Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language: The Role of Communicative Competence, Pragmatics, and Literacy

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TEACHING ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: THE ROLE OF
COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, PRAGMATICS, AND LITERACY

by

Yasmine Kataw

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
2016
ABSTRACT

The Role of Communicative Competence, Pragmatics, and Literacy in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

by

Yasmine Kataw: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2016

Major Professor: Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan
Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is the culmination of various writings reflecting the author’s beliefs and ideas on effective second language teaching. The first section includes the author’s teaching philosophy, which emphasizes communicative learning, remaining in the target language, intercultural and pragmatic competence, and using the standards for foreign language learning. The second section includes three artifacts: the first demonstrates the application of concept-based instruction according to sociocultural theory to introduce cultural concepts to Arabic language learners. The second artifact addresses the role of teacher discourse in Dual Language Immersion programs. The third artifact is a literature review and lesson plan regarding refusals in Arab culture. Finally, the portfolio ends with three annotated bibliographies supporting the author’s perspective and teaching philosophy, including the role of translation in Arabic language learning, communicative teaching in different contexts, and reading anxiety in foreign language learning.

(147 pages)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first want to thank God for giving me the strength and determination to accomplish this work and improve my teaching.

I would like to thank the professors in the MSLT program who have guided me throughout this process. First, Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan who when I was still back in Jordan applying for this program helped me prepare for everything. I have grown as a teacher, a writer, and a person due to her guidance. Second, Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante whose energy and expertise have kept me on my toes improving my work and teaching throughout the whole program. Third, Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini whom I first met in Jordan and who encouraged me to apply to this MSLT program in the first place. I also want to thank Dr. Jim Rogers who during my first semester helped me wrestle with theories and ideas which I found to be useful in my teaching, and Dr. Joshua Thoms who made learning about SLA revolve around application.

I would like also to thank my professor at Petra University, Dr. Nihal Amiera, who taught me the fundamentals of language teaching and encouraged me to follow the path I am on now. I also want to thank my colleagues Elizabeth Abell, who is a sister to me, Fred Poole, Muhammed Hussein, and Haito Zhao for their friendship, advice, and support.

Furthermore, I want to thank my family back home who remind me that they’re proud of my work and encourage me to keep going. Lastly, I would like to thank my husband Aant Ghish for his love and support for everything I do.
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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is the accumulation of work that I produced while pursuing a degree in the Master of Second Language Teaching program (MSLT) at Utah State University. The main theme of this portfolio is teaching Arabic as a foreign language through methods I believe to be effective based on research, reflections, and observations throughout my two and a half years of study. The teaching philosophy section is the foundation of this portfolio and it includes what I have learned from my experience as a student and teacher, and where I see myself in the future coming out of this program.

The teaching philosophy statement addresses the main areas of what I believe to be effective second language teaching. I begin with the importance of making language learning communicative so that students practice meaningful language in the classroom that reflects real-life situations they will encounter with other speakers of the language. Second, I explain the benefits of teachers remaining in the target language as much as possible while using strategies to make the target language comprehensible. Third, I examine how the student-teacher relationship can have a significant effect on the dynamics of the learning-teaching process. Fourth, I discuss why cultural and pragmatic aspects are essential in language learning and how language cannot be taught in a vacuum without connecting it to the people who speak the language, and their societies. Finally, I illustrate how the use of The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (2012) offer me a framework in my own teaching that can serve as a guide in determining what students should know and be able to do with the language.
APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

My experience learning Arabic as a second language began when I was eleven and my parents sent me, an English-speaking child from New Jersey, to Jordan to live with my Arabic-speaking grandparents. My parents knew that if I were ever to acquire the language, the sooner the better. I began going to Jordanian schools where everything was taught in Arabic. I was in the fourth grade and had always been a good student. However, in this new language, basic subjects such as science and math were suddenly incomprehensible. I began taking intensive Arabic classes on the side to help me catch up with my peers. After school I played outside with other children in the neighborhood. Playing internationally known games such as hide and go seek and freeze tag in Arabic helped me pick up more and more of the language. I needed to speak in Arabic in order to be understood by the other children. At home, my grandparents and aunt spoke to me in Arabic and made sure I watched Arabic cartoons. I was fully immersed in the Arab culture and surrounded by native speakers.

I cannot say I had a passion for this language or sought after learning it on my own. I learned Arabic because I needed to survive. It was later that I realized I had the upper hand by speaking two languages. For when going back and forth from Jordan to the United States, I was able to quickly adapt to either environment and enjoy talking to people and socializing. Moreover, during school, English being my native language allowed me to notice the horrid mistakes my Arabic-speaking English teachers made. Sitting in the classroom during my English classes, listening to the English teacher’s incorrect pronunciations and copying down grammar rule after grammar rule, I was
actually convinced that if I had gotten up and given the lesson myself I would have done a better job at teaching.

I continued taking intensive Arabic classes and began being able to answer test questions like the rest of my peers. My grades remained low due to the constant influx of new vocabulary in subjects like history and social studies that I had trouble understanding. I began to compare my Arabic teachers in terms of their ability to teach me Arabic. And as I recall clearly, the classes in which I felt the most confident were the ones where I heard not one word of English. I would ask if this word meant such in English, and she would just nod if I was correct or rephrase it in Arabic if I was wrong. I have been trying to implement the same technique in the Arabic classes I teach. Naturally, I faced difficulties having to learn both the classical and colloquial forms in Arabic. I felt I was learning two new languages at once. I was frustrated because I had trouble expressing my thoughts in Arabic without mixing both forms. The issue of whether to use or teach classical or colloquial form has become a major topic discussed in the Arabic teaching world, and I have kept up to date with the research conducted on this topic in order to figure out what is best for my students regarding this issue.

Furthermore, I learned pronunciation through repetition and listening. Pronunciation in Arabic is crucial. This is because some sounds do not exist in English; therefore, the earlier students can discriminate and pronounce sounds, the more they will speak with comprehensibility. I also believe that learning a language with the objective of accuracy and proficiency requires learners to put effort into correct pronunciation. Therefore, I believe that when teaching a foreign language, the teacher must speak as clearly as possible and at a speed that is appropriate to the students’ level. I focus a lot on
pronunciation with my Arabic students. I know better not to expect a native Arabic accent from my students, but the more practice the better.

At one point, during high school, I began to fear I was not as proficient in English as other speakers of English my age are. That is when I began to read a lot more in English so as not to fall behind in my L1 proficiency level. Then I realized I was mixing my L1 with my L2 while speaking to people who understood both. At first, I thought this meant I was lacking proficiency in English and Arabic since I was relying on one language to express an idea when unable to find the word I want in the other language and vice versa. Yet, I have learned in the MSLT program that this is called ‘code switching’ and that it is actually a positive habit as long as one is able to converse in either language when expected to do so without the need to switch. I also learned that being bilingual and biliterate improves academic performance and cognitive abilities as long as one continues to use both languages.

I then decided to major in English literature at a Jordanian university. Even before university, I knew I wanted to become an English teacher. I had not yet viewed this profession as teaching a foreign or second language. During my first year, I kept observing my teachers and taking mental notes on the ways my professors taught. I was intrigued by some, at the same time appalled by others. I had a few teachers who encouraged us to speak our minds and understand the material not for the sake of memorization for a test. Yet, I remember the resistance from my peers who made this approach to teaching sometimes impossible. This was due to students not knowing how to express themselves and give their opinions aloud or on paper and fearing that if they
tried it would lead to a low test score. Nevertheless, these teachers were determined to prove to us students that their way of teaching would benefit us then and in the long-term.

At the same time, I had teachers who never encouraged students to give their own opinion. The professor gave facts and we wrote those down and were assessed on memorization and explanation of those given facts. These learning experiences are the main reason I want to keep learning how to teach in a communicative environment where students’ opinions in the target language are appreciated and where communication based on understanding is encouraged. Observing my teachers also made me realize that teaching was not just about how well I am able to deliver the material to my students but more importantly how I can provide a motivational environment that will promote their learning.

Then I took my first linguistics course and the professor was everything I thought a teacher should be. She repeatedly mentioned how we, the students, had a lot of potential and how teachers can learn so much from us. She allowed us to suggest new teaching activities to do in class. We had a say in what happened in the classroom. She made me aware of the fundamental importance of motivation. Then with the same professor I took a psycholinguistics class followed by TEFL courses and an applied linguistics course. It was during these courses I knew that not only do I want to teach English as a foreign language, but I want to understand the underlying depths of language as a scientific study in order to rationally choose which approaches to follow and what methods to apply in the classes I teach. This professor always reminded us of teachers who when asked why they follow a certain approach in teaching, their answer is usually “because it works.” For
this reason she explained the importance of research and how the findings of research answer that question.

Returning back to the USA and being in the MSLT program in an academic English environment has allowed me the opportunity to do the research needed to answer that question, in addition to expanding my English abilities required to carry out such research in my teaching career. This program offers exactly what I was looking for regarding my goals of being a second or foreign language teacher. In addition to being a graduate instructor of Arabic, I have had the opportunity to apply what I have learned in a real classroom. This combination of studying, researching, and teaching has created the perfect environment for professional growth for me.
PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Before applying to the MSLT program, I knew I wanted to teach English as a foreign language to university students in Jordan. I knew I wanted to get a Master’s degree in the field of Applied Linguistics in order to develop my knowledge and skills. I had assumed I would be obtaining my MA in Jordan. What I did not anticipate was finding myself in the MSLT program teaching Arabic as a foreign language to native speakers of English at the university level. I have learned a great deal from this experience. It has made me realize how difficult Arabic is to learn for adults, as they are passed the critical period stage for learning a second language and often do not have the chance to be immersed in the culture. Yet, despite its difficulty, there is a demand for learning Arabic as a second/foreign language and it is now considered a critical language to learn. Both the language and cultural/political interest in the Middle East make teaching Arabic a challenging yet enriching experience in my language teaching career.

In the future, I hope to teach either English in Jordan or Arabic in the United States, both at the university level. This portfolio therefore aims at the application of the principles, theories, and concepts that I have learned from my experience learning, teaching, and observing in the MSLT program that will allow me to create improved learning atmospheres in both Arabic and English language educational environments.
MY PERSONAL TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I begin my teaching philosophy with Nunan’s (1995) question, “Why don’t learners learn what teachers teach?” (p. 133). It is a very broad question, yet, in my opinion it is “the question” teachers must ask themselves when students face difficulties learning. This question revolves around the problems faced during the learning-teaching process. We continuously try to find solutions to these problems through research. However, it is an open-ended question that does not have one unified satisfactory answer. For this reason, I have continued to research the possible answers to this question and experiment with what I have learned throughout my experience of learning and teaching in the MSLT program at Utah State University. I have significantly grown as a teacher and have come a long way from teaching EFL in Jordan. What I assumed was effective language learning was merely an introduction into the vast field of language learning. Therefore, with reference to previous research along with examples from my own teaching, I present in my Teaching Philosophy an elaboration of the main components that make up what I now believe is effective language instruction.

