful to me. For example, I uncovered that even L2 Japanese speakers (from an L1 English background) who are highly advanced or proficient in the language tend to opt out of using culturally appropriate formulaic expressions. The implications from this paper are very consequential by emphasizing the necessity for the inclusion of lessons in pragmatics in target language programs.

Abstract

This paper examines specific elements of pragmatic language (i.e., refusals and indirect opinions) in the context of L1 English learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) / Japanese as a second language (JSL), contrasted with the mirror image pragmatic examination of L1 Japanese learners of English as a foreign language or English as a second language (ESL/EFL).

Introduction

This paper looks at the thorny pragmatic challenges that L1 English learners experience when learning pragmatic aspects of Japanese, namely learning how to recognize or produce refusals and indirect opinions in Japanese. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) emphasize the importance of pragmatic awareness as follows: “Speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative, ill mannered, rude, or a combination of all three. Such misinterpretation of communicative intent is heightened in cross-cultural situations” (p. 244). This highlights the importance of foreign language learners being able to acquire subtle pragmatic aspects of their respective target languages, including refusals and indirect opinions. Subsequently, this paper examines mirror image pragmatic language features by contrasting cultural differences between Japan and the United States (i.e., L1 English learners of Japanese contrasted with L1 Japanese learners of English). The investigation of both sides of the same coin may assist to de-obfuscate thorny pragmatic challenges encountered by each group of learners.

Ideally, an investigation of relevant literature on this topic will shed light on corresponding or differing linguistic pragmatic aspects between L1 Japanese learners of English, and L1 English learners of Japanese. For example, LoCastro (2010) states that “cross-cultural mismatches between Japanese interlocutors and American English speakers may arise regarding the location and frequency of the listener responses” (p. 97). By contrast, Houck and Fujimori (2010) address the seeming inability of Japanese learners of English to offer an indirect opinion in English, e.g., “the tendency of learners from cultures such as Japan to use offensively direct strategies when speaking English” (p. 90). Therefore pragmatic challenges faced by both groups (JFL/JSL learners and EFL/ESL learners) may reflect a variety of cultural differences between North American/Western and Japanese cultures.

Knowledge of the most apparent cultural differences (including the tendency of preconceived notions and stereotypes to distort) may result in speech acts or utterances which exaggerate perceptions of the other culture. This is perhaps one reason why a Japanese speaker might use extremely direct English utterances with L1 English-speaking interlocutors, based on knowledge that English speakers are more direct. Moreover, Japanese learners of English may even overdo ‘directness’ when speaking in English to the point of being rude. This paper reviews applicable research on such issues, and then compares and contrasts similarities and difference between each group of learners.

Refusals and Indirect Opinions in JFL Learning

Increasingly, technology is becoming an integral part of foreign language teaching in multiple dimensions. Pragmatics is an area in which potential gains may be

made through technological means designed to enhance pragmatic awareness. In this arena, Ishihara (2007) examines the impact of a web-based pragmatics awareness program, which utilizes naturalistic audio samples, for its ability to increase pragmatic competence in learners of Japanese. Ishihara (2007) evaluates various speech acts and states that learners analyze the “language of acceptance and refusal in order to self-discover the lexical and prosodic features of refusals” (Ishihara, 2007, p. 28). Moreover, Ishihara claims that evidence of JFL learners’ increase in pragmatic competence is evident from evaluating their “reflective journaling” (p. 34).

Table 4 contains examples which exhibit the acquisition of pragmatically appropriate Japanese refusal strategies. When looking at the refusal aggregate compilation of strategies employed by JFL learners revealed in Table 4, it seems clear that such strategies are more indicative of Japanese refusal patterns which comport with Japanese society, more so than they seem to comport with North American society. For instance, in Japan there tends to be much more consciousness of rank, position, or status, and language is modified accordingly, e.g., most Japanese would speak to a college professor or a boss much differently than they would speak to a member of their own family. By contrast, many North Americans tend to employ similar levels of formality when speaking in a variety of social context, e.g., being on a first name basis with higher ranking persons. Another proper refusal strategy in Japanese from Table 4 is the accepted use of a ‘white lie’ as a way to save face. In the USA, any lie is generally frowned upon. Instead of saving face, the act of lying, regardless of motive may implicate someone as being untruthful or branded ‘a liar,’ especially if the truth is later exposed. Even so, in

Japan, it appears that the white lie is a perfectly acceptable and even routine refusal strategy, which Ishihara claims JFL learners successfully adopt.

Table 4	
<i>JFL Learners Demonstrate Pragmatically Appropriate Refusal Strategies</i>	
✓	Using appropriate refusal expressions according to the interlocutor and the situation (e.g. relative age, status, level of acquaintance, intensity of the act)
✓	Using a white lie as a face-saving strategy
✓	Speaking honestly with close friends
✓	Using strategies of refusals (e.g., providing reasons for refusals, offering an alternative, apologizing/stating regret)
✓	Using an appropriate tone of voice (e.g. alerting the hearer as to the upcoming refusal, speaking hesitantly, leaving the refusal sentence incomplete, using bows in formal refusals)”
✓	Demonstrated their awareness of use of white lies as a face-saving strategy
✓	Semantic formulae for refusals (e.g., providing reasons for refusals, offering an alternative, stating regret).

Note. Adapted from “Web-based curriculum for pragmatics instruction in Japanese as a foreign language: An explicit awareness-raising approach,” by N. Ishihara, 2007, *Language Awareness*, 16, pp. 34-35. Copyright 2007 by N. Ishihara.

There is value in testing JFL/JSL learners’ ability to acquire pragmatically appropriate refusal strategies in the target language. Pertaining to one pedagogical approach, Ishihara (2007) asserts that web-based pragmatics instruction “can potentially be effective as a curriculum independent of class-based instruction” (p. 36), yet claims that more optimal outcomes may be achieved if web-based pragmatics instruction is used in tandem with class-based instruction. The fact that evidence demonstrates that pragmatic knowledge can be acquired from online or web based instruction (not only from traditional in-classroom instruction), should provide L2 Japanese teachers and learners with a sense of optimism.

While Ishihara's research lends support to the notion that L2 Japanese learners can acquire pragmatically appropriate refusal strategies, other research by Kawate-Mierzejewska (2009) seems to paint a different picture, i.e., that even advanced L2 speakers of Japanese tend to employ quite different refusal strategies than L1 speakers of Japanese. Kawate-Mierzejewska examines differences in refusal strategies between "20 Japanese speakers of Japanese (JJs) and 20 American English speakers of Japanese (AJs)" (p. 199) in the context of naturalistic 15-20 minute telephone conversations. All 20 North Americans used in the study were very advanced speakers of Japanese. All had lived in Japan for over ten years. All participants had no problem interacting and communicating with L1 Japanese speakers in everyday conversation, and nearly all of them passed the most advanced level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2009). The results indicate that "AJs employed a wider variety of refusal strategies than the JJs" (p. 199). The JJs were observed using five distinct refusal patterns, while the AJs employed seven distinct refusal varieties (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2009). Furthermore, it was observed that the JJs and AJs "shared only two refusal sequence types, the Excuse type and the Delay-Excuse type" (p. 214). Kawate-Mierzejewska opines that JJ refusal patterns are most likely governed by "shared sociocultural and pragmatic knowledge" (p. 214). To add further context, "knowledge of formulaic routines can be useful when performing a highly face threatening act such as a refusal" (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2009, p. 214). The larger number of face saving linguistic devices in Japanese is probably indicative of a greater value put on saving face in the Japanese sociocultural context than in a North American sociocultural context. Subsequently, L1

North American English learners of Japanese, perhaps out of a greater sense of individualism, may simply not be interested in saving face, even if they possess the advanced language skills to properly do so. Therefore, when making refusal type statements it appears that Japanese usually opt for a standard ‘plug and play,’ i.e., formulaic response to most refusal situations. By contrast L2 speakers of Japanese seem to generate their own individualized or authentic response for each situation even if armed with an advanced level of proficiency in Japanese.

JFL learners might acquire pragmatic awareness in a variety of ways. While some of those ways might involve formal classroom instruction, others are more naturalistic. For instance, Yokoyama (2006) uncovers that L1 Japanese speakers tend to engage in “foreigner talk,” i.e., L1 speakers tend to speak to L2 speakers differently than with other L1 speakers (as cited in Itomitsu, 2009, p. 158). Yokoyama expands on the notion of ‘foreigner talk’ by describing how L1 speakers of Japanese converse with L2 learners: “Japanese natives tend to modify their speech by avoiding the use of linguistic mitigating devices when they speak to non-natives, and monolingual Japanese simplified their speech to non-natives more than bilingual Japanese did” (as cited in Itomitsu, 2009, p. 158). This means that monolingual Japanese speakers tend to be more direct and even less polite to L2 Japanese speakers when uttering refusals in Japanese. Such a direct style of ‘foreigner talk’ communication could partially explain why L2 learners may have a relatively easy time understanding refusals. It could also partially explain why L2 learners, even at advanced levels, may struggle to acquire native-like refusal patterns, i.e., less native-like input is likely to result in less native-like output.

An additional pragmatic component which this section examines is how L2 Japanese learners interpret indirect opinions and how well they acquire proper indirect opinions for expressing and comprehending linguistic strategies. Since Japanese society places a great deal of value on social harmony, opinions are frequently stated in indirect ways, or a variety of strategies may be used to soften opinions, or otherwise structure opinions collectively. In terms of offering opinions, Iwasaki (2009) finds significant differences between how L1 speakers of Japanese differ from L2 learners:

While L1 speakers often sought common ground using various mitigation devices such as *-zyanai desu ka* ('isn't the case that?'), *-yone* ('y'know'), and the modal adverb *yappari* ('after all, as expected'), L2 learners enrolled in a 4th-year Japanese course rarely sought common ground using these devices (p. 541).

There could be several reasons that L1 English speakers may not attempt to seek common ground when offering opinions. However, when examining advanced JFL learners it could be assessed that it is less a factor of knowledge (i.e., simply not knowing the mechanics of such constructs), but it might be easier to assume that the cause originates in pragmatic transfer from the L1. In terms of opinion sequence structures regarding offering justification versus simply stating one's own opinion, Iwasaki (2009) observes that L1 Japanese speakers offer unsolicited reasoning with their opinions at least half of the time. By contrast, "L2 speakers tended to state their stance first and provide their reasoning only after the interviewer's request" (p. 546). This may indicate that L2 Japanese learners transferred the exact pragmatic style for stating an opinion from their English L1.

It seems likely that L1 English speakers may not modify their pragmatic style when speaking in Japanese for a variety of reason. Iwasaki (2009) claims that L1 speakers of Japanese use a variety of “linguistic devices,” when speaking in Japanese, such as strategic mitigation techniques which help to soften assertions, e.g., seeking “common ground before expressing their opinions” (p. 552). Also, L1 Japanese speakers almost always provided “general or background information” before stating their own opinions so that all participants could arrive at shared conclusions; whereas L2 speakers tended to offer opinions and conclusions “up front and then provided their reasoning” (Iwasaki, 2009, p. 552). Iwasaki (2009) elaborates on pragmatic differences between L1 and L2 speakers of Japanese in terms of offering opinions:

L1 speakers very often used the quintessential modal adverb *yahari/ yappari*.

They also used the verb *omou* ‘think’ with various combinations of negatives; the sentence-final particles *kana*, *yo*, and *ne*; and modality markers (*daroo*, *zya nai ka*, and *kamosirenai*, which all roughly mean ‘maybe’). Such intricate usage of hedges, sentence particles, and modality markers contribute to establishing common ground and achieving non-confrontational, harmonious ways of stating and supporting opinions. // L2 learners rarely used *yappari* or modified *omou*...

L2 learners sounded more direct than L1 Japanese speakers (p. 552).

These differences are likely the result of sociocultural differences. In particular, Japanese society tends to favor collectivism and social harmony, while North American or Western society tends to value self-confidence, individualism, and freedom of expression. It is likely that L2 learners of Japanese from a North American background

may avoid the use of modals, softeners, and hedges since the excessive use of passive voice in a North American cultural setting may convey an image of weakness, inactiveness, deceptiveness, or a lack of confidence. For example, when interviewing for a job with a North American firm, if the hiring manager solicits an interviewee for his or her opinion and the job applicant utters a highly passive or hedged response the applicant is likely to be perceived in an unfavorable way, e.g., weak, passive, indecisive. Such societal expectations and norms can be deeply ingrained at a subconscious level.

By comparison, Iwasaki (2009) asserts that in terms of softening opinions, L2 speakers' infrequent selection of proper linguistic devices results of two major factors: "limited proficiency and less need felt to use such devices" (p. 552). I would argue that it is more a result of the later, i.e., not feeling the need to use such strategies, but even going further that L2 speakers may either consciously or unconsciously reject such devices rooted in deeply ingrained North American sociocultural values. Even so, it is possible that advanced learners of Japanese may not fully understand or appreciate the value of modifying their speech patterns when conversing in Japanese, especially if their curricula haven't specifically addressed pragmatic dimensions of target language learning. Therefore, it would probably be useful to strengthen pragmatic instruction for JFL/JSL learners by providing what Iwasaki describes as the appropriate use of "hedges and modal adverbs" (p. 553). Additionally, instruction which specifically illustrates impact of culture on dialogic strategies should probably be emphasized in pragmatic instruction.