I begin by discussing communicative language learning, the importance of remaining in the target language, and implementing task-based activities. I then continue to explain the significance of the student-teacher relationship, the importance of helping learners gain intercultural and pragmatic competence, and the influence of teacher discourse, ending with the standards for foreign language learning in general and Arabic in particular.
Making Language Learning Communicative

The first time I was introduced to the Communicative language teaching approach (CLT) was in my Applied Linguistics class during my undergraduate program in Jordan. I continued learning more about CLT in the MSLT program. Most importantly, I was able to make connections between what I learned from my MSLT courses and my experience teaching Arabic as a foreign language. From this experience, I find that two main components lead to successful language learning. The first is a lot of meaningful communication practice in the classroom because students usually have no exposure to Arabic outside the classroom, making CLT suitable to apply in my teaching because it provides meaningful practice in the language inside the classroom in meaningful contexts (Ballman, Liskin, Gasparro & Mandell, 2001). Second, a pedagogical approach to grammar is needed to handle the complexity of Arabic grammar. According to VanPatten and Benati (2010), grammar is learning the rules of language structure not for the sake of form, but for a basic understanding of how the language works in order to use it.

In my own experience learning and teaching the Arabic language, I’ve seen that Arabic grammar intimidates learners and demotivates them to continue learning Arabic. Even native speakers find it extremely complex (Ryding, 2013). As Suleiman (2011) points out, “the experience of learning Arabic grammar is mind-numbing, adding that it is the same for millions of students in the Arabic speaking world” (p. 89-90). However, Ryding (2013) claims that Arabic grammar plays a significant role in building a foundation for fostering future communicative proficiency and competence. Thus, to neglect grammar as a whole would not benefit learners. Ryding explains that CLT is based on learning grammar through “assimilation of spoken or written language and
subsequent experimentation with using language for specific tasks” (p. 211). In other words, CLT calls for an implicit understanding of necessary grammar that supports communication. (Ballman & Gasparro, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). I believe that CLT is a suitable pedagogical approach because it focuses on communication while not neglecting grammar.

Furthermore, CLT allows learners to induce grammatical concepts based on their understanding of meaningful patterns they find in spoken and written form. Learners naturally want to comprehend what they are reading or hearing and make connections. Shrum and Glisan say “The human brain seeks patterns in its search for meaning” (p. 77). Paying attention to such patterns will increase their level of communicative competence. This is the main reason why I want to continue practicing this approach. I find communicative teaching a means through which students can actually use the language in various situations and scenarios they will surely encounter with native speakers.

Communicative teaching also allows me to create opportunities that help students convey realistic and relevant messages as the key to satisfying their objectives for learning Arabic. For students are most likely to learn a second or foreign language if they perceive a clear communicative need for it (Sharma, 1999). If teachers provide means of communication in the classroom, students’ motivation to continue learning is increased.

According to Lee and VanPatten (2003), my role as the CLT teacher is that of a guide and facilitator who provides the students with opportunities to practice real-life communication inside the classroom through task based-activities carried out by the students through student-to-student interaction, negotiation of meaning, and
collaboration. My main guide to help me provide these opportunities is the *Can-do Statements* published by ACTFL (2014).

Interpersonal communication is the first mode of communication that allows teachers and learners to interact meaningfully with the language. Focusing on what the students can do with the language puts a completely new perspective on language learning and teaching. More specifically, my role as an Arabic teacher, according to Ryding (2013), “is to have an extensive knowledge base not only in literary Arabic, but also in the ways that written and spoken Arabic interrelate, and what that implies for communicative language teaching” (p. 3).

The role of the students is to carry out the activities designed by the instructor in the target language through student-to-student collaboration. They take charge of their own learning and are encouraged to become autonomous learners. From my experience, these roles are more rewarding not only to my students but also to teachers who as facilitators rather than leaders, allow their students to become learners who are more self-reliant resulting in learning that continues outside the classroom. McCombs and Whisler (1997) call this learner-centered teaching, “the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners with a focus on learning” (p. 9). In more detail, Doyle (2008) defines it as “subjecting every teaching activity (method, assignment or assessment) to the test of a single question: “Given the context of my students, course and classroom, will this teaching action optimize my students’ opportunity to learn?” (p. 1). I agree that the key to successful learning is when the teacher asks this question. I try to help my students acquire learning-for-life skills such as communicative competence through making connections between the L2 and its culture and between the colloquial and classical
forms of the L2. I believe that learner-centered education creates life-long learners because the focus is both on the learner as an individual with specific learning needs, levels of motivation, and learning capacities and on teachers as creators of suitable effective learning environments. (Ballman & Gasparro, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; McCombs & Whisler, 1997)

Focusing on communication and creating a learner-centered environment will lead to successful language learning. However, I face two main difficulties when trying to apply communicative teaching and keeping my classes learner-centered: first, remaining in the target language using comprehensible teacher discourse, and second, creating task-based activities. These two are important aspects of what defines my teaching. I will address both these aspects separately in the following two sections.

**Remaining in the Target Language using Comprehensible Teacher Discourse**

Before teaching Arabic as a foreign language, one must ask what variety of Arabic to teach as the target language. Arabic is a unique case of foreign language teaching, which is different from teaching other languages such as French or Spanish. As an Arabic instructor, I believe it is important for teachers of Arabic to explain to students that Arabic consists of varieties both dialectical and standard and in what ways they differ, and how these differences effect students’ usage of Arabic outside the classroom. According to Zaidan and Callison-Burch (2014), “The Arabic language is a loose term that refers to the many existing varieties of Arabic. Those varieties include one “written” form, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and many “spoken” forms, each of which is a regional dialect.” (p. 171). Furthermore, it is worthwhile for Arabic instructors to discuss
how students can go about learning either standard alone or standard along with a chosen dialect or standard first then a chosen dialect.

**Diglossia**

Part of my teaching philosophy is knowing my field, which includes learning about language teaching in general and the Arabic language in specific, that being the status of Arabic and where it stands in the foreign language teaching world. Only then can I attempt to teach Arabic using the most suitable approaches. Thus, I wanted to learn more about the varieties of Arabic and whether it is best to teach either standard or colloquial Arabic or both together, or one at a time.

The existence of Arabic varieties is called “diglossia” which was defined by Furguson (1959), stating that diglossia is where “two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions” (p. 325). These different conditions are explained by Albirini (2010) and (2014), stating that the Arabic dialects are used in casual daily interactions and do not have a standardized script. These dialects are spoken natively by speakers of Arab countries and include the Egyptian and Gulf dialects, in addition to the Levantine dialect spoken in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. Whereas, standard Arabic is the formal written variety that is taught in schools and has official status throughout 22 Arab countries.

Whether or not to teach a dialect and which one to teach has been widely debated and discussed in the field of teaching Arabic as a foreign language in the United States (Abdalla, 2006; Al-Batal & Belnap, 2006; Shiri, 2013; Ryding, 2013). My opinion has always been for students to study MSA first since the Arabic dialects stem from the
standard variety, and then venture out to learn a dialect depending on which Arab country they decide to visit or what study abroad program they come by.

According to Abdalla (2006) and Shiri (2013), most students learning MSA know that eventually they must learn a dialect if they want to function in Arab society, leading them to rely on being immersed in the Arab culture where they can either pick up the dialect on their own, or through study abroad programs where they are taught the dialect. Shiri (2013) points out that some larger Arabic programs are able to offer dialect classes, in addition to teaching a chosen dialect alongside MSA. Yet, the question remains of which dialect to choose and based on what reasons. In my opinion, part of teaching Arabic is encouraging students to visit Arab countries, participate in study abroad programs, learn a dialect, and be confident in speaking Arabic whenever they have the opportunity regardless of which variety.

As an Arabic instructor, I face a similar challenge as my students, and that is competence in a full spectrum of language varieties aside from MSA. I have my own variety through which I communicate with other native speakers. Yet, in the classroom, I am expected to use MSA. At times a word from my colloquial Jordanian vernacular or Levantine dialect slips out and I automatically switch back to MSA. It is challenging on my end as the instructor because I know that the written and rarely spoken MSA will not benefit my students on the street or in a super market aside from probably being ridiculed by native speakers.

Furthermore, according to Ryding (2010), I am not the only Arabic teacher who faces this challenge. “Faced with a prescribed curriculum or textbook, many Arabic teachers find they are expected to know how to teach MSA to Americans (or Westerners)
in “communicative” ways—ways that in some respects make little sense when teaching a primarily written language” (p. 5). I keep my students aware of the fact that they will eventually need some vernacular guidance, and that aside from class time I am willing to focus on “spoken” Arabic with my students, letting them know that the only vernacular I can offer is my own being the Levantine dialect.

**Using English**

According to *The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2012), Teachers and students are encouraged to use the target language 90% of instructional time. I found trying to remain in the target language 90% of the class time challenging when I saw the confused or frustrated looks on my students’ faces. My first instinct was to help them out with English. Also, if I could not find the means to convey the message through visuals, rephrasing, and gestures, I would get frustrated and resort to a few English words. Bateman (2008) reminded me I was not alone, for he talks about the challenges that language instructors like myself face when using only the target language to teach. These include explaining instructions for activities and talking about the target culture. Nevertheless, Bateman claims, “Those who strive to maximize their use of the target language tend to be more successful as instructors than those who do not” (p. 15). From my own experience, I have noticed that the more I am determined not to use English, the more satisfied I am with the lesson as a whole. I know that my students strained and tried their best to understand what they could, which means they put in the effort. Straining, even though tiresome at times for both the students and myself, develops their listening and comprehension skills. This is the main objective, which is to develop their language skills, which must outweigh my eagerness to avoid confusion.
According to Shrum and Glisan (2010), teacher talk or teacher discourse must contain features of comprehensible input that should facilitate learners' communicative development and contribute to a communicative goal. As long as teachers make every effort to ensure their discourse is comprehensible for students, they can be certain that in the end learners will benefit from struggling to understand the target language without use of the L1. Therefore, teachers have to find ways that support learners during their struggle without resorting to the L1. Moreover, Lee and VanPatten (2003) explain that in order to make L2 input comprehensible to learners and avoid creating a stressful environment, teachers can use linguistic and non-linguistic means to adjust, modify, and simplify the input learners receive. Linguistic modifications include paraphrasing, focusing on intonation and emphasis, stress, and slower articulation when pronouncing certain words. Non-linguistic includes images, gestures, diagrams, etc. Teachers should also focus on familiar topics that allow students to retrieve their background knowledge and experiences. Shrum and Glisan (2010) claim, “Past experiences always affect new learning” (p. 77). Connecting my teaching to things my students already know allows them to generate meaningful language rather than struggle for finding new ideas. In the next section, I will discuss how certain engaging activities can encourage students to remain in the target language.