It may be assumed that in-country target language immersion is a panacea for developing pragmatic competence. However, there might be more systematic approaches

which serve to isolate and remedy specific deficiency areas of pragmatic awareness. A good starting point is learning to identify more or less difficult aspects of pragmatic acquisition. In this domain, Taguchi (2008a) examines the pragmatic comprehension ability of 63 JFL learners at a university in the United States (30 beginners at about their second semester of study and 33 intermediate learners at the fourth semester of study). By means of a computer-based listening test, Taguchi sought to determine comprehension for “three types of implied meanings: indirect refusals (12 items), conventional indirect opinions (12 items), and nonconventional indirect opinions (12 items)” (p. 562). Taguchi claims that for both groups of elementary and intermediate learners of Japanese “indirect refusal was the easiest to comprehend, and conventional indirect opinions were the most difficult” (p. 565-566). Taguchi (2008a) concludes that “nonconventional opinions were more difficult for the learners to comprehend than refusals, probably due to their idiosyncratic nature”. Furthermore, “the processing effort for these items was greater than for other item types because the learners needed to process a large number of contextual cues in order to understand meaning” (Taguchi, 2008a, p. 571).

In this regard, JFL learners at various levels may lack the ability to construct meanings when there are simply so many things that remain unuttered in Japanese. A high school choir teacher once said, “In music, rests are silent music.” Similarly, perhaps in Japanese, unsaid utterances are a silent form of communication. The problem may be for L2 learners that too many silent utterances may produce insufficient context required for comprehension. According to Yamashita (2008) “Misunderstanding occurs when

Japanese do not say enough” (p. 207). Yamashita describes an important aspect of interlanguage pragmatic ability as “understanding things that are unsaid or hinting are as important as understanding implicature or routines” (p. 208). Relatedly, the following is an example of an American businessman’s inability to understand an indirect refusal of a Japanese businessman, perhaps because it came in the form of a subtle hint:

When the American businessman visited a Japanese company to get an advertisement, the Japanese businessman said, ‘The color coordination is fashionable; this kind of journal has surely not existed before. We will be considering it.’ The American businessman was excited about the reaction of the Japanese saying *consider* it. On the other hand, the Japanese person who accompanied him instantly said, ‘Mr. X, it’s not a deal! If so, he would have asked us the deadline and other details; ‘will be considering’ means ‘will not do any further’. (Sasaki 1994, as cited in Yamashita, 2008, pp. 207-208).

Yamashita (2008) also points out that “Whether or not we actually say something, nonverbal actions such as gestures including hand waves, head nods, facial expressions or eye movements can mean as much as verbal utterances alone or even more” (p. 208). Relatedly, Jungheim (2006) examines differences between culturally specific gestures, i.e., “how learners of Japanese as a second language and Japanese NSs interpret a Japanese refusal gesture, the so-called hand fan, and found that the learners are significantly poorer than NSs at interpreting the refusal gesture” (as cited in Yamashita, 2008, pp. 208-209). In this vein, pragmatic instruction for L2 Japanese learners, including

the study of facial gestures and physical movements, may be as important as learning linguistic or verbal concepts and strategies.

Greater illumination of specific pragmatic acquisition processes and challenges was garnered through Taguchi's (2009) computer-based listening evaluation of 84 American English-speaking learners of Japanese comprehension of "three types of indirect meaning: indirect refusals, conventional indirect opinions, and non-conventional indirect opinions" (p. 249). These learners were at various levels of learning, i.e., elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The results demonstrate "that refusal items were the easiest to comprehend, followed by conventional and non-conventional indirect opinions" (p. 249). This seems to reinforce the notion that there is a range of difficulty regarding various components of pragmatic knowledge. For instance, "Once the linguistic part of the challenge is controlled, learners seem to be able to transfer their L1-based inferential skill to L2, and successfully seek relevance of the indirect information" (Taguchi, 2009, p. 265). However, the transfer from L1 knowledge or skills, e.g., the ability to inference, does not seem to apply to all pragmatic areas equally. Taguchi (2009) provides further rationale for why L2 Japanese learners may have an easier time comprehending refusals:

Both in Japanese and English, giving a reason for refusal is a common strategy. Since linguistic and non-linguistic conventions encoded in indirect refusals are more routinized and familiar to L2 learners, comprehension of indirect refusals is less demanding because it does not require extensive inferencing. Learners can

understand the refusal intention based on the shared conventions of language use, without processing a great number of contextual cues (p. 265).

Refusals in Japanese may appear in a spectrum from the most direct to the most indirect. In my own interactions with Japanese interlocutors, I have encountered an array of refusals from the explicit *iie* ‘no,’ or *muri desu* ‘it’s unreasonable,’ or ‘impossible’ to the more indirect *tottemo kibishii desu ne* ‘it’s quite severe,’ or *chotto muzukashisoo desu* ‘it looks a little difficult.’ However, it is less common for Japanese speakers to utter explicit refusals out of consideration for the other person’s feelings and maintaining an outward appearance of politeness and social harmony; even though native-speakers of Japanese may opt for more direct strategies with L2 speakers as previously noted.

One factor which may contribute to easier comprehension of Japanese refusals in general may be due to the frequent use of formulaic phrases, i.e., commonly uttered / prepackaged phrases with little to no modification. In this regard, Imai, Miller and Mizutani (1985) describe the use of formulaic language for refusals or disagreements: “For example, in response to a request, one can say *Kangaete okimasu* ‘I’ll give it consideration’. These kinds of expressions do not mean either yes or no but imply that there is little hope for the request” (as cited in Taguchi 2008, p. 561). Various common formulaic refusal utterances like *Kangaete okimasu* could probably be easily taught and acquired in JFL classrooms. For instance, a JFL instructor could straightforwardly tell his or her students what a particular phrase literally means in English, e.g., *Kangaete okimasu* essentially means ‘very unlikely’ or ‘no’. This sort of straightforward instruction could be implemented with beginners and intermediate learners. However, much more

lengthy and nuanced opinion utterances should likely be tackled in intermediate and advanced JFL classes.

While target study-abroad immersion is certainly not a ‘cure all’ it certainly is helpful in the acquisition of target language and culture. Taguchi (2009) asserts that JFL learners may have limited opportunities for authentic interaction, so it is vital for JFL instructors to “ensure that pragmatic learning comprises part of language learning” (p. 270). For JFL/JSL teachers this has two significant implications. First, pragmatics should probably be incorporated at all levels of L2 Japanese learning rather than in a single course. Second, pragmatic topics should be appropriately matched to the specific proficiency levels of students.

Refusals and Indirect Opinions in EFL Learning

This section explores challenges that L1 Japanese speakers face when learning English as an L2 in terms of comprehending and uttering refusals and indirect opinions. Kondo (2008) examines pragmatic development of Japanese EFL learners, focusing on refusals and “how Japanese EFL learners’ pragmatic behavior changes and how their awareness of pragmatic aspects of their own and the target language is raised through instruction” (p. 154). Kondo explores two main areas: 1) “whether learners’ use of refusal strategies change after explicit instruction;” and 2) “what kinds of pragmatic aspects the learners become aware of through explicit instruction” (p. 154). Kondo contrasts data from 38 female Japanese learners of English at a Japanese university (observation group) with data from 46 female American college students (control group) from California and Arizona. These groups are subsequently referred to as: “Japanese learners before

instruction (JEB),” as well as “Japanese learners after instruction (JEA),” and finally “Americans (AE)” (Kondo, 2008, pp. 161-162). The control group received explicit pragmatic instruction at their university in Japan for 12 weeks; pre-tests and post-test were administered before and after instruction (Kondo, 2008). Kondo analyzes frequency and overall use of the following ten types of refusal strategies: 1) direct refusals, 2) expressing regret, 3) statement of positive opinion, 4) excuse / justification, 5) gratitude, 6) statement of future acceptance, 7) indefinite reply, 8) proposing an alternative, 9) statement of empathy, 10) expression of good wishes (Kondo, 2008). This study appeared to employ sound research methodologies. In particular, the pretest and posttest data from the observation group analyzes the development of specific pragmatic features germane to the study. Additionally, the inclusion of a control group of L1 American English-speakers is helpful for comparing and contrasting improvements in EFL learners in Japan stemming from formal pragmatic instruction.

According to Kondo (2008) “Japanese learners before treatment preferred using ‘Regret’, expressions such as ‘I’m sorry’, more than Americans (JEB 69%, AE 22%)”... most likely influenced by cultural norms (Kondo, 2008, p. 161). By contrast, “Americans used ‘Positive Opinion’, ‘Gratitude’ and ‘Future Acceptance’ more often than JEB” (p. 161). However, there did appear to be some commonality at the outset, as “the most frequently used strategy was ‘Account’ for both Americans and JEB. The percentage of those who used this strategy did not differ much between the two groups (JEB 86%, AE 85%)” (p. 161). Moreover, “the comparison between JEB and JEA shows that there were instructional effects on their pragmatic behavior. ‘Regret’ was used less frequently by

JEA (49%) than by JEB (69%), which demonstrates a change toward the pattern of AE (22%)” (Kondo, 2008, p. 162). Kondo provides the following example of increased pragmatic awareness in refusal strategies through examination of pretest (JEB) and posttest (JEA) response data for Subject 1, and claims that similar results were observed in many Japanese test subjects:

Subject 1

JEB: I’m sorry. I have to go grandfather’s house with my family. JEA: Next weekend? Oh, I’m sorry, Jennifer. But my family already made plan. I’m sorry, I can’t come. Maybe some other time. Thank you for the invitation (Kondo, 2008, p. 165).

Kondo (2008) concludes that “the present study provides some evidence that pragmatics actually can be taught, and through instruction learners become aware of pragmatic similarities and differences between their native language and the target language” (p. 172). These results appear to show movement in the observation group from unnatural English refusal strategies toward more culturally appropriate refusal strategies.

One challenge that many foreign language teachers may encounter is prompting students simply to produce output, which may come in the form of a refusal or opinion. However, what are teachers to do when students lack the motivation or skill to speak? Ellis (2012) addresses the “silent period” which he describes as one of the “key features of learner language in naturalistic learners” (p. 191). As harmless and natural as a silent period may be in second language learning, Shimizu (2006) addresses what appears to be

a general unwillingness for Japanese students to express opinions in ESL/EFL classroom settings. For example:

Almost all the teachers from abroad in Japan become stressed because of their Japanese students' silence or reticence in English-language classes. Although the students like to talk idly in Japanese, which disrupts the smooth progress of the class, they are unwilling to express their opinions in English concerning the topic being studied (Shimizu, 2006, p. 33).

Certainly, the willingness to offer opinions in classrooms seems to greatly differ between Japanese and North American culture. For example, in North American classrooms, attending "class without expressing an opinion indicates laziness or a lack of intelligence. A clash between the different conventions of the two countries may be the reason for misunderstanding or miscommunication in a Japanese English-language classroom" (Shimizu, 2006, p. 33). Shimizu opines that one reason behind Japanese students' reticence to offer an opinion is that they are socially conditioned to wait their turns. Thus, in this context, students usually "wait to be called on, and once they open their mouths, the right and perfect answer can be heard" (p. 35), or such is their collectivist idealistic notion. Additionally, Shimizu cites "poor English," the linguistic dissimilarities between English and Japanese, as well as the "nativist goal" as common reasons for the silence of Japanese students in English target language classrooms (pp. 37-38). Shimizu (2006) concludes that the Japanese unwillingness to express opinion is a result of:

Transfer of pragmatic norms from their L1 (Japanese) to L2 (English)... Along with Japanese linguistic traits, which are quite different from those of English, Japanese cultural values of self-restraint and respect for elders and seniority restrain Japanese students from speaking freely (p. 43).

It would be interesting to assess differences in the 'silent period' and other pragmatic characteristics of learning by comparing at-home learning versus study abroad learning through immersion. How do learners interact with a target language differently when at-home versus in a target language immersion environment? Relatedly, Taguchi (2008b) investigates the role that learning environment plays in the development of pragmatic acumen by examining 60 Japanese EFL learners at a university in Japan, against a comparable group of 57 Japanese ESL learners at a university in Hawaii. The purpose was to determine whether or not being in a study abroad / immersion environment on top of classroom study would make a significant difference in pragmatic awareness by comparing "study-abroad and at-home instructional contexts" (p. 424). Taguchi (2008b) specifically examines two areas of pragmatic awareness: indirect refusal and indirect opinions. Table 5 lists some examples given by Taguchi (2008b) of indirect refusals and indirect opinions which were included in pretest and posttest exams. With both questions, examinees listened to an audio dialogue, and then responded to a written question.

Table 5	
<i>Example Questions: Indirect Refusal and Indirect Opinion</i>	
(1) Indirect refusal question	(2) Indirect opinion question
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a brief dialogue between two interlocutors, Mary asks John if he would like to go to the movies. John makes an indirect refusal by uttering the following response: "I have to finish my paper by eight." ✓ The examinee is asked to determine if John's response is a refusal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a short discourse between two speakers, Ben asks Barbara if she likes a particular movie. Barbara replies: "I was glad when it was over." ✓ The examinee is asked whether or not Barbara liked the movie.

Note. Adapted from "The role of learning environment in the development of pragmatic comprehension," by N. Taguchi, 2008b. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 30, p. 436.

Based on the evidence from pretests and posttests for both groups, Taguchi (2008b) assesses that: "For both groups, comprehension of indirect opinions was both more difficult and took more time than indirect refusal comprehension"... and also that "comprehension of indirect opinions presents greater demands for processing; as a result, comprehension of opinions may lag behind that of refusals in pragmatic development, regardless of the environment of residence" (p. 442). Subsequently, Taguchi opines that "the present findings do not lend support to the previous findings that living in the target language environment is beneficial for pragmatic development" (p. 442). Taguchi concludes that: "learners in a FL environment are not necessarily disadvantaged in pragmatic development; pragmatic comprehension develops naturally in domestic, formal classroom settings that afford limited opportunity for input, communicative practice, and pragmatic awareness" (p. 443). These findings seem to have encouraging ramifications for pragmatic education in one's home country, particularly since the research

methodology of this study appeared to be solid. Both groups of learners were similar in every comparable way, particularly in terms of demographic composition and length of English study. The only substantial difference was that one group continued learning in Japan while the other group learned English in Hawaii during the length of study. One major point of significance is that the university instructors in both Japan and Hawaii appear to be comparable in every significant way, e.g., native English-speakers with similar English teaching qualifications. Another implication that I would draw from this study is that a well-designed target language program which includes sound methodologies and qualified teachers ought to be able to produce similar outcomes regardless of whether learners reside in a country where target language is primarily spoken.

Continuing to examine classroom learning, it is useful to turn to Yphantides (2009) who demonstrates the ability of L1 Japanese speakers to offer implied meanings when uttering refusals or indirect opinions in EFL/ESL classrooms. One example from a dialogue between two interlocutors referred to as X and Y transpires as follows: “X: ‘Let’s go to the movies tonight,’ Y: ‘I have to study for an exam’” (p. 34). Such an example seems to illustrate the ability to utter more nuanced and sophisticated refusal than an explicit ‘no, I can’t’. In fact, Yphantides (2009) opines that X’s utterance contains “both the literal and surface meanings,” while “Y’s assertion that he/she must study for the exam, but primary or indirect meaning hidden under the surface is Y’s rejection to X’s proposal” (p. 34). There could be various ways of looking at such linguistic abilities. They could reflect similarities in pragmatic features between Japanese

and English, thus showing transfer from the L1 to English. Even though L1 English speakers tend to be more direct than L1 Japanese speakers, nonetheless, L1 English speakers, among themselves, may utter a variety of more ambiguous and nuanced implied meanings and indirect refusals based on the real-world context.

Yphantides (2009) provides an example of successful acquisition of appropriate conversational techniques for implied meanings by EFL/ESL learners, as evidenced by unscripted classroom utterances such as:

‘I’m sorry. I don’t have my purse now’ and ‘I have to buy an expensive book for the class.’ (indirect refusal to lend some money); ‘You look beautiful when you are dressed in bright colors’ (indirect opinion suggesting that dark colored dress does not suit the person well) (p. 50).

Such examples help to illuminate that L1 Japanese learners of English appear to not struggle to produce indirect opinions or make subtle or indirect implications with their utterances. It may be more challenging, however, to instruct such learners to fine-tune such abilities in order to easily switch back and forth between the use of indirect or implied meanings and more direct utterances and to be able to recognize when to use difference speech tactics based on applicable social contexts.

Discussion

The examination of pragmatic differences and similarities between L2 Japanese learning (for L1 English speakers) and L2 English learning (for L1 Japanese speakers) reveals an array of dynamic and interesting phenomena. Further examination uncovers various speech patterns and strategies which are rooted in cultural differences, while

others factors may be rooted in gender. Taguchi (2015) contends that “in order to learn pragmatics, learners must attend to multipart mappings of form, meaning, function, force, and context. These form-function-context mappings are not only intricate but also variable and do not obey systematic, one-to-one correspondences” (p. 1). Needless to say, when examining pragmatic language learning challenges, determining precise root causes for specific challenges and developing corresponding remedies may be quite a thorny endeavor.

In terms of examining the acquisition of pragmatic awareness in L2 Japanese learning, it is not only important to look at gains which result from classroom instruction, but also gains from in-country immersion. In this area, Iwasaki (2010) quantitatively and qualitatively examines the pragmatic development of five L1 English learners of Japanese through comparing formal and informal speech patterns before and after one academic year of study abroad in Japan. Evaluating pragmatic awareness gains from study abroad immersion seems ideal, as “acquiring ways to convey an appropriate demeanor is vital in learning Japanese as an L2. Japanese has no neutral forms of politeness, and speakers cannot easily opt out of choosing the level of politeness” (Iwasaki, 2010, p. 46). This is probably very true when L1 Japanese speakers converse amongst themselves, yet it may not always be the case with L2 speakers of Japanese, since *gaijin* (i.e., foreigners) are met with a different set of expectations. In fact, I have even encountered L1 Japanese-speakers who describe a *gaijin* waiver, or *gaijin dakara shou ga nai* (i.e., ‘foreigner therefore nothing can be done’), which essentially means that

it is expected that foreigners will not conform to various socially expected norms while in Japan.

In this light it is interesting to study which pragmatically appropriate structures are adopted by L2 learners and which ones are disregarded, as well as the reasons behind the selection strategies. Ironically, Iwasaki (2010) observes that the study group seems to use informal speech more frequently after returning from Japan, indicating a decrease of pragmatic competence, based on post-immersion interview data. According to Iwasaki, this might not have been an actual decrease in pragmatic proficiency per se, but rather during study-abroad immersions in Japan students might have been “pressured to use the plain style by their Japanese peers and/or host families” (p. 69), or engage in communication with close friends, or other informal social interactions which might obfuscate the proper use of formal and informal speech patterns for L2 learners of Japanese. According to LoCastro (2012), native Japanese speakers tend to “follow the generally socially-agreed-upon rules rather than to use language creatively, dependent on situated features. In other words, the default for Japanese speakers’ enactment of politeness is to follow societal norms” (p. 145). By contrast, Iwasaki implies that there are in fact shades of grey in terms of politeness (tied to degrees of formality), and that native Japanese speakers are adept at knowing when to use more or less formal expressions. Therefore L1 Japanese speakers employ “styles, which are often associated with formal or informal contexts, also index complex social and situational meanings, and native speakers are reported to shift their styles to create desired contexts” (Iwasaki, 2010, p. 45). By comparison, it might be an unrealistic ideal to expect L2 learners of

Japanese to easily acquire native-like intuitions when offering opinions, making refusals, or performing other pragmatic speech acts in Japanese, even when immersed in the culture. Iwasaki (2010) observes that “all participants in this study learned through their study-abroad experiences that Japanese speakers make choices... though there is considerable variability among individuals as to whether and to what extent their choices resemble those of native speakers” (p. 69). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assess that rather than cultivating proficiency gains, immersion in Japan might actually muddy the waters of pragmatic comprehension, including being able to distinctly recognize refusals and indirect opinions. If this possibility is true, then formal pragmatic instruction (especially prior to study-abroad) could greatly assist learners to better identify actual meanings in naturalistic communication. Otherwise, learners may be relegated to ad hoc approaches of trial, error, and guesswork.

It is also interesting to note that the most significant differences in pragmatic language may not always occur between L1 and L2 speakers. Sometimes greater differences may be observed between men and women regardless of what their L1 or L2 might be. Kawate-Mierzejewska (2009) observes “some gender differences in refusal realization strategies in both JJ-JJ and JJ-AJ interactions” (p. 199). Cross-cultural examination with respect to gender revealed that “both the JJ male and AJ female participants used the five different patterns of refusal sequences, but only one type, Delay-Excuse, was common” (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2009, p. 213). Additionally, “The AJ female participants produced the greatest variety of refusal patterns” (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2009, p. 215). Yamanaka and Fordyce (2010) identify specific differences

in JFL and EFL pragmatic learning. Interestingly, pertaining to gender, Yamanaka and Fordyce uncover that “female speakers decline more politely in both Japanese and English (longer responses, more polite expressions); whereas Japanese responses contain words making the gender of the speaker explicit; this is not the case for English” (p. 200). On average it seems that L1 Japanese speakers tend to be more polite than L1 English speakers, yet women generally tend to be more polite than men in both languages, whether conversing in the L1 or L2. The level of politeness or impoliteness is likely to affect refusals and opinion strategies, as politeness may often manifest in the form of various softeners and other mitigation strategies. It seems that gender plays a role, and men generally appear less likely than women to expend the effort required on various politeness tactics and strategies.

Hidden or imbedded meanings may prove to be an obstacle for L2 Japanese learners. Akai (2007) contrasts differences in refusals between English and Japanese speakers by providing one speech act context to illustrate the difference, e.g., when a salesperson is trying to sell a product (p. 11). In this example the Japanese Speaking Person (JSP) states: "*chotto kangaesasete kudasai*" (Let me think about it); whereas the English Speaking Person (ESP) states “I don’t want it” (p. 11). Akai (2007) provides the following rationale for each style of refusal, thus:

In English, when one says that they do not want your product, there is no hidden meaning behind this sentence. When a Japanese person says ‘let me think about it,’ he really means ‘no’. This utterance is because of the Japanese culture of harmony. Japanese people try not to hurt other people's feelings by directly refusing one's

request. However, an English person who accepts the words at face value will once again ask if the shopper had a chance to think about it (p. 11).

In this respect, it appears that hidden meanings or dual meanings can be a stumbling block for L1 English JFL learners. While they may understand the literal meanings of utterances such as ‘let me think about it;’ nevertheless teaching the pragmatic dimensions of such utterances and their actual meanings can be an important aspect of JFL instruction. By comparison, it seems that L1 Japanese learners of English seem to be more adept at learning indirect refusals in English without as much explicit instruction, as they are quite used to the language of indirect or hidden meanings from their L1.

Conclusion

Following an examination of relevant literature written on pragmatic aspects of L2 English and L2 Japanese learning, focusing on refusals and indirect opinions, it seems clear that transfer from the L1 influences comprehension and output in the L2 in both cases. In this realm, Taguchi (2015) states that “adult L2 learners experience a unique challenge in their pragmatic development, stemming from the co-existence of first language (L1) and L2-based pragmatic systems” (p. 1). Therefore, language teaching and learning do not appear to be a simple matter of memorizing vocabulary or grammar constructs in an attempt to understand utterances in target languages through direct translations. Particularly when crossing over from an English L1 to a Japanese L2 or vice versa, pragmatic education must take a more pronounced role in target language instruction (See Appendix D).

RESEARCH STRAND ARTIFACT

Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) Best Pedagogical Methods:
A Deeper Analysis of Home-Country Study with Authentic Materials

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

I originally wrote this as a proposed research paper for Linguistics 6010 class (Research in Second Language Learning). My intent was to identify the best teaching and learning methods for JFL in the literature review, and then propose a study to evaluate the efficacy of students who primarily utilize authentic materials in the context of formal home-country JFL study at the university level. The research involved in creating this artifact has allowed me to identify the many strategies used by L2 Japanese learners, and more critically reflect on some of the best strategies for foreign language learning.

Abstract

This paper examines many of the challenges that L1 English learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) experience. The literature review identifies many of the pedagogical methods commonly used in teaching and learning Japanese for L1 speakers of English. It then selects two of the seemingly best JFL learning methods (immersion and authentic materials), and then proposes a large research project to test the efficacy of authentic materials as the primary pedagogical tool (within the learners' home countries) compared with learning outcomes from study abroad immersion in Japan. Since, in-country immersion is a time tested method of foreign language acquisition which is readily apparent in learning any L2, this study proposes specifically testing home country authentic material pedagogy against immersion based pedagogy. Concrete research design and methodologies are presented. If results demonstrate that authentic material pedagogy is at least as effective as in-country immersion based learning, it will have significant implications for the JFL learning community. Such results would acts as a means of encouragement to teachers and students by demonstrating that proper tools and methods can produce learning results comparable to immersion programs in the JFL context.

Introduction

One of the primary challenges for L1 English learners of Japanese is acquiring working proficiency in literacy and oral fluency. The objective challenges which face L1 English learners of Japanese were described in detail at the beginning of my literacy artifact. Needless to say, as one of the hardest second languages to acquire for L1

speakers of English, I felt it was a worthy endeavor to take a closer look at some of the best practices in L2 Japanese teaching and learning.

Justification of the Study

JFL study by L1 English speakers is a relatively emerging area in applied linguistics, as compared to the study of English speakers of the Romance languages or other European languages such as German. Much research has yet to be conducted in the field of L1 English learners of Japanese. In the introduction, the problems associated with learning the Japanese writing system were articulated. Since JFL learning poses many significant challenges, it is worthwhile to conduct a broad spectrum research study to determine whether the use of authentic texts do in fact promote Japanese literacy for English L1 learners of Japanese, as compared to traditional pedagogical materials (e.g., textbooks written specifically for JFL learners). In total, very little research has been done on the use of authentic materials in relation to JFL learning. More research is needed in order to provide JFL teachers with more confidence for increasing authentic material use in JFL classrooms.

Literature Review

This paper provides a brief overview on the literature regarding some of the major challenges to Japanese literacy. It also examines some of the common methods for attaining Japanese proficiency. It also addresses some common language learning methods and outlines an approach to quantitatively evaluate two methods in a proposed research project.

Fukuda, Noguchi, Seely and Romijn (1994) describe the theory of “Total Physical Response” as an effective method of JFL pedagogy. This theory essentially claims that learners who put verbal commands into a physical response can more effectively attain mastery of the Japanese language, through more effective ‘mind body’ associations with the language. It seems reasonable that TPR has a role to play in JFL learning, since the roots of this method can be traced as far back as the 1880s, and TPR has been applied in foreign language teaching with a variety of target languages (p. xv). Since TPR has been around for a long time, it was one of the earliest methods I examined. However, since there have been so many methods applied to JFL learning since TPR was first employed, it can be assessed that TPR alone did not holistically fulfill the diverse needs of the community of JFL learners.