**Task-based Activities and Conducting Lessons**

As I mentioned above, my second challenge in teaching communicatively is creating activities that are truly task-based. After experiencing traditional language teaching, it takes a lot of energy and creative ideas to develop activities that engage students. Teachers can make language learning engaging by designing numerous
activities with communicative goals that students can use in the real world. This keeps students focused and engaged because they know the objective behind what they are doing. Such activities according to Ballman and Gasparro (2001) are called Task-Based Activities or TBA. The rationale behind incorporating TBA in our language classrooms is that in these activities learners have a reason to do something communicative in the target language. In other words, they are guided in carrying out a task in the target language for real-life application. This allows learners to gather information in collaboration with other learners which increases their speaking proficiency in the target language.

Ellis (2009) and (2012) explains that creating TBA involves both design and methodology. This is where I have faced challenges. Designing the predetermined steps to guide the students in achieving the communicative goal can be tricky. I have at times designed activities thinking they were task-based since they asked for collaboration to gather information, but then they lacked that last step that asks students to use this information in the form of a communicative task. As I have continued to learn more about TBA and how to make my lessons communicative, it has become less of a struggle to think of ideas for activities. See (Appendix A) for an example of a task-based activity I designed for intermediate level Arabic learners for a lesson about Arab countries, their capitals, their flags, and asking each other about which Arab countries they wish to visit and why. This activity has two parts: in the first part, students in pairs exchange information through collaboration, and in the second part, students use the information they received to answer each other’s questions regarding visiting an Arab country in the future.
As I wrestle with designing TBA, I am reminded by Ellis (2009) “It is important to recognize that there is no single way of doing TBA” (p. 224). I can focus on different language skills one at a time or combine two or more, as long as in the end they are always learner centered, meaning that it is only possible to carry out these activities through interaction, collaboration, and support between students. TBA are usually done in pairs or groups to encourage negotiation of meaning and collaboration when gathering information or agreeing on an opinion. I have taught relatively small classes, which, at the beginning made it more challenging to keep my TBA new and engaging. Yet, I have managed to turn this into an advantage. I make my students feel like they prefer the class to be small because it allows them the privilege to ask for more clarifications and questions as one group. We have discussions in the target language that sometimes I lead, and sometimes they lead. It is easier for them to lead discussions as a small group, as they can all participate more than once. I do not think a small class has a negative effect on how TBA are carried out, besides the fact that students have repeatedly the same partners. Swan (2005) mentions that TBA are not easily implemented in other parts of the world due to the learning contexts that interfere with the freedom and capabilities to apply TBA. This reminded me that teaching in my current context offers the perfect atmosphere to create and implement TBA and expect students to willingly respond to them. I have no excuse other than to try my best regardless of how big or small my class is.

As I am trying to develop TBA for my classroom, I can see that the advantage for teachers is that these activities make it possible for the learning process to be shared between both teacher and learners. The teacher no longer has to take full responsibility of everything that goes on in the classroom (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). More importantly, the
advantage for learners is that they take on more responsibility for their learning in relying on themselves and each other to put together messages to convey meaning, thus becoming autonomous learners.

Moreover, as a foreign language teacher, I should practice designing my own TBA to coincide with the curriculum I am expected to cover. I should automatically consider modifying and adjusting the “grammar substitution drills”, for example, with activities that will promote contextual and meaningful application of grammatical structures that support communication. Designing, adding, and modifying activities are essential when preparing and conducting lessons. In the following section, I mention other factors that go into conducting an effective lesson.

**Conducting Lessons**

When designing a lesson plan, my three main objectives are: first, making use of all the class time. Genesee’s (2008) view on time management in the classroom is that “Time must be translated into effective learning opportunities” (p. 38). Second, briefing the students at the beginning of the class on the lesson’s objective. This reminds them of their course goals and connects them to the progress they have been making throughout the course. Third, stating the objectives of what they will be able to do by the end of the lesson. When it comes to managing the lesson time, Shrum and Glisan (2010) state that, “teachers should teach the new material first, use the downtime to have students engage in practice or discussion with one another, conduct closure during the last part of the lesson, and avoid using the precious first and last segments of a lesson for classroom management tasks such as collecting homework or taking attendance” (p. 77). I agree with considering the importance of classroom time management. For example, it is very
time consuming to explain homework at the end of the class. I always send homework through email or Canvas. At the same time, I know that the instructions should still be in Arabic. Therefore, in my homework explanations I begin explaining the assignments mostly in English with a little bit of Arabic then I gradually take out the English. If students have a question, they can email me. Even at the beginning of the class, I go over the communicative goal. I would have already explained this goal in the previous email. This way students come to class more prepared, knowing what they will be learning.

I also allow the class to stray off topic at times if the discussion is still related to the L2 and the culture and does not necessarily disrupt the lesson. Political and social aspects are important topics for my students in the Arabic language classroom. For example, topics such as weddings in the Arab culture, refugees in Arab countries, history, etc., are sometimes discussed. Numerous connections are made during these discussions because many words are in the target language while Arab traditions as well as information regarding real life in Arab countries are touched upon. These discussions mostly stem from activities students do in class. Cloud (2000) states that, “Structuring the classroom around concrete activities rather than paper and pencil tasks is the strategy that is most likely to result in authentic use of language among students” (p. 55). Therefore, activities that are designed to promote discussions lead to language use that is relevant to what is occurring outside the classroom. This will facilitate well-rounded L2 learning. Moreover, another factor that will facilitate well-rounded L2 learning is the existence of a positive student-teacher relationship.
Student Teacher Relationship

According to Garcia, Gillings, and Lopez (2013) “The existence of positive relationships is considered as possibly one of the most influential factors in language learning” (p. 117). In my teaching, I try to establish a relationship between the students and me that will create a learning environment that encourages my students to practice speaking comfortably. This can be difficult for many language teachers including myself when trying to strictly remain in the target language. This can sometimes intimidate learners and may even decrease their level of motivation. In order to prevent this demotivation, teachers should have a clear understanding of learners’ objectives for learning the target language.

Ryding, (2013) phrases the rising interest in Arabic beautifully by stating “An interconnected world with ever-increasing international links and interests, as well as key economic and political concerns at the global level, have raised the public profile of Arabic language and literature, Arab society and culture and the Arab world in general” (p. 2). I believe it is essential to connect the language along with its culture to what is occurring in the Arab world. After all, students learn a foreign language so they can obtain real-world communication skills. (Ballman & Gasparro, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). More specifically, the students in my Arabic classes who are majoring in subjects such as Political Science, Social Sciences, global communications, and Journalism eventually need to learn specific terms and want to be able to discuss certain topics related to their interests in a real-word setting. Therefore, the question I continually ask myself is how to be a language instructor who best prepares my students for the real Arabic-speaking world. I have discovered that this is what my
students find interesting and is a major part of their objective for learning Arabic, and as a teacher, I must gain the extensive knowledge needed for effective Arabic language learning. Thus, in order for teachers to fulfil these needs and interests, they must know their students’ learning objectives well, and ask their students about their majors and interests in learning the target language. Over the past couple semesters, I have emailed my students before the course begins asking them why they chose to learn Arabic and in what ways they wish to use Arabic in their future careers or interests. Based on their answers, I included topics and vocabulary to the curriculum that catered to their interests and goals. This shows consideration towards the students and develops a strong teacher-student relationship needed for successful language learning from the beginning of the course.

Furthermore, Pine and Boy (1993) offer an interesting insight into the effect of this learner-teacher relationship by saying that “Pupils feel the personal emotional construction of the teacher long before they feel the impact of the intellectual content offered by that teacher” (p.117). Therefore, before I began teaching Arabic at USU, I thought carefully about how to be empathetic, respectful, and friendly all at the same time with my students. Knowing that their motivation towards learning will be influenced depending on the nature of our relationship. I try to establish a positive and supportive relationship with my students, I want to ensure they can approach me for any difficulties they are having in the course. Another factor that influences this relationship is the amount of time the teacher puts into teaching. Every week I give an extra hour during which students practice reading and writing since most of the talking is done during the regular classes. I found this to be necessary as I can see that students appreciate this extra
time and are dedicated to making the most of it. I continue to learn better ways in how to engage with my students and be as helpful as possible to facilitate their learning.

**Helping Learners Gain Intercultural and Pragmatic Competence**

In the MSLT program, I learned the importance of the cultural and pragmatic aspects of language learning and how it cannot be taught in a vacuum without connecting it to the people who speak the language, their societies, and how they use the language. Geisler (2008) states, “students need to know the central cultural metaphors or ‘key words’…that are generated by various historical traditions and discourses” (p. 234). The Arabic language with all its rich metaphors and phrases did not suddenly appear. There are historical, traditional, and religious reasons behind the various contextual usages of the language. Thus, it is essential to explain language use in different contexts and scenarios. For example, how to refuse an invitation using words and even gestures that could soften the refusal.

Moreover, the values of the Arab culture, especially the values that exist today, are important to discuss with students to help them understand the true meaning and source of particular language use. Ryding (2013) explains that many curricula in Arabic language and culture fail to give a sense of the everyday values that exist in the culture. In my teaching, I have tried to explain such values as respect, family, religion, freedom, etc., in ways they can understand using different sources such as short stories, folktales, poetry, paintings, and media in all its forms. One textbook does not provide such a variety and I believe that every language teacher should be in constant search for sources
that will help students gain a sense and understanding of cultural values and pragmatic rules that will encourage students to apply the language appropriately in real-life contexts.

Furthermore, I have learned to implement different ways to introduce cultural concepts that are too abstract to give one explanation for, or even an English translation, due to not having one exact equivalent in the L1 culture. A phrase or concept like *Insha’allah* meaning God willing, could have different meanings in different contexts and is a phrase that is not as heavily used in the Western culture as it is in the Arab culture. To help explain such a concept, teachers can first allow students to begin forming their own definitions by showing them examples of how it is used, by whom, and in what situations. Vygotsky (1987) views mastering a concept as leading the learner to a deeper understanding and control of the concept. Therefore, learners try taking in all the concept’s characteristics and forming their own personal understanding leading to a class discussion about using the concept correctly and appropriately in various contexts and situations.

After students truly understand the concept, students can engage in role-play, which I have implemented in my teaching and will continue to do so knowing that according to Via (1976), helps them to resemble native speakers and understand and practice their embodied social norms including gestures and intonation in the classroom. Role-play allows students to use the concept in order to explain a real-life event or state of affairs in collaboration with other students.

In spite of the difficulties I face in introducing the Arab culture and its pragmatic rules to students, I have learned first, that there is a vast collection of sources provided for
learners of Arabic, teachers of Arabic, and material for fluent speakers of Arabic that can
also be of usage to me and my students. Second, I have discovered through research and
the courses in this program, different ways I can introduce culture and pragmatics that are
engaging and motivating for students involving analyzation and comparison of the
similarities and differences between their culture and the Arab culture.

Standards for Learning a Foreign Language in General and Arabic in Particular

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (2012) offer a
framework that can serve as a guide in determining what students should know and be
able to do with the language. They introduce the “five goals of foreign language
education” or the “5 C’s”: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and
Communities. These goals each contain standards that describe the knowledge and
abilities students should be able to acquire by the end of a certain period of study.

According to the Standards for Learning Arabic K-16 in the United States (2012), there
are three core beliefs: “all students can develop competency in the Arabic language and
appreciation for the Arabic culture; all students can learn; and instruction must be
interactive, learner-centered, and reflect current best practices” (p. 118). Reading specific
beliefs for Arabic learning encourages me to become a better teacher because I know I
have support. These beliefs summarize all the elements of successful language learning
that I want my Arabic language classroom to have.
In order to help me apply these standards in my own teaching, I have created a figure that is adapted from *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* 2012 (p. 9). The figure below illustrates how these goals and standards come together under the main goal of contextualization.

![Figure 1. Standards Guide](image)

I chose to incorporate these standards into my teaching philosophy because they remind me of what my students should be able to do through the communicative activities I design and the content I bring to the classroom. It is also important to provide them with means through which they connect to different disciplines in Arabic. For example, advanced level students can watch Al-Jazeera or read about Islamic art in Arabic and grasp what information they can in Arabic. In both cases, they are connecting to politics and art; via the target language. For example, in my intermediate class,
students watch short documentaries about general society topics such as recycling, smoking, employment etc., which they find interesting. This encourages them to listen intensively in order to understand the content in the target language.

Moreover, they can compare content within Arabic itself through recognizing patterns in the language that help them with acquisition. Lastly, I can encourage them to contact native speakers of Arabic through the internet. For example, in one of my intermediate Arabic classes, students practiced Arabic with tutors from various Arabic countries through an online video conferencing tool for ten half hour sessions. The tutors did not use any English and they discussed topics I chose that were related to the topics in class. Students expressed how much they learned and benefited from this practice. Students can also interact with Arab international students on campus, or visit Arab restaurants in the area. In this way, they are involving themselves in the target language community.

Lastly, from my experience in participating in Penn State’s STARTALK Arabic Academy for professional development for teachers of Arabic, I observed real Arabic classes demonstrating how these standards, combined with communication-based teaching, created an extremely effective language-learning environment. I also had the opportunity to practice these standards with the classes I had observed by teaching two different lessons. I then received feedback on my teaching indicating what I can improve. I was able to experience Arabic language teaching in a different context, which better prepared me for teaching Arabic at USU. Learning about the standards and how to apply them in both the STARTALK program and mainly in the MSLT program, has allowed me to improve my role as an Arabic instructor.
Conclusion

I continue to find communicative language learning a major component in my language teaching because it allows me to create opportunities that help students convey realistic and relevant messages as the key to satisfying their objectives for learning Arabic. My role as the teacher is to create a suitable effective learner-centered environment that creates life-long learners. In this learner-centered environment, I try to remain in the target language, though a struggle at times, I have learned that by using linguistic and non-linguistic means to modify and simplify my Arabic language, learners are more likely to comprehend the input they receive. Such an environment also requires designing and implementing task-based activities that necessitate a lot of practice to make them engaging, collaborative, and meaningful.

Moreover, a successful student-teacher relationship helps create a learner-centered environment where I try to focus on students’ individual interests and objectives for learning Arabic, be positive and supportive towards their struggles, and provide extra time for students. A main part of students’ interests in learning Arabic is culture, specifically practicing Arabic appropriately in real-life cultural settings. Therefore, I explain the importance of helping learners gain intercultural and pragmatic competence first by understanding the history and values conjoined with Arabic language, following how to practice using Arabic appropriately and contextually. Lastly, the standards for foreign language learning in general and Arabic in particular guide my teaching in that the five C’s call for more variety of topics that caters to students’ interests through activities that keep them motivated, and reminds me of what my students should be able to do with Arabic at any particular level of proficiency.
Despite having written my own teaching philosophy, I am not fully satisfied with my language teaching skills, nor will I ever be, which pushes me to continue to learn from research, practice, observing fellow language instructors, and most importantly practice through experience. As an instructor, I cannot say I apply the perfect method nor that I know the exact reasons behind every student’s difficulty in learning Arabic as a foreign language, but I can continue to learn from teaching and experimenting with what I think is effective for successful language learning for now.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

I began teaching Arabic at USU with a mindset that was not purely communicative. I had been observing my Jordanian Arabic and English language teachers for years who taught mostly in an audiolingual fashion. I learned a great deal about CLT in the MSLT program, yet I still needed some sort of demonstration. As I began observing my colleagues teaching other languages, I formed a clear picture of what communicative language teaching looks like. I found that all the instructors strived to teach communicatively to the best of their abilities. They thought of creative ways to make their classes and activities more engaging. For example, they used famous characters (familiar names) to explain nationality, or showed videos that were not totally related to the lesson but perhaps funny to refresh the students and test their L2 listening comprehension skills. Also, one of the instructors asked questions that generated a lot of L2 communication which needed precise preparation. I also focused on student-teacher and student-student relationships and observed many engaging activities that I wanted to implement in my own classroom.

Three language classes I had observed had a distinct effect on my own teaching. A beginner’s English class, a beginner’s German class and an advanced Russian class. These observations helped me with some of the challenges I was facing with my teaching.

One of my challenges was having a small number of students in my Arabic classes. I was not sure if class size had an effect on the activities’ success. As I continued to observe more language classes, I became adept at restructuring the activities for them to work in the dynamics of my own classroom.
An example of such an activity is taken from a beginner’s English class. The dynamics of this particular class were interesting to me for three reasons: class size, levels of students, and having Arabic native speakers in the class. First, it was a much bigger class than what I had been teaching that semester. The instructor asked the students to go around the class to find similar hobbies to their own, and then to discuss as a class, who had the same interests. In one of the Arabic 2010 classes I taught, I only had three students. Therefore, activities such as this where students walk around talking to different partners and switching partners to find similar hobbies would not be as engaging in a small classroom. Instead I had my students discuss their hobbies as one group. I also added a question to the activity where they categorize their own hobbies in addition to hobbies I gave them into sports, art, etc. I began to realize that having a small class allows my students to have more time to discuss more aspects of a single topic in the time it would take for a bigger class to discuss one aspect. Thus, I learned to take advantage of the dynamics of my classroom from observing a bigger class.

Second, this class had drastically different levels which made it difficult for all the learners to comprehend the instructions. The teacher had activities that were slightly easier than the rest to cater to the different levels. This is not easy to do for each lesson. Upon my own reflection, I decided it would be best for my class if I offered more office hours and more practice homework to allow such students to catch up. I was afraid that if I gave different level activities during class time, those students with the easier tasks would not push themselves to improve. I remind my students that learning a language like Arabic is a big commitment. They must do all the work and once they walk into the classroom they should switch to full Arabic mode and practice speaking as much as
possible. Furthermore, at times the teacher allowed for a little bit of L1 communication among students to help confused students get on task. Otherwise, they could not catch up with the majority. In my opinion, if I had allowed this in my classroom the students would stop focusing on what I say and rely on their classmates for translations. I wanted to discourage and prevent the use of English to the extent possible.

Third, there was a significant number of native Arabic speaking students who at times would translate the instructions into Arabic for students who were having difficulty understanding them. During activities where they talked about hobbies, they would speak in English mostly then add personal comments in Arabic, or express their admiration for a hobby. For example, I heard “oh I would love to have my own collection of something!” in Arabic. This was interesting to me because it showed me that they were not trying as hard as the instructor expected in terms of expressing themselves fully in English. When it came to their emotions or feelings it came out in Arabic. I faced the same predicament in my class. I wanted my students to try their best to express themselves in Arabic and I was still hearing side comments in English. I learned that this is expected especially at the beginning but I had to think of ways to let my students know it was still unacceptable. I made examples of the students who, when they did not know how to express something in Arabic, would ask me how. I also began translating aloud over any side talk in English into Arabic. I knew it bothered students at the beginning but the English began to die down gradually.

Another challenge I faced at the beginning of my teaching was remaining in the target language. I wanted to observe other classes to see how feasible remaining in the target language really was. I wanted to know if I was the only instructor finding it
difficult to do so. I observed a beginner’s German class where the grammar was mostly implicitly understood through the activities and grammar explanations on the board that supported the activity at hand. Students asked questions about the grammar and the teacher began explaining in German first and then resorted to English to clarify an important difference between the English and German usage of a word. I learned that sometimes it is acceptable to use a tad bit of English when making important grammatical comparisons between the L1 and L2 if it is complicated, and as long as it supports the communicative goal at hand. I observed in this German class along with other Indo-European language classes such as French, that students were more likely to pick up the gist of the teacher talk due to similarities in English, than they would in Arabic, making it easier for these instructors to remain in the L2.

Continuing on that note, I wanted to observe a language like Arabic which Anglophone students would find exceptionally difficult due to learning an entirely new alphabet. I observed an advanced Russian class where the instructor spoke Russian the entire time. The students responded in Russian most of the time and when they did not, the instructor just reminded them to speak in Russian. Sometimes English vocabulary words were needed to interpret meanings in Russian, but rarely. However, when they began to learn new vocabulary words, the students gave the meaning in English and she helped them find the meanings in Russian. Sometimes the students asked each other meanings of words in English for which the instructor then helped them figure out the meanings in Russian. The instructor also said humorous things in Russian that made the students laugh. When I tried to do the same in my Arabic class I had to use a lot of gesturing and intonation for my students to understand why it was funny. I believe humor
adds a lot to language teaching and therefore, even at the beginner’s level, I try to make my students laugh using simple L2 sentences.

I enjoyed this class very much because speaking in the target language went smoothly for both teacher and students. I knew that one of the main reasons why these students remained in Russian so easily was because most of them had served a church mission in Russia. Yet, I had the opportunity to observe a class similar to what I pictured my intermediate Arabic classes could eventually look like, not as fluent of course but with the same drive.

Another aspect of teaching I wanted to observe is the student-teacher relationship. Observing these three classes mentioned above all taught me where to put boundaries and restrictions, when to be friendly and understanding, under what circumstances should I expect more from my students and when to offer more help. Teaching a small class allowed my students to ask questions all the time and participate throughout the whole lesson. My students were always talking and being heard by everyone in the room. Observing the other classes, not all students got the opportunity to be heard and praised by the teacher. While students probably do not need constant praise, they may feel more confident when they know the teacher can hear every word they say and they will receive feedback on everything.

Throughout my teaching experience in the MSLT program, we instructors shared our ideas and teaching experiences every day. Yet, once we entered each others’ realms of teaching and saw how our lessons were conducted and witnessed each others’ struggles, we learned so much. It allowed us to stop and reflect on how we define
ourselves as language teachers. I will continue to observe as many classes as possible to improve and experiment with new ideas.
SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF TEACHING

In this section I analyze and assess my own teaching from watching a video recording of myself teaching following the Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement (SATS) model proposed by Spicer-Escalante (2015). I mention the positive and negative aspects I found in the lesson including my advisor’s opinions and comments on my teaching and outcome of the lesson as a whole.