In an effort to grasp a more comprehensive list of possible strategies utilized by JFL learners, I examined Grainger (2012) who counts forty-four common strategies adopted by L1 English speaking JFL learners. Some examples of these strategies include: “speaking as much as I can to anyone by initiating conversations;” “imitating/copying native speakers around me or on audiotape;” and “asking other people around me when I do not understand what I have heard” (p. 608). This study was interesting because most of the strategies studied involve interaction with Japanese language teachers or native Japanese speakers, which involves students seeking out authentic verbal input.

Since it didn’t appear sufficient to simply survey JFL learning strategies, I turn to Harbon and Rose (2013) who examines motivational challenges by exploring “self-regulation” (p. 96) strategies of twelve student participants, as well as various

impediments for JFL learners, e.g., frustration, procrastination, self-criticism, and boredom – particularly related to the study of *kanji*. This study highlights some of the major obstacles that JFL students must deal with in order to attain literacy in Japanese, and helps set the stage for why further study is needed to identify and validate effective pedagogical methods for JFL learners.

After factoring motivational impediments, I examined how the use of technology may enable JFL learning. In this light, Hirata (2004) demonstrates that computer-assisted software significantly assists JFL learners in improving oral proficiency, specifically related to enhancing native-like oral pronunciation, particularly in terms of pitch and duration (p. 357). This study is important because it shows that computer applications can assist in the development of Japanese proficiency. Even so, Hirata's work might be expanded through additional research in the application of computer-based applications to support the readability of authentic texts for JFL learners.

Even though technology provides reason for optimism in JFL learning, target language in-country immersion will likely remain a favored method for foreign language learning. Relatedly, Manabe-Kim (2012) examines the strategies of missionaries as JFL learners in an in-country immersion environment, particularly their linguistic skills acquired in an immersion setting and the importance of cultural competency skills. This study is important because it sheds light on the importance of the immersion environment. In many ways, it is self-evident that in-country immersion is a great method for foreign language acquisition, because it at least provides frequent opportunities for a wide array of opportunities for linguistic output in the target language. Immersion will be useful in

the proposed research paper by providing contrast to the primary factor being tested, i.e., the use of authentic materials in JFL learning.

However, when looking at the age old assumption that immersion is a panacea for which prompts foreign language acquisition to take place, Taguchi (2008) puts that myth to the test. By comparing L1 Japanese EFL versus ESL Learners, she examined differences in the pragmatic competence of English indirect opinions and indirect refusals over time. Both groups of learners were similar in all meaningful respects, e.g., age, prior English study, and pretest competency. The only major difference was that one group of learners studied at an intensive English program in Japan (EFL), while the other group studied abroad in the United States (ESL). Taguchi concludes that “The present findings do not lend support to the previous findings that living in the target language environment is beneficial for pragmatic development” (p. 442). Taguchi’s study appears to bust the myth that study abroad is the best method of promoting foreign language acquisition. If this holds true for L1 Japanese learners of English, it should also hold true for L1 English learners of Japanese, or learners of any L2 or TL. This helps bolster the idea that other factors, (e.g., materials and methods) can in fact be every bit as effective as the gospel pedagogy of ‘study abroad’.

The complex Japanese writing system poses many thorny challenges whether at-home or in Japan, particularly related to learning *kanji*. Matsumoto (2013) examines many of the challenges native English speakers face when learning *kanji*, as well as the effects of the L1 on L2 learning, specifically relating to memorization strategies for *kanji*. This research is important because it illustrates the difficulties for L1 English learners to

attain functional literacy in Japanese reading and writing. It makes a contribution by studying the difficulties that L1 learners (with a Romanized / phonetic written language background) face when attempting to memorize *kanji* which are complex pictographic symbols (p. 161).

While the study of literacy is important, the study of corrective feedback (CF) as applied in JFL classrooms seems promising. A study by Yoshida (2010) addresses the role of CF between JFL learners and students and the overall implications for CF in the JFL classroom environment. This study combined with previous studies demonstrates how diverse JFL pedagogy can be, and highlights the need for more ubiquitous research of on JFL pedagogy for L1 English learners. This article addresses the importance of CF in the JFL classroom. However, it falls short of substantiating CF as a stand-alone tool for assisting L1 English learners in overcoming the significant obstacles to Japanese L2 acquisition.

In addition to mere CF, JFL teachers should recognize the benefits of making learning fun. A good example is Armour's (2011) article which focuses on JFL teaching and learning through the use of Japanese comic books, also known as '*manga*' (Jpn. 漫画). Essentially, Armour asserts that the use of authentic materials, specifically *manga*, are an effective way to teach / learn Japanese, by exposing students to real-world content and sociocultural understanding. Thus, Armour asserts the use of *manga* increases student motivation through making learning "fun" (p. 125). Armour's work is useful because it brings attention to the use of non-traditional authentic materials in terms of JFL pedagogy, yet lacks the empirical evidence for increased learning outcomes.

There is certainly much that can be said for the importance of making learning fun, a method that has probably been underutilized in the JFL field. However, the role of technology is an emerging promising which might also not be employed to its fullest extent. Dixon (2010) opines that computer-assisted text input might have significant implications, i.e., “could be of benefit to the field of literacy in Japanese as well as the field of JFL pedagogy” (p. 34). Computer-assisted text input basically means using software that allows users to create any combination of Japanese writing with Romanized alphabetic characters on a keyboard. Dixon implies that JFL learners may employ such computer-based tools to increase literacy by means of an enhanced writing capability.

Another example of technology in JFL learning is likely the use of authentic materials in the form of digital media. Gruba (2006) studies the efficacy of video texts and digital media as a pedagogical tool. Gruba’s qualitative analysis of twenty-two L1 English JFL learners implies that digital media exposure is an effective means of input, which stimulates learner output in various ways (p. 77). This helps lay the groundwork for the effectiveness of authentic materials whether in print form or in video or digital media form. Digital media from Japan might also help to create a simulated immersion environment, or give learners authentic input from the target language while residing outside of Japan.

Kondo-Brown (2006) compares the effectiveness of authentic materials to standard textbooks specifically in a JFL learning context. The results of Kondo-Brown’s research demonstrated that: “English L1 nonnative readers of Japanese in advanced-level Japanese courses can identify the meanings of advanced-level *kanji* words appearing in

an authentic narrative text significantly better than when the same words are tested in isolation” (p. 130). This study is significant because it provides data from quantitative research, which helps make a reasonably strong case for authentic materials. My proposed research project attempts to test the efficacy of authentic materials in a more comprehensive quantitative study.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review it can be inferred that in-country immersion and the use of authentic materials emerge as two of the strongest methods of promoting JFL acquisition. It's readily apparent that living in a country where the target language is primarily spoken for a sustained period of time, while not a panacea per se, usually generates positive outcomes for most reasonably motivated learners (albeit with varying results). However, in contrast to the use of authentic materials, the research by Kondo-Brown (2006) is promising. There is evidence that authentic materials help produce tangible results, but as yet it is unclear how far those results go. Thus, my proposed research project puts forth the concept of putting authentic materials to the test in concrete terms with the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do the learning outcomes from use of authentic materials in the classroom compare to in-country immersion in the JFL context?

Research Question 1.1: Are authentic materials at least as effective, if not more effective in promoting JFL learning than in-country immersion in the target language?

Research Methods

The methods used for this study will involve analyzing the results of a two year period of study from L1 English learners of Japanese from six different universities from three different regions: two universities from the United Kingdom; two from the United States; and one from each Australia and New Zealand (as a combined region). The rationale for sampling populations in this way is that it will facilitate the study of diverse L1 English speaking JFL learners while helping to control for differences in varieties and dialects of English. The following universities will be sampled: from the United Kingdom, University of Oxford and University of London; from the United States, Harvard University and the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM); from Australia, University of Melbourne; and from New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington. It will also help to account for variations embedded in separate educational systems in separate geographic regions. However, since all countries are modern and advanced they are similar enough for sampling and comparison.

The University of London's program requires that all students in the BA program spend their entire third academic year studying at partner universities in Japan ("University of London: BA Japanese," 2015). Some of these partner schools are ranked among some of Japanese best universities such as Tokyo University, Keio University and Waseda University – while others fall into a medium range category such as the Hokkaido University or Ochanomizu University. However, they all share the commonality of being authentic schools established in Japan for primarily Japanese students. These results may help establish a firm baseline for in-country immersion

learning as an effective learning method, or as Krashen (1982) referred to the potential for study abroad for providing ample opportunities for quality “comprehensive input” (p. 38).

The University of Oxford has a robust BA Japanese program which requires all students to spend their second year abroad in Japan (“University of Oxford: BA in Japanese,” 2015). However, unlike the University of London which has partnerships with a variety of universities, Oxford student must all do their study abroad at Kobe University. While this limits the Japanese immersion experience to a single university, it still provides the opportunity for a rich in country immersion experience.

Next, Harvard University has a respected BA program for Japanese (“Harvard University: Japanese,” 2015). While study aboard is not compulsory per se, the University does tout multiple opportunities for interested students to study aboard for summer programs or longer programs (“Harvard University: Japanese,” 2015). The Harvard program strongly emphasizes authentic materials from relatively early in the program, thus: “Interactive classroom techniques and culturally authentic language materials are utilized, and classes are conducted entirely in Japanese from approximately the beginning of the second year of instruction” (“Harvard University: Japanese,” 2015).

This emphasis on authentic materials found in Harvard’s Japanese program along with other programs that emphasize authentic materials ought to ensure there are enough students in the observation group who meet the criterion threshold. This proposed study will take advantage of existing characteristics within the various programs sampled. Minimal intrusiveness should encouraging willingness to participate. It is vital to have

each university's full support and cooperation to facilitate ease of data gathering, and as such this research will seek to conduct "convenience sampling" (Perry, 2011, p. 66) to the maximum extent possible. Utilizing existing traits in each program without requiring universities to change content, or ask students to modify their preferred method(s) of study or courses taken are key strategies in garnering maximum support and participation.

The University of Hawaii at Manoa's (UHM) BA Japanese program was selected because UHM claims to have the largest Japanese program in the United States, serving 1,000 students each semester with 200 fulltime students with declared Japanese majors ("UHM: Japanese," 2015). UHM's Japanese program is interesting because it is not only the largest BA Japanese program in the United States but it is often recognized as the best overall program ("UHM: Japanese," 2015). UHM puts tremendous resources toward its Asian language programs and Japanese is no exception. This is partially evident by the fact that UHM also offers masters and doctoral programs in Japanese language and literature ("UHM: Japanese," 2015).

UHM provides an interesting contrast to Harvard. Its Japanese program is ranked higher than Harvard's program, yet it is a public state school, and admissions standards are lower. This means even students with relatively low high school grade point averages and college admissions test scores can often successfully garner admission to UHM's Japanese BA program. Since Hawaii has a large ethnic Japanese population, this means that UHM's Japanese program is likely to have more heritage speakers (with greater exposure to the language before college).

Other characteristics of UHM's program are that study abroad in Japan is not a requirement for graduation. Also, many of the courses in the program such as literature and culture are not taught in the target language, but instead are taught in English ("UHM: Japanese," 2015). Furthermore, while there are translation courses which use authentic materials, there does not appear to be the same level of emphasis on the exclusive use of authentic materials in the last two years of the program at Harvard. However, a thorough review of all syllabi will be required to determine exact levels of authentic pedagogic materials used in every program.

Next, Australia's University of Melbourne offers a BA in Japanese program which "is one of the largest in Australia" ("University of Melbourne: Japanese," 2015). Melbourne offers a legitimate four-year program with content ranging from traditional grammar-based instruction for L2 JFL learners of Japanese, as well as authentic materials, one example including a course on "Japanese through the media" ("University of Melbourne: Japanese," 2015). The four year curriculum appears to be designed so that the entire program can be completed in Australia without any compulsory study abroad component.

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, has a decent Japanese language program with a BA program as well as post graduate master's and doctoral programs in Japanese ("Victoria University of Wellington: Japanese," 2015). Study abroad is not listed as compulsory for the BA program ("Victoria University of Wellington: Japanese," 2015). The program does emphasize "speaking straight away," and the course content appears to be a mix of traditional instruction combined with authentic materials which

emphasize modern society and sociocultural contexts (“Victoria University of Wellington: Japanese,” 2015).

The research setup and methodology will involve studying pretest and posttest data from fifty students from each program, with a total initial sample of three hundred students. All students will have a declared undergraduate major in Japanese. Each student will be given a basic prescreening test after completing their second year of college in order to ensure they have a reasonable baseline of Japanese proficiency in reading, writing and oral comprehension. For students that do not pass the prescreening test, attempts should be made to advertise and recruit enough volunteers, to ensure a total of three hundred total participants at the study’s outset. Having high numbers in the beginning will help minimize the effects of “subject attrition” (Perry, 2011, p. 101), and ensure an ample pool for selection the three final groups for the study.

It would be unrealistic to request students to modify their studies and the coursework they take in college. Therefore, the research methods will be as unobtrusive as possible and will allow the students to select coursework and behave as they normally would. Due to dealing with many prestigious universities and students that have academic success and future careers on the line, the proposed study will primarily rely on convenience sampling as stated, and characteristics that are already build into the diverse programs of study selected.

The proposed study will maintain the utmost respect for students’ privacy and confidentiality. Students will not be asked to report their grades from any class. They will only be asked to indicate the exact Japanese courses they took in their last two years of

study, and report the details of study abroad programs including length of study and coursework completed during such programs. Detailed syllabi would be requested from the universities in order to conduct a throughout review of course contents and methods. Subsequently course content and level of authentic materials used for each course will be assessed; and each course would receive a percentage assessment proportion of authentic materials used contrasted with total course material used (e.g., 50/100, 80/100, 90/100).

In this determination, there would be no distinction made between non-modified authentic materials and modified authentic materials. Modification could include technological means to provide phonetic (*furigana*) readings above *kanji* characters; or shortening of passages to make them more digestible. This study, however, would not differentiate between types of authentic materials, but simply to compare aggregate authentic material pedagogy to study abroad as well as a third control group.

To add further illumination; out of the three hundred initial participants, three groups would be created. The first group is the authentic materials groups which will be referred to as Group A. The second group will be the immersion group, Group I. The control group will be referred to as Group C; each of the three groups would contain fifty students. The three hundred initial participants will be combined and then totally randomized. This will help ensure that individual schools would not be compared to each other; rather learning methods will be compared. After students are randomized Group C will be created first. Fifty students will be randomly selected for Group C, paying no attention to their learning methods whatsoever. The only requirements for Group C will be that they pass the initial screening test at the end of their second year. This will help

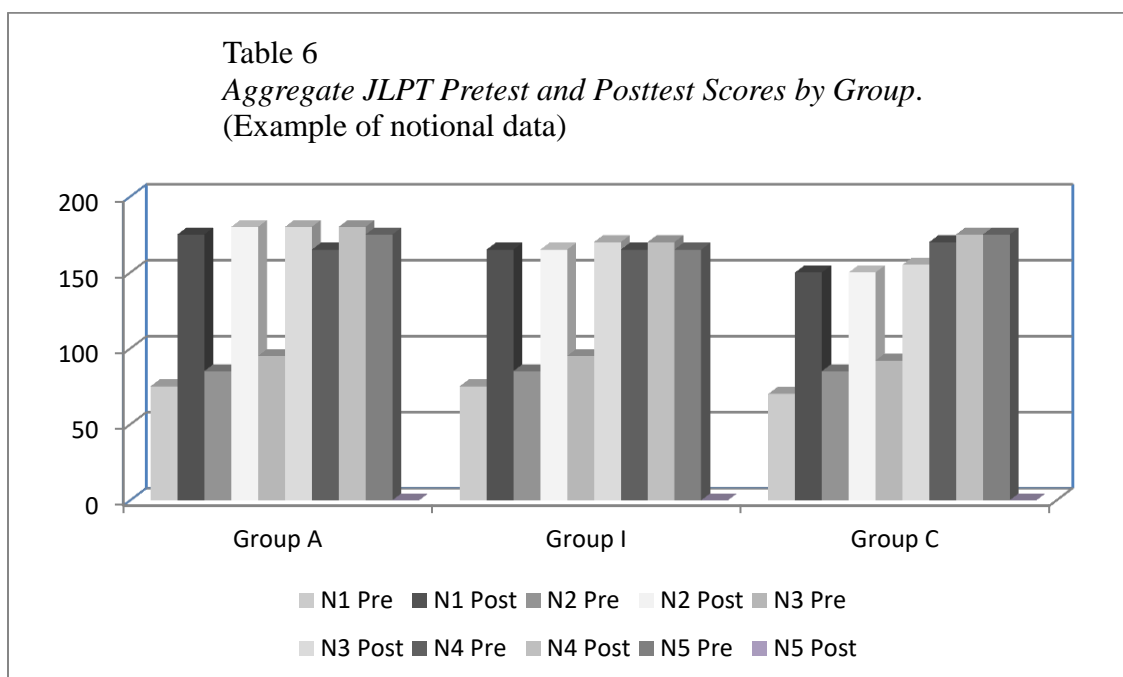
ensure that each student has gained a sufficient linguistic base in the TL for participation and evaluation. Subsequently, students passing the screening test would take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) (Jpn. Nihongo Noryoku Shiken 日本語能力試験) as the actual pretest at the end of their second year, and a JLPT posttest right after graduation. Group C will undoubtedly have undergone mixed pedagogical training, and they will also be asked to provide the details of which courses they took for analysis.

Next, Group A will be formed by selecting fifty students from the remaining two hundred and fifty students, choosing students with the most amounts of authentic material coursework, but who did not participate in any immersion program. Every effort will be made to select students with one hundred percent of authentic material instruction for Group A. However, that may be difficult to obtain. Therefore a threshold range will be established for authentic content instruction for Group A; the cutoff will be eighty percent, even though every effort will be made to select students with as close to one hundred percent authentic material instruction for Group A.

The final fifty students, Group I, will be chosen by selecting students who participated in immersion programs, making every attempt to identify students with the greatest amount of immersion time, ideally one full academic year. If there aren't enough students with a full academic year of immersion, students with half year and summer immersion programs will be included according to the length of their immersions.

In short, from the initial three hundred volunteers, one hundred and fifty will be selected for actual study (the remaining one hundred and fifty unobserved students may be utilized as needed to account for attrition). The first fifty will be selected randomly for

Group C, and the remaining hundred would be carefully selected for Groups A and I, by making every effort to select students who most closely match the observation criterion. JLPT scores for students in each group will be aggregated together so that scores will be compared by examining the aggregate scores of each group. Table 6 shows an example of what final aggregate scores for each group might look like. Since this is a proposed research study, I provided one notional graph to illustrate how I might organize and present my data. The notional data in Table 6 seems to affirmatively answer Research Question 1.1. For instance, Group A, outperformed Group I and C in every posttest category, with the exception of the N5 posttest (which is actually not applicable, since no student elected to take the N5 after graduation). Again, this is notional data. It would be interesting to see the data and results if the proposed research were actually carried out.



Rationale for Using the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)

The reason for using the JLPT as the actual pretest and posttest is to control and standardize level of motivation across all students. It can be presumed that anyone who majors in Japanese already has a high level of motivation for the language, and most of these graduates will go on to seek employment related to their major.

The JLPT is a test created by the Japanese Government to assess the linguistic proficiency of non-native speakers of Japanese. Since 1984, the JLPT has been used as the most “reliable means of evaluating and certifying the Japanese proficiency of non-native speakers;” and by “2011, there were as many as 610,000 examinees around the globe, making JLPT the largest-scale Japanese-language test in the world” (“JLPT Objectives and History,” 2015). Moreover, the JLPT “takes full advantage of the most advanced research in Japanese pedagogy and testing theory, and reflects the vast wealth of data accumulated since the original JLPT was launched over 25 years ago” (“JLPT Objectives and History,” 2015).

Another reason for using the JLPT is that it is probably the most comprehensive test in terms of measuring true linguistic ability. The JLPT finely pinpoints true proficiency by providing five different levels of the test, i.e., N5, N4, N3, N2 and N1. N5 is the easiest test and the N1 is the most difficult (“JLPT Four Key Characteristics,” 2015). This means that students can self-regulate and choose their own level of pretest and posttest. Most students with intermediate Japanese ability (i.e., mid-way through college) for example would probably elect to take the N3, N4 or N5, but many highly ambitious or adventurous intermediate students may nonetheless take the N2 or N1 out of

curiosity. Whereas, most graduates of a four year BA program in Japanese would be more likely to challenge the N2 or N1, as it will make them much stronger candidates in the job market. Having a large sample pool as identified will allow students to take the tests they feel comfortable with, but also provide sufficient data for accurate comparison and analysis. In this way, this proposed study contains the mechanism to compare ‘apples to apples’ and helps minimize “extraneous variables” (Perry, 2011, p. 52) and other potential distractors in analyzing data.

The JPLT contains the following four characteristics: 1) “Measures communicative competence required to perform tasks;” (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, and practical fluency as applied to daily life); 2) Students “Select a suitable level from among five levels,” based on self-assessed proficiency level); 3) “More accurately measures Japanese-language proficiency with scaled scores;” which is a more accurate method of assessment than “raw scores;” and 4) “JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List,” which means “test scores and pass/fail results alone do not clarify what students can do in Japanese in real life” (“JLPT Four Key Characteristics,” 2015).

Another note on JLPT scoring: each test level (N5 through N1) evaluates three areas: 1) Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar); 2) Reading; and 3) Listening. Each section receives a score of 0~60, for a total of 180 possible points for the exam. In order to pass the exam, a minimum aggregate score must be reached for the entire exam as well as minimums for each section; (at least 19 points must be gained to pass each section) (“JLPT Scoring Sections,” 2015).

Since the JLPT is the gold standard and benchmark for working in Japan, or in jobs requiring proof of fluency in Japanese, it is highly likely that all students will have similar levels of motivation to do well on the JLPT. This also helps to control for “subject attrition” (Perry, 2011, p. 101) in the program. For example, if students were being evaluated based on some kind of arbitrary or contrived test that has no bearing on the college Grade Point Average (GPA) or post college employment prospects, it would be very likely that they may lose motivation for the study. Using the JLPT as the pretest and posttest allows students in all groups to focus on doing well on the JLPT, and not focus on being participants in the research study. Subsequently, this may also help to control for the “Hawthorn Effect” (Perry, 2011, p. 107), as students won’t actually be observed during their studies, but will only be evaluated based on JLPT test scores.

Research Challenges and Solutions

The proposed study as stated might be considered overly ambitious due to time, coordination, funding (e.g., travel money) and other logistical constraints. As with any research project, there is the necessity to set realistic goals and expectations. This must be balanced with accomplishing the goals set out in the research project. If the project is too large in scale it may be rendered impossible due to time, budget, and logistical constraints. On the other hand, if the research project is too modest or limited in set up or scope, its results may not be able to effectively answer the research questions, and therefore may be a waste of time.

When I designed this study, I did so with the results in mind. If assessed that sampling three separate regions of the English-speaking world would help triangulate the

results, by accounting for a wide range of variables to include variations in different dialects of English learners, and differences in educational systems (albeit within the scope of comparable advanced countries). The range of educational programs and curricula also helps to ensure a wide range of students with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds represented (e.g., Harvard versus Hawaii). Moreover, differences in teaching methodologies at various universities allow to a large extent to sample and compare different pedagogical approaches, thus eliminating the need to ask participant faculty members to change their curriculums. For example, some programs tend to rely a lot more on textbooks, while other programs tend to use more authentic materials; such existing characteristics would be taken advantage of with the proposed study.

Probably the best mitigation strategy is to apply this research on a small scale and rely on “cluster sampling,” “multistage sampling” (Perry, 2011, p. 64), or “snowball sampling” aka “dung beetle sampling” (Perry, 2011, p. 68). For example, in Utah this research model could be applied to schools in the mountain west which have four-year Japanese BA programs, like the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, and the University of Colorado Boulder. Through partnerships at various universities in the Unites States, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, the same research set-up could be implemented elsewhere by academic colleagues through a series of partnerships. As long as the same methodology is used, data and analysis could continually be added to the research study in subsequent publications.

In short, by using partners, the research would continue to cluster or snowball over time. This would significantly mitigate time, funding, and logistical constraints

placed fully on any one researcher. One key to getting partners to run this study at various universities is to make it as easy and unobtrusive to university staff and students as possible. Also, universities may welcome the idea of objectively assessing the learning outcomes of their respective programs. Positive results could encourage broader participation by providing concrete evidence to entice and recruit prospective students.

Potential contribution of this study to the existing literature

The potential contribution of this study is that it performs a much deeper analysis of two of the best JFL learning methods: target-country immersion and home-country study using authentic materials. It builds on previous studies but goes further in terms of design, testing, and evaluation methods. This study if implemented will assist the JFL learning community in testing the relative validity of these methods as best pedagogical and learning approaches. If the research questions are validated, meaning that authentic material pedagogy proves to be as effective, if not more effective, than in-country immersion, the results will be significant. Such findings would give learners without the time or resources needed to study abroad greater confidence that indeed, if appropriate materials and methods are utilized, high levels of proficiency in Japanese can be attained, even if study is confined to their respective home countries, for whatever reason.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

I have included three annotated bibliographies; each with a separate theme, yet all interrelated with my second language teaching philosophy. The first one relates to overall theories of second / foreign language teaching, addressing such topics as communicative language teaching, which I feel are universally applicable to all languages. The other two annotated bibliographies are specific to the Japanese language, one dealing specifically with cultural aspects of Japanese, while the last bibliography focuses on specific best practices pertaining to promoting literacy in L2 Japanese. While the sources identified in the following annotated bibliographies are certainly not a comprehensive list of sources that inform my second language teaching, they ought to give readers a basic sampling of some of the main concepts and theories which inform my teaching approach.

Best Theories and Practices in Second/Foreign Language Teaching

Throughout the MSLT program I have been exposed to a wide array of teaching concepts, theories, and methodologies. Subsequently, I have attempted to savor the works of various linguistic scholars, and I have made every attempt to embrace the best teaching methods, concepts and strategies into my own teaching style. Thus, I begin this annotated bibliography by identifying the second language ‘best practices’ carefully selecting the very best from the academic world of applied linguistics.