**Background:** On January 28, 2015, my advisor Dr. de-Jonge-Kannan observed my teaching of a whole fifty-minute Arabic first year-second semester class or Arabic 1020 class, which met three times a week. The course is preceded by Arabic 1010 and is followed by courses Arabic 2010 and 2020.

**Students:** The class included 10 in total (2 female, 8 male). Two students were heritage speakers of Arabic, one of them a heritage speaker of the Palestinian dialect and the other of the Lebanese dialect. I also had one student who’s L1 was Korean. The rest spoke English as their L1. Most students were majoring in political science or international studies and wanted to use Arabic in their future careers.

**Curricular Context:** The title of the lesson was “Buying and selling at the Souq”. Before this class observation, students were already familiar with counting in Arabic and the vocabulary words for stationery items and food. After learning how to buy and sell at the market or *souq*, students can then practice the necessary language needed for making transactions at a bank in addition to booking a room at a hotel or a ticket at the airport, etc.
**Objectives:** The two communicative goals were that students could count money (authentic Jordanian money) using the correct currency terms “dinar and qarsh”. In addition to students buying and selling a number of food and stationery items using the appropriate terms for buying and selling in the *souq*, students will also learn how to ask prices and bargain. The Standards targeted by this activity were Interpersonal and Presentational speaking and Products of Culture.

The product of culture was mainly bargaining which is a must in the Middle East. Locals do it all the time. Even if the merchandise has a price label, the buyer may still try to ask for a cheaper price. Foreigners who do not know how to bargain or think it is unnecessary, are charged ridiculously high prices. Therefore, I wanted to make sure that my students learned what to say and how to say it sounding clear and convincing.

I began with introducing the topic and terms used at the *souq* such as buyer, seller, how much, expensive, cheap, etc. I used PowerPoint slides to help me explain that we were going to the *souq* and showed pictures of a buyer and a seller. I then said “I want to buy something” and wrote the word “buy” on the board in first, second, and third person forms. I then used “buy” in sentences and acted out buying something. I then showed pictures of what *dinars* and *qaroosh* actually look like while writing the singular and plural form of both *dinar* and *qarsh* on the board.

I used a lot of visuals, voice intonation, gestures, facial expressions, and body language to help the students comprehend the vocabulary items and new expressions for shopping. My advisor said that all students were following and paying attention. I then handed out real paper and coin Jordanian currency to generate questions from the students about the pictures or colors of the money. They asked what was king in Arabic
and asked about one of the ancient ruins that was on the back of the five dinar bill. I could tell this got them more interested in the lesson. The following table shows each activity, the time it began, the mode of communication targeted, and the format.

Table: 1  Buying and selling at the Souq (Activities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Modes</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:05</td>
<td>Warm up: Teacher asks students to write particular words from previous lessons and numbers on their whiteboards.</td>
<td>Interpretive writing</td>
<td>Whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:25</td>
<td>Students ask each other “How much money do you have? They will each count and tell their partner how much as they write their totals on the work sheet and then answer the next question on the sheet, then figure out who has a bigger total?</td>
<td>Interpretive speaking and writing</td>
<td>Pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:40</td>
<td>Four students are sellers- two in each store. One will be a grocery store and the other a stationery store. Each Seller has a name tag that says “Seller”. The desks will have all the items on paper with their names and prices. Including the name of their store taped to the desk. The four desks will be in the front of the class while students who are buyers will stay standing and buying things. I will interject words that sellers say to welcome customers and I will also encourage the buyers to bargain.</td>
<td>Interpersonal and Presentational speaking and Products of Culture.</td>
<td>Whole class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the first activity, I passed out different amounts of fake printed dinars and coins to each student. I then put students in pairs to ask their partner how much money they had and then count in Arabic and tell their partner the totals to write on the work sheet, then answer the next question on the sheet, who has a bigger total? Despite knowing that when I asked students to first individually count their money, many
students must have counted in English in their heads. But I had purposely printed the Jordanian currency from one side, which is the Arabic side so that there were no English numbers at all. I should have asked for each of them to take turns counting aloud so that they wouldn't count in English. I was pleased to see most of them write their total amounts correctly. My advisor thought that the activity took it bit longer than it should have. I think the reason behind that was my students not being used to counting in big numbers in Arabic.

For the second activity, I asked four students to be sellers, two in each store. One was a grocery store and the other a stationery store. I wanted this activity to be a role play where each seller had a name tag that said “Seller” and the rest of the students would play the roles of buyers going to the souq. The desks had pictures of all the items on paper with their names and prices, including the name of the store taped to the desk. The four desks were in the front as the rest who were buyers stayed standing in line and buying things with their fake Jordanian money. I demonstrated what each seller and buyer should do and say. I interjected words that sellers say to welcome customers and encouraged the buyers to bargain. They appeared to enjoy being out of their seats trying to recall certain words and phrases to help them interact. I liked the energy and enthusiasm in a few students that showed me that they were engaged in the role play. My advisor mentioned that one shop ended up with lots of buyers (who then chatted with each other in English when it was not their turn). She said I could have managed the balance between shops a bit better. I should have had two buyers from the beginning because that long line of customers at each store meant no interaction and no communication in Arabic for all those waiting. I actually had planned to put two buyers
but I sensed many students were still a bit confused with what was going on and wanted to see an example first. But perhaps I should have taken more time to demonstrate at the beginning to prevent confusion.

Throughout the lesson, it seemed like I was a bit too jumpy at times. I still try to find that fine line between enthusiastically encouraging my students and making them nervous. I also noticed from watching the recording that I tend to explain things a bit too fast and should slow down. I should not worry about time at the expense of making my students feel rushed. Yet, I want my students to remain on their toes and alert throughout the lesson. Hopefully my teaching will become smoother in the future.

As I was watching the video recording, I also wanted to really study my students’ facial expressions as I was teaching. After teaching that class for a few weeks, I knew when my students were struggling to comprehend something or when they were relaxed or engaged. But when I am teaching I cannot see every student’s response to the lesson. In the video, I could tell from some of their expressions when I was explaining things too quickly, or when side comments or questions were asked in English when my students know they should ask me. I also noticed during the first activity that some students were having trouble counting past a certain number. These insights helped me prepare better for the lessons to come.

Overall, I thought the two communicative goals were reached: learning how to count money and practicing how to buy and sell items. I wanted the lesson to be beneficial for my students to help them once they visit a real souq in the Middle East. My advisor assured me that the Can-Do Statements were achieved and that at the end of the
class, students could confidently declare “I can use Arabic for basic shopping interactions”. 
FIRST ARTIFACT

The Cultural Concept of “khajal” and Concept Based Instruction
INTRODUCTION

This paper was written in Dr. Rogers Linguistics 6600 course. I found Lev Vygotsky’s work and sociocultural theory interesting and beneficial to teaching a foreign language in general and cultural concepts in particular because he gives an inside perspective on how we learn and the internal processes we go through to learn. I also learned that understanding theory and how a theory came to be is essential before applying it. Teachers should not only think of teaching as practice and application but also as experimenting with theories taken from various sources or theories teachers themselves originate and want to apply in their own classrooms. In this artifact, I chose to experiment with the theory of concept-based instruction. I explore concept-based instruction as a non-traditional way to introduce Arabic cultural concepts that Arabic language learners find difficult to understand merely from an English definition due to its non-existence in their own culture. Gaining a sociocultural perspective means learners can try to situate themselves in the Arabic cultural context. I found concept based instruction to do just that. Students take their own understanding of a cultural concept and compare it with others and examples of its usage in real cultural contexts provided by the instructor. Trying to materialize an understanding is not like reading a definition. Though concept-based instruction seems like a long and complicated process, from experience with applying it in my ARBC 2020 classroom, I saw that it helped students gain a deeper understating of cultural concepts. In my conclusion, I demonstrate a lesson plan that I used in my Arabic teaching for understanding and learning how to appropriately use an Arabic cultural concept.
**Abstract**

This paper explores the culture-based emotional concept of ‘khajal’ which in English stands for the general concept that covers in its range different shame variants such as shame, embarrassment, shyness, and bashfulness. The pragmatics of the situation and context in which the word is used largely determine which of the variants is appropriate. This is an emotional concept that is difficult to define in terms of context alone for there are culture-specific codes such as gestures and intonation which govern the use of this word in Arab culture. Therefore, this paper addresses the principles through which concept-based instruction (CBI) can turn L2 development into a conceptual process through internalization that helps learners understand the pragmatic usage of these concepts. In this study, I will attempt to materialize and verbalize the cultural concept of “khajal” in Arabic, through which learners gain a systematic understanding of this abstract emotional concept through a materialized concrete activity resulting in its internalization.

**Keywords:** concept-based instruction, shame variants, culture-based concept, pragmatics, materialization, verbalization, internalization, role-play, Arab culture, context

**Introduction**

The pragmatic parameters of any language must be taken into account in cross-cultural communication (LoCastro, 2012). Pragmatics studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning, and according to Leech, (1983) “meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language” (p. 6). Context is not enough to indicate meaning, for there are culture-specific codes such as gestures and intonation
which govern the use of language. Moreover, Shammas (2001) explains that since cohesion and coherence of text are not adequate judgments of textual interpretation, we must look outside of the text for an adequate account of appropriateness and inappropriateness. Therefore, in terms of communication in the Arab culture, pragmatics and culture-specific codes are analyzed for the purpose of interpretation. Ryding (2013) points out the importance for teachers of Arabic to create multiple paths to intercultural competence, due to the rising interest learners have in the Arab culture. Such paths can include concept-based instruction, which helps equip the learner with strategies for interpreting the pragmatic effect of the Arabic utterances as they are used by the native speaker. These strategies consist of role-play and the materialization and verbalization of the cultural concept of ‘khajel’ through drawing the expressions of ‘khajal’ from clips of various scenarios.

Definition of concepts

Wells (2008) has defined concepts as “collaboratively produced constructs that constitute the realm of “what is known” (p. 330). In Arabic, ‘khajal’ is a cultural concept that has been formed through a collaboration of what is known in the Arabic culture coming from what causes or triggers the emotion of shame and the response to it. This differs from Middle Eastern culture to Western culture according to the moral code adopted, but shame in general is universal. Teachers can begin introducing the cultural concept based on this universality then compare cultural values behind such concepts as shame. This will help learners understand why “khajal” does not have an English equivalent, and thus prepares them to understand the various contexts in which this concept is used.
Furthermore, Vygotsky asserts, “The development of concepts and the
development of word meanings are one and the same process’’ (1987, p. 2). Focusing on
systematic relationships between word meanings and their cultural contexts brings
learners to the awareness of pragmatics, semantics, and the concept of culture that will
develop both their understanding of the word’s meaning and ability to use that particular
word appropriately in cultural context.

**Definition of the concept of ‘shame’ or ‘khajal’ in Arab culture**

Defining culture-based concepts can lead to different definitions based on cultural
values, making it difficult to grasp for L2 learners. In this section, I will explain why the
cultural concept of ‘khajal’ is one of those difficult concepts. According to Al Jallad
(2008, 2007), the concept of ‘khajal’ in Arabic can be defined as one of the following
depending on context, gesture and intonation.