Among the most striking and dynamic concepts in second language teaching is the notion of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as identified by **Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001)**, in their book, *The Communicative Classroom, Vol II*. This book describes the communicative approach to language teaching and learning. It prescribes various methods for creating optimal second language learning outcomes by methods such as: Task-Based Activities (TBAs), in which learners must carry out multistep task in the target language in small group settings. The authors describe three critical features which TBAs must include: 1) they must be “learner centered” and involve students working together; 2) task must involve “meaningful exchanges of information;” and 3) TBAs should conclude with some kind of presentational activity, i.e., students must present what they learned (pp. 76-77). The three essential elements of TBAs are what I found to be most useful in this book, since it provides a fundamental template for lesson planning in such a way to make the second language classroom truly communicative in nature.

In the context of CLT, I also believe it is very important to recognize the work of **Lee and VanPatten (2003)**. In the book *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*, Lee and VanPatten explain the evolution of foreign language pedagogies, beginning with the Audiolingual Method (ALM) and the gradual transition to the CLT method which is continuing to garner more popularity in foreign language teaching circles. This book provides an overview of the development of language teaching from the early ALM ‘behaviorist’ model until the modern CLT approach. It illustrates the pitfalls of the “Atlas Complex” meaning teacher fronted classrooms (pp. 9-10). It provides an overview of research which eventually led to the demise of ALM, e.g., **Savignon’s (1979)** findings that communicative classrooms led to greater fluency outcomes in French language learners than ALM approaches (as cited in Lee & VanPatten, 2003, pp. 49-51). Overall, Lee and VanPatten (2003) were able to succinctly describe the history and best practices in the SLA field, and that is why their book will become a permanent feature in my language teaching library. Moreover, **Ellis (2012)** expounded upon the notion of communicative classrooms by focusing on the social aspects of learning from the point of view of the learner. In his chapter called *Focus on the Learner*, In *Language teaching research and language pedagogy* (pp. 149-193), he elaborates on the L2 acquisition benefits of learner-centered teaching methodology. This approach focuses on the L2 learning gains which occur as a direct result of increased naturalistic social interaction in the target language within foreign language classrooms. Ellis (2012) ultimately concludes that “Group work provides a context that allows learners to maximize the use of the L2 for learning” though more opportunities to

“negotiate for meaning” or otherwise “scaffold” L2 input and output in the context of peer exchanges (p. 191). The research of Ellis is important because it gives foreign language teachers the conceptual framework to maximize the language learning gains which can be made by exploring and exploiting peer to peer interactions in the classroom which appear to simulate gains made in more naturalistic learning environments.

I consider myself an adherent to the sociocultural theories as related to L2 learning. I believe that Ellis through examining the contribution of teachers and students in the context of social learning, built upon sociocultural and interactionist theories that were laid beforehand. In this arena, I absolutely must highlight the work of **Vygotsky (1978)** who coined the term Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD essentially examines the raw or unassisted ability of a student and contrasts it with ability when assisted by a teacher or subject matter expert. This basically means that a learner’s skill can be evaluated on a spectrum which demonstrates that ability as an individual is quite often not at the same proficiency level as in the context of a social context. This is significant because it shows the efficacy for learning which is based in social interaction. **Long (1996)** also contributed to the notion that L2 learning has tremendous gains from social interaction. Long’s Interaction Hypothesis essentially identifies the second language acquisition benefits obtained through conversational and social interaction in the target language. I am very attracted by the social and interactionist theories of SLA, and I have happily embraced the concepts and theories set forth by great scholars such as Ellis, Long, and Vygotsky.

However, even as important as social interaction is to L2 language learning, I am still drawn to other concepts which highlight other aspects which enable L2 acquisition. In fact, motivation is a vital aspect of second language acquisition. Students and teachers both must possess an intense amount of motivation in order for successful second language acquisition to occur. In this regard, I am inspired by the work of **Dörnyei, and Csizér (1998)**, who published the journal article called *Ten Commandments for motivating language learners: results of an empirical study*. In this work Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) regarding motivation asserted the following:

We take the view that L2 motivation is one of the most important factors that determine the rate and success of L2 attainment: it provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement (p. 203).

This book is important because it not only emphasizes the importance of motivation in language learning, but also prescribes ten essential guidelines for language teachers to adhere to, such as “creating a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom;” or providing “positive feedback and appraisal” (p. 11). In essence, the authors have created a template for bringing forth motivation in language learning classrooms, and therefore maximize the potential for ideal L2 learning outcomes.

Regarding motivation and foreign language learning, I find the cognitivist work of **Chomsky (1972)** called *Language and Mind* to incidentally contain very motivational aspects. This article captures one of Chomsky's biggest contributions to the field of second language acquisition (SLA), namely that human beings are genetically predisposed for language, and that the human brain is hardwired for language. Two of the most essential concepts to Chomsky's assertion are: 1) the notion of Universal Grammar (UG), i.e. the human brain is wired for grammar and that all languages possess fundamental elements which the human brain is capable of processing; 2) the concept of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is sort of a magical device which facilitates language acquisition in the human brain. While the field of SLA has made tremendous strides since Chomsky developed this theory, I still assess that the cognitivist camp of SLA still has its place, by instilling a 'can do' attitude into language teachers and learners.

While I wouldn't consider myself a disciple of the cognitivist school of SLA per se, I am inspired by the ideas of some of the great cognitivists. In addition to Chomsky, I am also a fan of **Krashen (1982)** who in writing the *Principles and practices in second language acquisition* argued that: "comprehensible input – is the true cause of second language acquisition" (p. 34). While Krashen's concept of 'comprehensible input' is largely perceived as a cognitivist idea, it certainly has interactionist implications, as so much linguistic input inherently comes in the form of interaction, even if Krashen didn't overtly state his arguments with heavy interactionist overtones. Moreover, it is true that comprehensible input does get processed by the brain and over time leads to second /

foreign language acquisition. Either way, Krashen performed a great service to the SLA field by at least prompting greater attention on the role of input. Lee and VanPatten (2003) for instance seemed to concur regarding the importance of input, even by fine tuning and describing the type and quality of the input. Lee and VanPatten opine that just like a car engine needs gas, “likewise, input in language learning is what gets the ‘engine’ of acquisition going.” (p.26). Moreover, Lee and VanPatten declare that Input must be ‘meaning bearing,’ which means “both speaker and listener understand that the learner-listener is supposed to focus on the message;” and “if input is incomprehensible or if it is not meaning bearing, then these form-meaning connections just don’t happen” (p. 27). In short, Krashen caught the attention of the SLA field by making a case for ‘comprehensible input,’ and later scholarly research by Lee and VanPatten furthered this concept. In the concept of foreign language teaching, I agree with the notion of comprehensible or high quality input. That is why FL teachers must continually strive to find and use the best materials possible, whether they are authentic culturally relevant texts, or modified culturally relevant materials to make the input simplified or otherwise more accessible.

Finally, in the spirit of relentless motivation, I am inspired by founder of one of the most ubiquitous talent education methods widely referred to as the ‘Suzuki Method’. **Suzuki (1983)** advocates for the relentless commitment and states that “Anyone can train himself; it is only a question of using the right kind of effort” (p. 37). Furthermore, Suzuki (1983) illustrates that “If the five-minute-a-day person wants to accomplish what the three-hour-a-day person does, it will take him nine years. What one accomplishes in

three months will take the other nine years” (p. 97). Whether acquiring musical skills or foreign language proficiency, it’s pretty obvious that a few minutes per day or passive study will not yield positive results. If language learners are displeased with learning outcomes, perhaps they should first reflect on the amount of time devoted to their language learning pursuits each day.

Cultural Aspects of JFL Learning

Although I make distinctions between various artifacts (e.g., language, literacy, culture) or various compartmentalized sections of my portfolio, the reality is that there can be tremendous overlap between various aspects, such as literacy and culture. I have been impressed by the work of Kern in terms of a multi-literacies approach by combining knowledge of culture and focusing on texts with culturally relevant themes so that learners can acquire literacy skills and cultural skills simultaneously. In terms of building my awareness of promoting cultural knowledge through literacy, I drew inspiration from **Kern’s (2000)** work *Literacy and language teaching*, as well as **Kern’s (2005)** writing *Beyond orality: Investigating literacy and the literary in second and foreign language instruction*. For instance, Kern (2000) defined the multi-literacies approach as beyond the confines of simple reading and writing capability toward “dynamic, culturally and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse written and spoken texts to fulfill particular social purposes” (p. 6). Moreover, Kern (2005) similarly opined that FL teaching should strive to actualize “contemporary multicultural and multimodal literacy needs” (p. 384). Kern (2005) also stressed the importance of grasping the “sociocultural and political contexts in which texts are situated” (p. 384). This simply means that true

linguistic competency to include literacy cannot be divorced from understanding the cultures, societies, and politics from which consumed target language writings spawned. This reinforces a central premise of my teaching philosophy which not only employs but actually favors authentic materials as the primary vehicle for learning culture and gaining literacy skills.

Regarding the cultural aspects of language, I am grateful for the opportunity to have taken Linguistics 6900 which was a course devoted to pragmatics. For example, two scholars that I was exposed to in this course **DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004)** assert that “Speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative, ill mannered, rude, or a combination of all three. Such misinterpretation of communicative intent is heightened in cross-cultural situations” (p. 244). Despite the fact that I’ve been a student of Japanese for about 20 years, I hadn’t fully appreciated the value of its pragmatic dimensions until I took Linguistics 6900.

One book which I immensely enjoyed regarding the general pragmatic aspects of language teaching and learning was *Pragmatics for Language Educators* by **LoCastro, V. (2012)**. This book shed tremendous light on the subject of pragmatics, and address how cultural factors affect languages against the backdrop of the “social theory” aspect of languages (LoCastro, 2012, p. 5). Specifically related to pragmatics in the JFL context, I was encouraged by the work of **Ishihara (2007)** who observes the ability of L1 English learners of Japanese to successfully employ a variety of culturally appropriate face-saving refusal strategies. The social and cross-cultural dynamics, as I have come to learn, are a vital aspect which any language teacher, or learner for that matter, must become

familiar with and learn to appreciate. I found the work of **Houck and Fujimori (2010)** to be fascinating because it led me to greater contemplation about cultural influences in speech patterns which may transfer (or in some cases not transfer) from the L1 to the L2. One compelling example is that Japanese learners of English tend “to use offensively direct strategies when speaking English” (Houck and Fujimori, 2010, p. 90). In this example, Japanese speakers who normally use indirect opinion strategies in their L1 may tend to even overdo pragmatic awareness strategies when speaking in English. In short, sociocultural factors behind various speech acts, such as socially accepted norms and strategies for uttering opinions, refusals, or requests are essential areas for study and contemplation by foreign language teachers.

Certainly, there are many important aspects of developing conversational competence in JFL learners. In the realm of promoting conversational ability in JFL learners, I was impressed by the work of **Ohta (2001)** who examines the development of interactional styles in the first-year second language classrooms. This chapter examines the role of interaction, active listening and teachers’ use of student responses to facilitate conversational competence in Japanese. For example, it states: “To effectively communicate in the L2, students must learn more than how to use vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriately. They must also learn how to interact using the language correctly. Learners must develop the ability to use the language appropriately in context, and to act as listeners as well as speakers.” I find this emphasis on interaction to be of interest, and it sheds light on the social processes which transform learned information to usable knowledge.

Study abroad or in-country immersion is an excellent way of examining how interaction facilitates target language acquisition. Relatedly, in terms of the age old debate over whether study abroad is the panacea which automatically results in superior learning outcomes than other methods, I was very impressed to examine the actual empirical evidence presented by **Taguchi (2008)**. In her article titled, *The Role of Learning Environment in the Development of Pragmatic Comprehension: A Comparison of Gains between EFL and ESL Learners*; she examined differences in the pragmatic competence of English indirect opinions and indirect refusals over time. Both groups of learners were similar in all meaningful respects, e.g., age, prior English study, and pretest competency. The only major difference was that one group of learners studied at an intensive English program in Japan (EFL), while the other group studied abroad in the United States (ESL). Taguchi concluded that “The present findings do not lend support to the previous findings that living in the target language environment is beneficial for pragmatic development” (p. 442). The bottom line is that the extensive empirical research in Taguchi’s study seems to bust the myth of the panacea of study abroad immersion as the only / best means of target language acquisition. I find this encouraging, that indeed, proper methodologies result in optimal L2 acquisitions yields, i.e., CLT approaches and devices, and the inclusion of culturally relevant authentic texts and materials in foreign language classrooms.

Best Practices in Promoting Literacy in L2 Japanese

In order to identify best practices and methodologies at promoting literacy in any particular target language, it is helpful to define literacy in the context of foreign

language teaching and learning. In this regard, I am attracted to the expanded definition of literacy as defined by **Willis and Paesani (2010)** in the article *Exploring the feasibility of pedagogy of multiliteracies in introductory foreign language courses*. In this context Willis and Paesani call for the inclusion of culturally relevant topics, focus areas, awareness, and competency in addition to the mere focus on the mechanical aspects of literacy. Relatedly, Willis and Paesani claim that the potential benefits of a multi-literacies approach in college level foreign language (FL) teaching are so great that multi-literacies pedagogy ought to be implemented even in “introductory FL instruction” (p. 122); which basically means including more real-world elements of meaning bearing language (e.g., culture, politics, etc.) into FL instruction. Thus, Willis and Paesani opine that the multiliteracies approach moves FL pedagogy even beyond a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) toward a multi-literacies framework, implying it’s the next step in FL teaching evolution. Additionally, Willis and Paesani (2010) state: “Although a multi-literacies approach does not prescribe specific content appropriate for introductory FL courses, it foregrounds the role of authentic texts of all types – both literacy and non-literacy – as the core element of instruction” (p. 129). I was intrigued by the multiliteracies approach and this prompted to look for examples of JFL instruction which embody some of its principles.

In this vein, I was impressed by the work of **Armour (2011)**, in *Learning Japanese by reading ‘manga’: The rise of ‘soft power pedagogy,’* which focuses on JFL teaching and learning through the use of ‘manga’ (Jpn. 漫画), i.e., Japanese comic books. Armour (2011) asserts that authentic materials are superior to other non-authentic

teaching materials such as textbooks written specifically for JFL students. Armour (2011) claims that “students who, though they have only formally studied Japanese language for two or three weeks, come out with some pretty impressive Japanese” acquired from comic books (p. 128). Armour (2011) also claims that students can use *manga* to learn about “Japanese popular culture in and out of the classroom” (p. 125); and asserts that “authenticity embedded in *MANGA* helps with the development of a L2 learner’s quest for cultural and communicative competence” (p. 132). I am motivated by Armour’s work because I also share the belief that authentic materials are not only ‘soft power pedagogy’ but superior pedagogy to mechanical textbooks. Furthermore, making Japanese learning fun through materials like comic books or other authentic materials (with entertainment value) might be one valuable means of helping students overcome the drudgery which accompanies the acquisition of an extremely challenging language.

In the arena, the work of **Harbon and Rose (2013)**, *Self-regulation in second language learning: An investigation of the kanji-learning task*, is very helpful by pointing out just how difficult JFL learning can be for native English speakers. This article provides awareness of challenges by contrasting the difficulty for native English speakers of learning the Japanese writing system, compared to Romanized writing systems. For example, it cites evidence that learning the Japanese writing system takes on average three times as long as learning to read and write in Spanish or French for example. Of three writing systems in Japanese, it examines the role of self-regulation in terms of memorizing the thousands of borrowed characters from Chinese, referred to as ‘*kanji*’. This study examines the self-regulation process of twelve participants, and studies

negative emotions such as frustration and other impediments such as procrastination in memorizing *kanji*. This article provides some meaningful insights into some of the major obstacles that commonly hinder English-speaking students of Japanese as a second language.

The work of **Kondo-Brown (2006)**, in authoring “*How do English L1 learners of advanced Japanese infer unknown kanji words in authentic texts?*” provides some hopeful news, that despite the difficulty of JFL acquisition for L1 English speakers there is some optimism, that effective strategies employed in the context of using authentic materials may produce very positive learning results. Kondo-Brown (2006) compared the effectiveness of authentic materials compared to standard textbooks. The results demonstrate that: “English L1 nonnative readers of Japanese in advanced-level Japanese courses can identify the meanings of advanced-level *kanji* words appearing in an authentic narrative text significantly better than when the same words are tested in isolation” (p. 130). Simply put, this means that the kind of context clues which are ubiquitous in authentic texts seem to promote JFL literacy through enhanced recognition and greater conversion of input to actual intake.

I was intrigued by a research article written by **Matsumoto (2013)** titled *Kanji recognition by second language learners: Exploring effects of first language writing systems and second language exposure*, which examines the challenges and strategies used by college students in the Midwestern United States (observation group) in learning to read *kanji* characters (borrowed from Chinese), in the context of gaining literacy in Japanese. It examines many of the challenges native English speakers face when learning

kanji, as well as the effects of the L1 on L2 learning, specifically relating to memorization strategies for *kanji*. The research seems to be designed well, employing quantitative methods and evaluates student performance and retention by administering computer-based tests. This paper is insightful because it evaluates the effects of the L1 has on JFL writing from a cognitivist perspective. For example, it's beneficial to explore the mental processes and cognitive obstacles that L1 English learners experience when learning *kanji*.

Relating to a central theme of my portfolio which examines the usefulness of authentic materials in foreign language teaching, I was captivated by **Sandom's (2013)** doctoral dissertation (*Investigation into the efficacy of text modification: What type of text do learners of Japanese authenticate?*) which examined the role that modified texts can play in making authentic materials more readable and accessible for English L1 students of Japanese. Sandom (2013) argues "that the authenticity debate and efficacy of text modification must be addressed specifically in the JFL reading pedagogy" (p. iii). Sandom (2013) summarizes the "authenticity debate" by stating two sides of the argument; "one favors the predominant use of unmodified texts while the other promotes the efficacy of modified texts" (p. iii). Through studying learning outcomes from authentic texts and modified authentic texts, Sandom (2013) concludes that modified texts play an important role in paving "a way for developing such learners' reading fluency," while providing "learners an authentic reading experience" (p. 298). The contribution made by Sandom (2013) is noteworthy by characterizing potential benefits of authentic text modification for beginning and intermediate learners.

In terms of computer literacy and cross cultural communication, I was impressed by the work of **Sakai (2015)** who explores computer-mediated communication (CMC) between L1 English speakers and L1 Japanese speakers. Sakai points out that CMC in Japan is very advanced and includes a rich array of extra-textual elements not found in English CMC such as “m(◡)m” (p. 234) which means to smile during the process of bowing. Sakai indicates that L2 Japanese learners would have to realize that expressions such as ‘lol’ or ‘OMG’ don’t exist in Japanese CMC, and would have to acquire Japanese extra-textual symbols to express equivalent notions (pp. 234-245). I found this article to be very insightful for highlighting the necessity for JFL learners to study Japanese CMC as a means of enhancing literacy skills in tandem with developing cross-cultural competence.

Finally, I have to give special thanks to one of my undergraduate Japanese language teachers, Dr. Shoji Azuma for writing and using a book called *Business Japanese* in his course (**Azuma and Sambongi, 2001**). This course presents Japanese business language in the context of genuine themes. As a result, it was much easier for me to learn key vocab and language from this book, even though it was an upper division course, than in the first two years of college Japanese (1010 through 2020). That is most likely due to the fact that learning language, vocabulary and grammar incidentally through authentic and thematic materials seems to be a much more effective means of foreign language teaching and learning than non-authentic means which present vocabulary in isolation or focus on grammar drills for the sake of grammar.

LOOKING FORWARD

I have tackled my MSLT program in three semesters, and it has been an exhilarating experience. I have gained so much from this program socially, academically, and spiritually. I am very optimistic that this program will open up a variety of professional opportunities in my future. I believe the MSLT program fits very nicely with my MS in International Relations degree. I certainly want to pursue opportunities teaching English at the university level in Japan. However, after hearing experiences from some of my MSLT colleagues, I might be open to teaching in Spain or some other countries which I haven't previously considered. The MSLT degree will also make me a more competitive candidate for many U.S. Government positions which require foreign language skills. At some point, I may consider going back for a PhD, but for the next few years I would rather focus on using my MSLT knowledge through professional work experience.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Lesson Plan: Presented at USU IELI 1000 (October 30th, 2015) Title: Art & Music: Blending Art with Music in Dynamic Ways
Level of students: Various: levels 1 to 4 (beginner through advanced)
Can Do I. Students can describe various art and music genres and their preferences for specific genres. II. Students can evaluate various art and music genres by describing positive and negative aspects. III. Students can design unique blends of specific types of art and music for a variety of venues: e.g., café, fancy restaurant, shopping mall, super market, private law firm, public park, museum exhibit, government building, wedding, university art gallery.
<u>Purpose:</u> Describing one's own preferences for art and music genres can be an important topic of conversational English. Additionally, articulating one's own art and music design plans, and negotiating such plans for various venues are useful communicative skills.
Title of each activity + Time for each step/activity
<u>Warm-up:</u> Reaction Paper / Discussion (5-7 min)
<u>Step 1.</u> Brain-soaking exercise: Read the short article titled about an Avant-garde art exhibit in Italy, and write a short reaction paper. <u>Step 2.</u> Discuss reactions in small groups and then as a class (2-3 minutes).
<u>Activity 1:</u> Information matching; discussion. (10 min)
<u>Step 1.</u> In small groups identify or match art genre titles with their descriptions. <u>Step 2.</u> Present findings to the class; describe why. <u>Step 3.</u> Teacher compares student answers with answer key; discuss as a class.
<u>Activity 2:</u> Art planning in multiple venues. (10 min)
<u>Step 1.</u> In small groups select two different styles of art for the following venues: café, fancy restaurant, super market, shopping mall, private law firm, public park, museum exhibit, government building, wedding, university art gallery. <u>Step 2.</u> Students rotate to work on different venues. <u>Step 3.</u> Discuss as a class.
<u>Activity 3:</u> Brain-soaking exercise; music critique. (10 min)
<u>Step 1.</u> In student panels of three (simulating the judging panel of 'American Idol') listen to short segments of songs of various genres. <u>Step 2.</u> Each judge must give a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' and briefly state justification. <u>Step 3.</u> Discuss as a class.
<u>Activity 4:</u> Music planning in multiple venues. (10 min)
<u>Step 1.</u> In small groups select two different genres of music for the following venues: café, fancy restaurant, super market, shopping mall, private law firm, public park, museum exhibit, government building, wedding, university art gallery. Match music genres with art from previous exercise. Each venue should have two art pieces and two corresponding music pieces. <u>Step 2.</u> Students rotate to work on different venues. <u>Step 3.</u> Discuss final results as a class.

Appendix B

Lesson Plan: Linguistics 6400 (JFL Micro-teaching for MSLT Peers, November 17th, 2015) Title: Attending a Linguistics Conference in Japan 日本の言語学会議に出席
Levels and Introduction: All beginners with the same L1 (English). All needing a crash course in Japanese for an upcoming linguistics conference in Japan. Successful networking requires the acquisition of a few culturally appropriate formulaic phrases.
Can Do.... Objectives 生徒が出来ること。。。目標 I. Can utter basic greetings. II. Can ask for another's name. III. Can ask/state which college other/oneself came from. IV. Can ask for/state which languages other/self speaks. V. Can exchange business cards. VI. Can express gratitude 'thanks,' and utter closing greeting. I. 基本的な挨拶を話すことができます。II. 自分の名前を述べる事が出来ます。III. 相手の名前と出身大学を尋ねることが出来ます。IV. 相手の話す外国語を尋ねることが出来る・自分の話す外国語を述べる事が出来ます。V. 名刺を交わすことができます。VI. 締めくくりの挨拶を言うことができます。
Purpose I. When attending formal conferences or business meetings in Japan, many foreigners might be able to rely on English. II. However, learning basic polite phrases in Japanese is very important in building relationships and <u>networking</u> . I. 日本での正式な会議やビジネスミーティングに出席したとき、多くの外国人が英語に頼ることができるかもしれません。II. しかし、日本では基本的な丁寧なフレーズを学ぶこととの関係構築とネットワークで非常に重要です。
Title of each activity + Time for each step/activity
<u>Warm-up:</u> Learning key vocabulary lesson. (Time: 10 min) <u>Communication Modes:</u> Interpretive and Interpersonal. <u>Format:</u> Pairs, and whole class.
<u>Step 1.</u> Listen and read key vocabulary while looking at related images on the PowerPoint presentation. <u>Step 2.</u> Review with a partner using Key Terms handout. <u>Step 3.</u> Review as a class.
<u>Activity 1:</u> Basic greetings, and inquiry. (Time: 5 min) (See Key Terms below and PPT) <u>Communication Modes:</u> Interpretive and Interpersonal. <u>Format:</u> Pairs, and whole class.
<u>Step 1.</u> Practice greetings and basic inquiries with a partner. <u>Step 2.</u> Rotate once or twice. <u>Step 3.</u> Review as a class.
<u>Activity 2:</u> Basic questions about foreign language competency. (Time: 10 min) (See Key Terms below and PPT) <u>Communication Modes:</u> Interpretive and Interpersonal. <u>Format:</u> Pairs, and whole class.
<u>Step 1.</u> Practice basic inquiries about foreign language competency with a partner. <u>Step 2.</u> Rotate once or twice. <u>Step 3.</u> Review as a class.
<u>Activity 3:</u> Asking for business cards and closure. (Time: 10 min) (See Key Terms

below and PPT) Communication Modes: Interpretive and Interpersonal. Format: Pairs, and whole class.

Step 1. Practice asking for business cards and closing greetings with a partner. Step 2. Rotate once or twice. Step 3. Review as a class.

Follow-up: Time: (15 min) Communication Modes: Interpersonal and Presentational. Format: Pairs in front of whole class.

Step 1. Pairs of two students present the entire list of dialogues in one combined scenario to the class through dynamic roleplays. Step 2. Rotate presenters if time allows.