**Table 2: English Definitions of "khajal" (adapted from Al Jallad; 2008, 2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Shame:</strong></th>
<th>X was ashamed of him or herself, something was happening inside X, the kind of bad thing that happens to people when they know they have done something bad, and they do not want other people to know it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Embarrassment:</strong></td>
<td>X was embarrassed, something was happening inside X, the kind of bad thing that happens to people when they know people are thinking of them, and they do not want this to go on after now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shy:</strong></td>
<td>X was shy, something was happening inside X, the kind of bad thing that happens to people when they see that people whom they do not know well are thinking of them, and they do not want this to go on after now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following examples adapted from (Al Jallad; 2008, 2007), show how ‘khajal’ can have more than one similar meaning that could either have a positive or negative connotation, which cannot be understood from the sentence context alone.

1) Samir Khajil min Muna.
Samir shame from Muna.
Here “khajal” could have two meanings:

Samir felt ashamed/embarrassed in the presence of Muna. In this case, Samir could have done something wrong in Muna’s presence that caused him to feel ashamed of his bad behavior. (Negative connotation)

Samir felt shy and bashful in the presence of Muna. Samir perhaps likes Muna and felt shy in her presence. (Positive connotation)

2) Ali khajjil Waleed.
Ali shame Waleed.
Here “khajal” could also have two meanings:

Ali did something silly in public and embarrassed Waleed. (Not so negative)

Ali did or said something sacrilegious that caused Waleed to feel ashamed for being his friend. (Extremely negative)

When students analyze these scenarios, they must understand the full context of the story or dialogue, including how the emotion was triggered and the response to it, as well as the relationship between speaker and hearer. The pragmatics of the situation and the context in which the word is used largely determine which of the variants is appropriate (Al Jallad 2008). When students understand the cultural values behind these scenarios, it makes it easier for them to make distinctions between the uses of “khajal”.

Moreover, Arabic shame scenarios are different in many aspects from those in English, especially in what triggers the emotion. For example, a host serving his or her
guests coffee with the left hand is a shameful situation, which is almost hard to believe for an English speaker. Culturally, khajal is sex and age-related. Women and children are expected to feel it more often than men do. For example, from my University experience in Jordan, girls were meant to feel ‘khajal’ if they smoked in public on campus.

There are shame constructions in English that do not have equivalents in Arabic. A significant difference is that in English there is no kind of shame that is praised or recommended as in Arabic. Harkins (1990) stresses the distinction between embarrassment and shame in English: One can be “embarrassed” and pleased at the same time by praise, but never “ashamed” and pleased. This is what makes this emotional concept difficult for Arabic learners to understand. In the American culture, in general one should not be shy and remain quiet. This may indicate a weak personality (Al-Jallad, 2008). Whereas, being shy and quiet in the Arab culture can signify respect which is praised. When teachers take the time to explain the differences between Arab and American culture, this will help students understand the conceptualization of shame. For example, values like freedom, standing up for one’s rights are highly rated in America, whereas, religion, knowing one’s heritage and respecting the elderly are core values for an Arab speaker. This may clarify the concept of “good shame” being shame with a positive connotation. (Jallad 2008).

**Role-play**

In this paper, we are dealing with a culture-based emotional concept, which exists in both Arabic and English, yet in very different forms. Allowing the students to engage in role-play will, according to Via (1976), help them to resemble native speakers and understand and practice their embodied social norms including gestures and intonation.
Role-play allows the students to use the concept in order to explain a real-life event or state of affairs in collaboration with other students. Popper and Eccles (1977) explain, “We can grasp a theory only by trying to reinvent it or reconstruct it with the help of our imagination” (p. 461). Showing clips of real scenarios where ‘khajal’ is being used between native speakers will help learners comprehend the cultural context of its appropriate usage and the positive or negative connotation of this word in different situations between different people in the society. Only then can students use their imagination to create their own similar situations and try using ‘khajal’ appropriately. The following examples are “khajal” scenarios students can act out in order to increase their understanding of this cultural concept “khajal”.

When elders walk into a room, out of respect the younger people stand. The students who do not stand up out of respect feel shame with a (negative connotation).

When guests are about to leave the hosts’ house, the hosts are always expected to invite them to stay longer a number of times. Guests are to feel “khajal” embarrassed to stay longer and persist on leaving politely (positive connotation).

When men greet women, out of respect they lower their gaze. Here “khajal” has a positive connotation as bashfulness or shyness.

**Concept-based Instruction (CBI)**

The L2 classroom is a place where students interact using the L2 to mediate communication and understanding of the L2 culture and the cultural concepts that are new to students. Therefore, according to Negueruela, (2003) “pedagogical principles in CBI applied to the field of L2 learning are grounded on a sociocultural understanding of
human thinking and learning” (p. 364). Ultimately, in order to use such concepts appropriately, one must practice with others. However, before practicing these concepts, students can be introduced to them through systematic instruction. Students are then able to comprehend and make use of the concept and transfer their abstract understanding to a concrete understanding of the concept. Vygotsky (1987) views mastering a concept as leading the learner to a deeper understanding and control of the concept. Learners try taking in all the concept’s characteristics and forming their own personal understanding to help understand how to use it correctly in various contexts and situations.

CBI can be challenging to adopt in the classroom, because teachers tend to rely on grammatical rules of thumb, definition, or translation for teaching difficult concepts assuming this is the quickest way to learn them, yet they forget that internalization of meaning for long-term learning and understanding, is more rewarding for the learner. Moreover, simple rules of thumb do not help the learner outside the classroom. On the other hand, verbalization instead of memorization of the information helps them retain the concept to be able to actually use it outside the classroom appropriately. Finally, if the teacher is able to implement an activity that will allow the learners to internalize the concept, then there will no longer be a need for memorization of rules.

**Definition of Verbalization, Materialization, and Internalization**

Gal’perin (1967) defines internalization as a “multiple phase procedure” which begins with the presentation of the concept and ends with its automatization. This procedure cannot occur without two additional procedures, which are materialization and verbalization. Therefore, it is a (4- phase) procedure. See the following figure adapted from Gal’perin (1967).
Materialization is transforming the verbal presentation of the concept into an imagistic depiction that is more concrete, coherent, and easily comprehended, rather than a verbal definition or rule of thumb. The purpose behind materializing concepts that are difficult for L2 learners to master is to compensate for poor visual learning that most textbooks provide. These L2 textbooks are full of illustrations that support the functions of rules of thumb like tables or images that the textbook authors found to be relevant to the function of the rule but may not be relevant to the learner’s perception of the concept.
Lantolf and Poehner (2008) add, “The importance of rendering the abstract in a material or materialized form is that it helps learners to identify essential characteristics of concepts” (p. 324). Therefore, concrete external materializations help learners understand what makes the concept function and how to define and use it in terms of context.

![Materialization](image)

Figure 3. Materialization adapted from Lantolf and Poehner (2008).

Verbalization is the expression of one’s understanding of the concept and the understanding of how to use the concept appropriately. Verbalization of a concept is not reciting a memorized definition of a concept; it is an expression of the learner’s comprehension of the concept in two stages. The first stage is to explain the concept to oneself through what Vygotsky (1978) called “inner speech”. The second stage is to express comprehension of the materialized concept to one’s fellow learners in the classroom. The materialization of the concept may only make meaningful sense to the learner who materialized it. That being said, it is important for students to make these personal meanings comprehensible to others. These further elaborations enhance the
students’ understanding of the concept. See the following figure adapted from Lantolf and Poehner (2008).

For example, after students are shown clips of ‘khajal’ scenarios in Arab cultural settings, they will draw their own understanding of ‘khajal’ from each scenario. Following their drawing, they will then verbalize their reasons behind drawing ‘khajal’ and express the meaning and its positive or negative connotation behind each drawing to themselves in the form of inner speech. Then students will make their drawings comprehensible to others. This process will continue until the students can use this cultural concept of ‘khajal’ in oral speech appropriately without referring back to their external materializations of this concept. Lantolf (2008) says, “Students Begin to rely on its internal ideal image” (p. 31). In other words, learners begin to understand the meaning and appropriate usage of the concept without going through the same systematic process.
of internalization. The learner has acquired this concept, and the image once created to understand the concept now remains with the student.

The following ‘khajal’ scenarios are adapted from (Al Jallad; 2008, 2007). The drawings are hypothetical examples of materializing ‘khajal’ through CBI.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Samir felt ashamed in the presence of Muna. In this case, Samir could have done something wrong in Muna’s presence that caused him to feel ashamed of his bad behavior. (Negative connotation)</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Samir felt shy and bashful in the presence of Muna. Samir perhaps likes Muna and felt shy in her presence. (Positive connotation)</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. *Samir Khajil min Muna.* (Two possible interpretations)

In the final section, I will explain a lesson plan for teaching another Arabic cultural concept; ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’, which can be difficult to understand since it does not exist in American culture and can also have a positive or negative connotation depending on context. There are three basic definitions of this concept in English first being (As God wills) indicating that by God's will something is plentiful or great, working well, or someone is beautiful, etc. Yet, it can also indicate that the speaker seeks God’s protection from 'evil eye'. Thus, it would mean (May Allah be the protector). It can also have a negative connotation showing sarcasm to mean someone is incapable of doing something
right, or to point out that the person is being a showoff. Since this concept is used extensively in Arab culture, it is important that Arabic language learners understand its meaning, and if they wish to use it, they learn when and how to use it. The following lesson plan is an attempt to use CBI to explain and help learners understand how to use this concept through discussion, practice, and roleplay.

**Lesson Plan for Practical Implication in the Classroom**

Teaching the cultural concept of ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’ using CBI (Arabic Intermediate Level).

This lesson is for university level students ranging from ages 18 and older. Most of whom speak English as their native language and come from American culture backgrounds. The number of students can range from five to fifteen students. This lesson is for students who have covered at least two semesters of Arabic. Therefore, they can understand and form decent paragraphs. They have a basic grasp of the Arab culture beyond Arab cuisine and clothing. Some have perhaps been to the Arab world and have experienced a bit of day-to-day pragmatic exchanges in the Arab culture.

**Communicative Goal:** Students will be able to understand how to use the cultural concept of ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’ in three different scenarios.

**Standards:** Interpersonal Communication and Cultural Comparison.

**Terms they will use include:** ما شاء الله

**Activity 1:** ما معنى ما شاء الله؟ What does ما شاء الله mean?
Time allotted for activity: 30 minutes

Description of Activity:

First, instructor will give basic definitions of ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’ in English and explain how it can have a positive or negative connotation. Since this phrase is also used as protection from envy, students will also read an excerpt about envy in Arabic and Islamic culture in English from a book called *diwan baladna Arab Culture From an Arab’s Perspective* by Ahmad Kamal Azban (2010), (see Appendix B) and discuss what they know about envy in American culture comparing it to what they just read about envy in Arab culture. Second, students will be shown three different examples where this concept is used. Instructor will read each one aloud with the appropriate intonation and stress.