Key Terms and Phrases

English 英語 <i>Eigo</i> .	Japanese 日本語 <i>Nihongo</i> .	
Nice to meet you.	はじめまして。 <i>Hajime mashite</i> .	
What is your name?	お名前は何ですか? <i>Onamae wa nan desu ka?</i>	
My name is <u>Tarin</u> .	私の名前はタリンです。 <i>Watashi no namae wa Tarin desu</i> .	
Which university are you from?	どちらの大学から来ましたか? <i>Dochira no daigaku kara kimashita ka?</i>	
I came from Utah State University.	私はユタ州立大学から来ました。 <i>Watashi wa Utah Shuuritsu Daigaku kara shimashita</i> .	
Which foreign language do you can speak?	どの外国語を話すことができますか。 <i>Dono gaikokugo o hanasu koto ga dekimasu ka?</i>	
I speak English and Japanese.	英語と日本語を話せます。 <i>Eigo to Nihongo o hanasemasu</i> .	
I speak a little German.	少しドイツ語を話せます。 <i>Sukoshi Doitsugo o hanasemasu</i> .	
Linguistics.....	言語学	<i>Gengogaku</i>
Conference.....	会議.....	<i>Kaigi</i>
English.....	英語.....	<i>Eigo</i>
Japanese.....	日本語.....	<i>Nihongo</i>
Spanish.....	スペイン語.....	<i>Supeingo</i>
Russian.....	ロシア語.....	<i>Roshiago</i>
Italian.....	イタリア語.....	<i>Itariago</i>
German.....	ドイツ語.....	<i>Doitsugo</i>
French.....	フランス語.....	<i>Furansugo</i>
Portuguese.....	ポルトガル語....	<i>Porutogarugo</i>
Do you have a business card?	お名刺がありますか? <i>Meishi ga arimasu ka?</i>	

Yes. Here is my business card. Here you go.	はい。私の名刺です。どうぞ。Hai. <i>Watashi no meishi desu. Doozo.</i>
Thank you so much.	どうもありがとうございます。Doomo <i>arigatou gozaimasu.</i>
It was a pleasure meeting you.	どうぞよろしくお願ひします。 <i>Doozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu.</i>

Business card template below:

名前 (Name): ユタ州立大学 (Utah State University) 外国語 (Foreign languages : _____)
E メール(E-mail):

Appendix C

This lesson plan has been created to demonstrate the approach mentioned in the Literacy Artifact of modifying authentic texts with technological means in order to make them more readable to learners. The following lesson is from a Japanese news article which features the blooming of Japanese cherry blossoms. The text has been modified; *furigana* or Japanese phonetic readings have been inserted using a Google app which inserts phonetic readings above *kanji* characters (“IPA furigana,” 2016). This is an example of a short lesson plan using an adaptation from an authentic text.

てんしょうちこうえん さくら まんかい
展勝地公園の桜ほぼ満開

4月18日 20時23分

とうほくゆうすう さくら めいしょ いわてけんほくじょうし てんしょうち
東北有数の桜の名所、岩手県北上市の展勝地

こうえん まんかい たいせい かぞくづれ
公園で、ソメイヨシノがほぼ満開になり、大勢の家族連れなどで
にぎわいました。

ほくじょうし てんしょうちこうえん ほん
北上市の展勝地公園では、およそ2000本のソメイヨシノ

きよねん しゅうかん はやくまんかい みこみ
が去年より1週間ほど早く満開となる見込みで、すでにほぼ

まんかい さくら たのしむ
満開の桜を楽しむことができます。(NHK News, 18 Apr 2015).

Step 1. Translate the article into English in your own words.

Step 2. Comment about the cultural significance and importance of viewing cherry blossoms in the Japanese culture, or any other cultural elements gleaned from the article. Write comments in Japanese. Discuss in groups and as a class in the target language.

Lesson Objective. Students will identify relevant grammar constructs and focus on retention of key *kanji* characters in their appropriate contexts. Students will think and write about the greater sociocultural context of cherry blossom viewing in the Japanese society.

Appendix D

Title: Refusals and Indirect Opinions in Japanese (Developed based on the Culture Artifact)
Level of students: Intermediate and advanced L2 Japanese learners at the college level. All students have the same L1 (English). All students have successfully passed Japanese 2020. This lesson plan is a 3000 level course designed to raise pragmatic awareness.
Introduction: Much of the Japanese language is formulaic in nature, meaning that precise phrases are used in their socially appropriate situations. However, proper use of such formulaic speech, using them at the right time and proper context can be extremely important. Appropriately employing such culturally applicable features of the language can make various societal transactions go more smoothly than they would otherwise.
Can Do... I. Students can demonstrate the proper pragmatic and culturally appropriate strategies for making refusals and politely offering opinions and indirect opinions in Japanese speaking environments. II. Students can use a variety of pragmatically appropriate refusal and opinion, and indirect opinion type utterances in their socially appropriate situations and contexts.
Purpose: Japanese culture places enormous value on social harmony and politeness. This lesson gives students the basic pragmatic tools to function by conforming to culturally appropriate standards of politeness in a variety of settings.
Title of each activity + Time for each step/activity
Warm-up: Analysis and brainstorming session. Specific examples have been created using basic strategies identified by Ishihara (2007). Scenario: Tarin (an American) attended college in Japan as an exchange student years ago. He is approached by his professor about a class reunion. Tarin has time to attend, but is not interested. Tarin uses a ‘white lie,’ i.e., ‘too busy’ as a face saving strategy along with formulaic polite language for refusals, when speaking to Professor Suzuki who is of higher status. Professor Suzuki: <i>Hey Tarin. Good to see you again. Anyway, this weekend there will be a college class reunion. Will you be coming?</i> Tarin-san: <i>Suzuki-san, Thank you so much, but I’m actually a little busy this weekend so I can’t. But, perhaps next time... I’m really sorry.</i> Target language translation: 鈴木教授：ああ、タリンさん。久しぶりですね。ところで、今週末、大学の同窓会がありますけど。来てもらえますか。 タリンさん：本当にありがとうございます。けれども今週末はちょっと忙しいのでいけないのです。多分次回に。。。本当にごめんなさい。 Time: (12-15 min) Communication Modes: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational. Format: Pairs, and whole class.

Step 1. After listening to and reading the instructor's example, students discuss the following pragmatically correct refusal strategies in Japanese defined by Ishihara (2007), as listed in the Culture Artifact, e.g., awareness of the white life for face saving (refusals), or cueing the listener to the upcoming refusal while speaking tentatively. Step 2. In pairs or small groups students practice these strategies and their usage in a variety of roleplay settings. (4-5 min) Step 3. In pairs or small groups students present a role-play in which they present at least two of these strategies (per group) to the rest of the class in the target language. (4-5 min)

Activity 1: Pragmatically correct ways of offering opinions. Japanese society places great deals of value on social harmony, opinions are frequently stated in an indirect way, or a variety of strategies may be employed to soften the opinion, or otherwise seek to arrive at opinions collectively. In Japanese softeners, hedges, or various mitigation strategies are utilized. In terms of offering opinions, Iwasaki (2009) identifies the following ways that L1 speakers of Japanese offer opinions, which L2 speakers of Japanese frequently do not employ: I. Seeking common ground using various mitigation devices such as *-janai desu ka* じゃないですか ('isn't the case that'), *-yone* よね ('y'know'), and the modal adverb *yappari* やっぱり ('after all, as expected') (Adapted from Iwasaki, 2009, p. 541). II. L1 speakers use of the verb *omou* 思う 'think' with various combinations of negatives; the sentence-final particles *kana*, *yo*, and *ne* かな、よ、ね; and modality markers (*daroo*, *zya nai ka*, and *kamosirenai* だろう、じゃないか、かもしれない、 which all roughly mean 'maybe'). Such devices are used to seek common ground when stating opinions (Adapted from Iwasaki, 2009, p. 552). III. Taguchi (2009) also identifies pragmatically correct means of offering indirect opinions by using quantifying adverbs (i.e. *doomo* どうも) and the questioning strategy for disagreement (e.g. saying *Doo deshou ne* どうでしょうね or 'Is that so?' to express disagreement), often mistaken by L2 learners as an actual question. (Adapted from Taguchi, 2009, p. 266).

Example. Politely offering a softened opinion.

Scenario: A mother is worried about her daughter's vegetarian/vegan diet. The mother believes the daughter needs to get more calcium from drinking milk as well as getting more protein from eating meat.

Mother: *I'm a little worried about your new diet. Wouldn't it be better to drink more milk and eat more meat? After all, isn't it better to be strong and healthy?*

Daughter: *Actually, I can get all the proper nutrition from a plant based diet. After all, think of all the great athletes that don't eat meat. Isn't it better to follow their examples?*

Target language translation:

母：私はあなたの新しい食事療法について少し心配ですよ。もう少し多くの肉を食べるともう少しの牛乳を飲むのほうがいいと思いますね？結局、それが強くて良い健康になることがほしくないじゃないでしょうか。どうでしょうね。

娘：実は、植物ベースの食事からすべての適切な栄養を得ることができます。やっぱり、肉を食べていないすべての偉大な選手と考えています。それは彼ら

の例に従うことをより良いではないかもしれない?

Time: (12-15 min). Communication Modes: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational. Format: Pairs, and whole class.

Step 1. Students listen to and read the example provided by the instructor related to the pragmatically correct strategies of offering an opinion and seeking common ground. Students discuss develop their own examples with a partner or in small groups. (4-5 min). Step 2. Students act out the scenarios they have identified with a partner, then switch partners once or twice. (4-5 min) Step 3. Students the present their scenarios and roleplay linguistic utterances for seeking common ground in offering opinions to the class. Discuss scenarios and utterances as a class. (4-5 min)

Activity 2: Pragmatically appropriate or polite strategies for offering refusals or disagreements in Japanese.

Imai, Miller, & Mizutani (1985) describe the use of formulaic language for refusals or disagreements: “For example, in response to a request, one can say ‘*Kangaete okimasu*’ ‘I’ll give it consideration.’ These kinds of expressions do not mean either yes or no but imply that there is little hope for the request” (as cited in Taguchi 2008, p. 561).

Example 1:

Regarding such use of ‘*Kangaete okimasu*’ ‘I’ll give it consideration,’ Sasaki (1994) describes the following scenario: “When the American businessman visited a Japanese company to get an advertisement, the Japanese businessman said, ‘The color coordination is fashionable; this kind of journal has surely not existed before. We will be considering it.’ The American businessman was excited about the reaction of the Japanese saying ‘consider it.’ On the other hand, the Japanese person who accompanied him instantly said, ‘Mr. X, it’s not a deal! If so, he would have asked us the deadline and other details; ‘will be considering’ means ‘will not do any further’” (as cited in Yamashita, 2008, pp. 207-208).

Example 2.

Scenario: An American is shopping for a car at a car dealership in Osaka, Japan. The American has just take the car for a test drive with the Japanese sales associate. After the test drive the sales associate asks he the American wants to buy the car.

Japanese sales associate: *Dear customer. How do you like this car? Wouldn't you like to buy it?*

American: *It seems like a nice car. However, I'm not going to buy it now. I'll give it a little more consideration.*

Target language translation:

日本人の販売員：お客様。この車がお好きですか。ご購入をお考えですか？

アメリカ人：それは素敵な車だと思いますね。けれども、今買いません。もうちょっと考えて置きます。

Time: (20 min) Communication Modes: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational. Format: Pairs, and whole class.

Step 1. Students develop a brainstorming list of situations where they might use the formulaic utterance ‘*Kangaete okimasu*’ 考えておきます, as either an indirect refusal or indirect way of disagreeing with an opinion. (5 min). Step 2. Students roleplay various situations where they would refuse an offer using ‘*Kangaete okimasu*’ 考えておきます, ‘I’ll give it consideration.’ (5 min). Step 3. Discuss and review scenarios as in small groups, and present roleplay scenarios, then discuss as a class. (10 min)

Activity 3: Pragmatically appropriate or polite strategies for offering refusals or disagreements in Japanese; polite alternatives to saying ‘no’.

I. Kawate-Mierzejewska (2009) asserts that L1 Japanese speakers generally use the following refusal strategies or sequences: “Excuse, Delay-Excuse, Delay-Alternative, Delay-Apology, and Delay-Promise” (p. 201). II. Yamanaka and Fordyce (2010) identify differences in JFL and EFL pragmatic learning stating that “many English responses begin with ‘no,’ whereas Japanese responses often started with reasons and then used *daijoo* 大丈夫(OK); some of the Japanese students said they would not use ‘no’ even with friends” (p. 200). III. Akai (2007) asserts that Japanese rather than explicitly saying ‘no’ usually make alternative utterances such as: ‘*chotto kangaesasete kudasai*’ ちょっと考えさせてください i.e., ‘Let me think about it,’ whereas the English Speaking Person (ESP) states ‘I don’t want it’ (p. 11).

Example:

Scenario: Tarin (L2 Japanese learner) asks Mayumi-san (L1 Japanese speaker) out for a date. Mayumi-san uses both a delay-apology strategy, and also avoids the explicit use of ‘no’.

Tarin: *Mayumi-san, nice to see you again. I am planning to see the new Star Wars movie next month. Would you like to go?*

Mayumi-san: *Next month? Oh, I’m so busy next month with Christmas. I’m so sorry, but I don’t have any free-time... perhaps someday when I have more time...*

Target language translation:

タリン：真由美さん、またお会い出来て嬉しいです。来月は新しい映画スターウォーズの公開があります。私はその映画を見に行く予定です。いっしょに行くことが出来ませんか。

真由美さん：来月？ええと、来月はクリスマスの用事が一杯ありますから、時間がないんですよ。ごめんなさい。多分、次の機会に、時間があれば。

Time: (10-15 min) Communication Modes: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational. Format: Pairs, and whole class.

Step 1. Students discuss various situations where they would either use refusal strategies as alternatives to explicitly saying ‘no’ as also addressed by Akai (2007), Kawate-Mierzejewska (2009), and Yamanaka and Fordyce (2010). (5 min)

Step 2. Students roleplay various situations, uttering alternatives to ‘no’ (*iie, いいえ*) in Japanese with softer and more polite alternative utterances, such as ‘let me think about it’ (*chotto kangaesasete kudasai*, ちょっと考えさせてください). (5 min). Step 3. Discuss and roleplay scenarios in small groups and in front of the entire class. (5 min)