1. Ma shaa’ Allah she is an excellent student.
2. Those flowers in the vase have lasted a long time, ma shaa’ Allah.
3. Ahmed: He talks a lot.
   Muna: Yeah, ma shaa’ Allah he thinks he knows everything.
Each student will write down what he or she thinks it means in each example, and which have a negative or positive connotation. Then in pairs, students will discuss and compare their definitions together.

Lastly, the instructor and students will discuss their definitions and compare them to the following definitions of the instructor.

1. Indicates that by God's will she has become an excellent student.
2. Indicates that the speaker seeks God’s protection from 'evil eye'. Thus, it would be: Masha'Allah (May Allah be the protector).
3. Shows sarcasm to mean someone is incapable of doing something right, or to point out that the person is being a showoff.

Activity 2: Roleplay (embodying social norms)

Communicative goal: Students can use the cultural concept of ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’ in appropriate sociocultural contexts.

Standards: Interpersonal speaking and writing, and Cultural comparison.

Time allotted for activity: 20 minutes

In groups of three or four, students will first write down their own scenarios in which to use ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’. Then each group will act out their scenario in front of the class. Meanwhile the rest of the class will decide what ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’ actually means in each scenario.
Conclusion

CBI is not a simple approach to apply in the language classroom when faced with cultural concepts such as ‘khajal’. However, second or foreign language teachers who wish to remain in the target language as much as possible may find that students retain a long-term understanding of the concept from the process of internalization being in the target language. In regards with teaching Arabic in particular to speakers of English, Ryding (2013) states that “in some cases there are no exact one-word equivalents for certain concepts, and that on the other hand, there may be many ways to interpret a particular term” (p. 7). This statement is not only true for the Arabic language, but other languages that contain cultural concepts difficult to explain without demonstrating real contextual scenarios unique to that language's culture. This is why CBI can count for one of the ways to approach teaching culture-based concepts in the language classroom, where the objective is to understand and be able to use the concept in pragmatically appropriate contexts.
SECOND ARTIFACT

Exploring Teacher Discourse in Dual Language Immersion Classrooms
INTRODUCTION

This paper was written for an independent study course with Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante, in which I learned about L1 and L2 teacher discourse in FL classrooms in general, and in elementary Dual Language Immersion classrooms in specific. I found this topic interesting for two reasons; first, as a language instructor, I am always trying to improve my teacher discourse and create an immersion environment searching for strategies I can use to improve the quality of my input in the classroom. Second, in Jordan, non-qualified L1 speakers of English are hired instead of efficient, fluent, and qualified L2 speakers of English, leaving me to wonder whether L1 speakers are actually “better” than fluent L2 speakers in teaching the target language. The literature review in this paper in addition to the proposed study represents my attempt to understand the various components of teacher discourse and the differences between L1 and L2 speaker teacher discourse.
Abstract

This study investigates the differences in teacher discourse between L1 speaker teachers (L1ST) and L2 speaker teachers (L2ST) in Dual Language Immersion programs (DLI). The nature of teacher discourse has been identified as a crucial component of the quality of input students receive in the classroom. This paper begins with a literature review on DLI and teacher discourse and ends with a research proposal to collect data on teacher discourse in four DLI English and Spanish elementary classrooms in Utah where the teachers are either L1ST or L2ST. The analysis concerns the important differences in the nature of teacher discourse between L1ST and L2ST of the target language. Of particular interest are: types of questions and types of corrective feedback in teacher discourse. The findings are examined in light of the misconception that L1ST discourse is somehow necessarily “better” than L2ST discourse. This proposed research will lead to recommendations for future DLI teachers, including self-awareness, reflection, and specific action plans connected with instructional strategies.

Key words: L1 speaker teacher (L1ST), L2 speaker teacher (L2ST), teacher discourse, Dual Language Immersion (DLI)
**Introduction**

In any language classroom setting, teacher discourse is the main source of input (Swain 1988). According to Thoms (2012), “From a discourse perspective, classroom talk is considered consequential to language learning and development” (p. 8). It is no different in DLI programs where both L1ST and L2ST are constantly modifying their discourse in order to make it comprehensible for students and to allow them to build on their current knowledge of the language.

Research has documented differences between L1 and L2 teacher discourse in language classrooms and how it affects learners’ language acquisition and output. These differences include fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence (Ellis, 2004; Ling & Braine, 2007; Medgyes, 1991; Merino, 1997; Rajagopalan, 2005; Samimy & Brutt-Griiffler, 1999). However, few studies have analyzed and compared L1 and L2 teacher discourse at a deeper linguistic level in terms of types of questions, and corrective feedback, and none have analyzed these elements of L1 and L2 teacher discourse in a DLI setting. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to review what is known about L1ST and L2ST discourse in DLI programs and a study to compare certain elements of L1ST and L2ST discourse in both Spanish and English DLI elementary classes in Utah.

This paper begins with a literature review of DLI programs in general, the DLI programs specifically in Utah, and the different characteristics of teacher discourse in immersion programs. Previous studies on teacher discourse are also mentioned.
The research questions of this paper are:

a) What are the differences between Spanish L1ST and Spanish L2ST discourse in DLI in terms of the following discourse components: question types and types of corrective feedback?

b) What are the differences between English L1ST discourse and Spanish L1ST discourse in DLI in terms of the same components?

c) Can we consider L1ST more efficient and qualified than L2ST for DLI, why or why not?

d) In light of the findings, what are key recommendations for future DLI teachers to help them enhance their teacher discourse.

Literature Review

Dual Language Immersion

A straightforward definition describes DLI as “Bilingual education being instruction in two languages and the use of those two languages as mediums of instruction for any part or all of the school curriculum” (May, 2008, p. 20). The word immersion refers to being in close contact with the target languages and their cultures as much as possible in a classroom setting through academic instruction. DLI is a unique experience. Not only is language taught through content and at a young age, but focus is also put on how to immerse the learners in the world known to the fluent speakers of the second language. DLI students are enriched by the experience of learning a second language along with its culture in an immersion setting through teacher discourse.
The Utah Model

In 1979, in Alpine school district, Utah began its first immersion program. It was a Spanish-English program, which according to parental standards, did not negatively affect their children’s performance in other subjects, such as math and social studies. This caused a spread of more DLI programs throughout the district. Teachers gradually began to develop newer and improved curriculums for these DLI programs, as well as offer guidelines for other schools offering immersion. The pioneer of Spanish-English DLI, Ofelia Wade, continued to develop these programs for the sake of maintaining Utah children’s Spanish language. Gregg Roberts and Wade, with the support of the governor, were able to interject new promising languages into these programs such as Chinese and German. As these new languages proved to be a success, more were suggested such as Arabic and Korean (Leite, 2013).

Utah’s educational leaders have carefully selected a model that meets the educational needs of its students and is responsive to the political landscape of Utah. These programs represent the fifty-fifty model that requires two teachers. One teaches the first half of the day in the minority language (Spanish for example) and the other teaches the majority language (English) in the second half, or vice versa (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000). DLI programs in Utah receive support from various stakeholders including politicians, business leaders, parents, and teachers, all seeking the benefits these programs offer Utah’s learners. According to Spicer-Escalante, Leite, and Wade (2015) “Today there are 138 state programs including 73 Spanish, 38 Chinese, 19 French, 6 Portuguese, and 2 German programs serving over 30,000 students across Utah.” The demand is increasing rapidly and Utah continues to excel and expand in DLI in order to admit more students.
and offer more languages. After years of Utah’s experience in DLI programs, Utah has become an international guide for DLI (Leite, 2013).

The main component of DLI programs in Utah and elsewhere is teacher discourse. In DLI classrooms, almost all teacher discourse is in the target language, which is the primary source of target language input in the classroom. The following section first defines teacher discourse, and then mentions the functions of teacher discourse and how to analyze these functions according to previous studies.

**What is Teacher discourse and how to analyze it?**

Before analyzing DLI teacher discourse in specific, one must first understand the definition of teacher discourse in general, its functions in the L2 classroom and the various analytical schemes for investigating these functions of teacher discourse. Previous research has defined teacher discourse in general as a form of communication that is the main source of input for learners in the language classroom (Swain, 1988). It is the oral interaction between teachers and students that takes place in a classroom context in the target language (Thoms, 2012). One may ask what distinguishes teacher discourse from everyday discourse. The difference lies in the modifications made by teachers to make their discourse comprehensible. Ellis (2012), describes these modifications as “the distinctive differences in how native speakers talk to non-native speakers as opposed to other native speakers” (p. 116). Despite this being a natural part of communication for all people who try to get their message across, language teachers use specific strategies to make their speech comprehensible to students, hence effective teacher discourse. According to Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), to produce effective teacher discourse is the ability to paraphrase, use gestures, speak at a
pace that is appropriate to learners’ levels, give corrective feedback, ask the right
questions at the right time, etc. These strategies make teacher discourse comprehensible
to language learners.

In order to determine how effective teacher discourse can be, researchers must
first consider which elements in teacher discourse to analyze, then create a scheme for
analyzing them. These elements can include the nature, content, modifications, feedback,
and questions of teacher discourse.

Previous researchers have devised various analytical schemes for investigating the
functions of teacher discourse. This paper reviews several schemes from previous
research and offers a rubric adapted from these previous codes to apply to the
investigation proposed in this paper. Previous researchers have categorized particular
elements of teacher discourse and labeled them. Their approaches guided the collection
and analysis of the data presented here, which includes classroom observations, and
transcription of audio recordings of teacher discourse in immersion and regular language
classrooms.

Beginning with the nature and content of teacher discourse, Tardif (1994)
conducted a study comparing Kindergarten French Immersion teachers with Kindergarten
English teachers regarding the nature and content of teacher discourse in the two different
settings. In order to collect data, the researcher first characterized teacher discourse into
two categories: “instructional talk” that relates to content such as vocabulary and
grammar structures, and “managerial talk” that relates to classroom organization,
discipline, management, and anything said unrelated to the content of the lesson. Tardif
(1994) then presented five modification strategies teachers use to modify their teacher
discourse: expansion or elaboration of student responses as a form of feedback, self-repetition, providing information, linguistic modeling, and teacher questions.

Tardif transcribed video recordings of three French immersion and two regular English kindergarten teachers. Analysis indicated that the immersion teachers made more modifications of speech in both instructional and managerial teacher discourse than the English kindergarten teachers. They also used more self-repetition and linguistic modeling. They also depended more on contextual cues such as pictures, objects, and people to make input comprehensible. In addition, immersion teachers used more paralanguage such as gestures and intonation to help learners understand. It is clear that teacher discourse in immersion classrooms is unique in that both instructional vocabulary and managerial vocabulary are new to the students, requiring more strategies for making teacher discourse comprehensible.

In addition to the nature and content of teacher discourse, researchers have investigated types of corrective feedback, an essential element to analyze because it shows how teachers respond to students’ errors and more importantly, if students understand the feedback by responding with uptake. Researchers have made an effort to measure corrective feedback, (Cullen, 2002; Ellis, 2012, Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2012; Wu, 1993) by first dividing corrective feedback into implicit and explicit feedback. Implicit was further divided into recasts, clarification requests and repetition. Explicit was further divided into metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and explicit correction. These divisions will make comparing between L1ST and L2ST corrective feedback more feasible to analyze, allowing for comparisons.
Lastly, the types of questions teachers ask is another essential part of teacher discourse. Sun (2012) states “Questioning, currently, is one of the most effective teaching strategies in classroom environment” (p. 175). Moreover, “native speaker teachers differ from non-native speaker teachers with respect to the kinds of questions they pose during whole class discussions and the effects of these questions on subsequent student discourse” (Thoms, 2012, p. 16).

In order to analyze teachers’ questions, they must first be categorized into types. By counting the occurrences of each question type, researchers can determine which types of questions are asked more or less frequently by L1ST and L2ST. Previous research shows many ways to categorize questions that can help measure them, some measurements more specific than others.

Tardif (1994), influenced by Bloom’s Taxonomy, created four levels of questions: low level, high level, context dependent, and context independent (see Table 3 for descriptions of each). The comparison of immersion and regular kindergarten classes showed higher use of low-level and context-dependent questions by the immersion teacher.

Table 3: Description of Question Levels Adapted from Tardif 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-level</th>
<th>High-level</th>
<th>Context dependent</th>
<th>Context independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-level thinking (e.g., recall and yes/no questions)</td>
<td>High-level thinking (e.g., new information, analyze, synthesize, evaluate etc.)</td>
<td>Depends on non-verbal cues (e.g., pictures and gestures)</td>
<td>Depends on verbal cues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other researchers (Long & Sato, 1983; Brock, 1986; Nunan, 1987; Wu, 1993; Yang, 2010) did not follow Bloom’s Taxonomy and created a different categorization which include open/closed questions, yes/no questions, display, and referential questions. Wu (1993) added question strategies teachers use to ask these different types of questions: rephrasing, simplification, decomposition, and probing.

Ho (2005) conducted a study on the questions of three L2 ESL teachers in an upper secondary school using the following three-level question construct that shows the different types of question prompts for each level beginning from simple one-answer questions to more complex explanatory-answer questions (see Table 4).

Table 4: Types of Questions for Each Level Adapted from (Ho, 2005)

| Level 1 Questions |  • Ask for answers the teacher already knows.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>• Prompt short, simple responses, which have one correct answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Level 2 Questions |  • Ask for answers related to the topic.  
 |                   |  • Designed to gauge students' proficiency, e.g., vocabulary and general knowledge.  
 |                   |  • Have two or more possible answers.  
 |                   |  • Ask for answers students may not have acquired within the classroom context.  
 |                   |  • Stimulate more thoughtful responses, though not necessarily linguistically lengthy or complex. |
| Level 3 Questions |  • Purely exploratory  
 |                   |  • Have no right or wrong answers  
 |                   |  • Stimulate complex and lengthy linguistic output from the students. |

Ho argues that counting yes/no and open/closed questions in addition to display and referential questions alone is inaccurate to measure question types in teacher discourse. Such types of questions elicit short restricted answers from students, and are less engaging. On the other hand, asking more open questions leads to lengthy answers not known to the teacher that are more engaging. Ho’s proposed approach to analysis is
appropriate for comparing L1ST and L2ST questions because it includes question types that can lead to both short and lengthy answers from students.

**Teacher Discourse in DLI**

Regarding teacher discourse specifically in DLI contexts, Tardif (1994) states that “the content and nature of teacher speech is an important factor in a learner’s linguistic environment, this is especially true in an immersion context where the teacher is the main source of oral input of the second language” (p. 466). Everything the teacher says in the classroom can be a source of input, making this the main reason why DLI teachers strictly remain in the target language. Previous research on teacher discourse in DLI programs has shown that in regards to lexical complexity, DLI language teachers must surround learners with language that is just complex enough that they acquire new vocabulary and sentence patterns without being overwhelmed. If sentences are too long or too complex, it is difficult for learners to begin to understand the rules that govern the language (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000).

Moreover, one of the functions of teacher discourse is to encourage students to talk. In DLI, students are learning a new language in an environment where they have to use it to communicate with each other and with the teacher. When students in the class are speaking from all directions trying to communicate in the target language, there are bound to be many errors. Part of teacher discourse is error correction and giving corrective feedback to students. How and when teachers should correct these errors in a DLI setting is explained by (Cloud et al., 2000) “errors in students’ oral language use should not be singled out or highlighted at the expense of communication (p. 76). Teachers should not ignore all errors and should seek to provide explicit feedback to
make sure students understand their mistakes and know how to say it correctly in the future, as long as it does not interrupt the flow of communication or the message the students are trying to convey.

**L1 versus L2 speaker teachers**

Before comparing the teacher discourse of L1ST and L2ST, it is important to have a basic insight of the perceived differences between L1ST and L2ST in the language-teaching world. Some differences are perceived by students, by administrators, and some by L2ST themselves. This section will present a brief review of the experiences, statuses, and self-perceptions of L1ST and L2ST in the field of second and foreign language teaching.

Regarding the students’ opinions of L1 and L2 language teachers, students in DLI programs in elementary grades are not aware or have not yet experienced the difference of having both L1 and L2 teachers. However, student opinions from previous research can benefit both groups of DLI teachers be they L1 or L2 speakers. In defense of L2ST, (according to Ellis, 2004; Ling & Braine, 2007; Medgyes, 1992), students have identified certain benefits of having a L2ST which include: sharing the same target culture and mother tongue of their teacher, viewing their teacher as a successful model for learning the language, able to teach successful strategies for learning the language more effectively and anticipate language difficulties, and more empathetic to these difficulties and needs of the students. On the other hand, the shortcomings of L2ST have also been mentioned. According to Ling and Braine (2007), students complained that L2ST relied heavily on textbooks and corrected errors more frequently, had poor pronunciation at times, and were unable to convey enough cultural knowledge about the target language.
However, according to (according to Ellis, 2004; Ling & Braine, 2007; Medgyes, 1992), it should not be assumed that all L1ST are proficient language teachers. There are many aspects L1ST and administrators hiring them should consider for teaching a second or foreign language. These include: explicit knowledge of grammar, speaking at a level-appropriate pace, speaking clearly and enunciating sounds clearly, finding ways to break down what comes natural to them into small parts that they can explain to their students, and knowledge of students’ L1 culture and language.

Medgyes (1992) conducted a survey in which administrators were asked whether they would hire a) an unqualified L1ST, b) a highly proficient L2ST only when a qualified L1ST was not available, or c) either one as long as the L2ST was highly proficient. Most chose b) then c) but none chose a). This indicated that although no one chose a) still the preference was to choose qualified L1ST over highly proficient L2ST.

In terms of L1ST and L2ST self-perceptions, Rajagopalan (2005) points out that self-perception can affect self-confidence in teaching especially as a L2ST of the target language. This is clear in a study conducted by Samimy and Brutt-Griiffler (1999) who examined the self-perceptions of L2ST through questionnaires and interviews, and found that L2ST reported experiencing difficulties in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and cultural knowledge, which affected their confidence and teaching abilities. Despite the fact that some L2ST face hardships in teaching their L2, according to Medgyes (1992) and Merino (1997), the ideal school is one which has a good balance of L1ST and L2ST due to them both having different varieties of good qualities in teaching language.
Proposal for Future Research

The assumption or stereotype that L1ST are more efficient language teachers than L2ST has been addressed many times in previous empirical work on general comparisons between L1ST and L2ST discourse in fluency, pronunciation, linguistic knowledge, and grammar. Phillipson (1996) after comparing L1 and L2 speaker teachers of English, calls for further elaboration and more detailed study of specific instances and contexts in order to disclaim what he calls “the native-speaker teacher ideal” (p. 14). Research comparing specific linguistic elements of language teaching may or may not lead to more evidence that the ideal language teacher is not always an L1 speaker. Nevertheless, this proposed study will compare a series of particular elements of teacher discourse, which include the types of questions teachers ask and the corrective feedback they give. Authentic DLI teacher discourse produced by teachers in two languages, Spanish and English, will be analyzed. The results will contribute to the current body of knowledge on L1 and L2 teacher discourse.

Ellis (2003) claims that teachers are well aware of the importance of language use in the target language classroom. This proposed research will help teachers become more aware and understand the specific aspects of their language use or teacher discourse. As a result, practitioners will learn the importance of amount and complexity of teacher discourse. This will enable future DLI teachers to consider more carefully their own use of the target language in the classroom and its repercussions for the quality of input students receive.
Methodology for proposed study

1. Participants

The participants selected for this study include four first and second grade elementary teachers: two teaching Spanish and two teaching English in Dual Language Immersion programs. One of the Spanish teachers is a native speaker of Spanish and one is a non-native speaker of Spanish. Both English teachers are native speakers of English. To protect the anonymity of teachers and the students in their classes, pseudonyms will be used.

2. Procedure

In the span of one school year (two semesters), the participants in this study will do the following:

a) At the beginning and end of the school year, participants will be observed and recorded randomly for 15-20 minute intervals during the Spanish classes and English class in order to analyze the types of questions asked and the corrective feedback given.

b) The voice recordings will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed using a rubric created for this specific study (see Appendix C).

3. Outcomes

This study will enable current and future DLI teachers to analyze and reflect on their own teacher discourse, in addition to helping them create specific action plans connected with strategies to help them enrich the input to which students are exposed.
Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher discourse is a complex yet essential element of classroom talk in the language-learning environment. It is the main source of input for students and requires constant modifications in order to make it comprehensible. DLI, especially Utah DLI is a unique setting for comparing L1ST and L2ST discourse in terms of constant target language use in the classroom in both instructional and managerial discourse.

Research on the differences between L1ST and L2ST has been conducted comparing general aspects of teacher discourse, such as fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence. However, greater understanding of teacher discourse in a DLI setting between L1ST and L2ST at a deeper linguistic level may make the results of this proposed study a valuable addition to the existing research.
THIRD ARTIFACT

Understanding How to Decline an offer or Invitation

According to Arabic Pragmatics
INTRODUCTION

This paper was written in Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan’s Linguistics 6900 course. In this artifact, I try to see Arab culture from an outsider’s point of view in order to find ways to explain Arab culture and pragmatics to my students. I chose one aspect of Arab culture that seems to stand out as unique and useful for Arabic language learners to understand before they visit an Arab country, which is how to decline an offer or invitation. After learning about teaching pragmatics in general, I wanted learn about teaching Arabic pragmatics in specific. Since many Arabic customs and traditions that effect what to say and how to act have become natural to me, I wanted to explore the literature surrounding Arabic pragmatics to know how to begin introducing this topic in class. I found guidebooks, stories, poems, authentic cultural texts and videos that helped me create a framework or lesson plan for introducing this topic to my students in class. I learned that telling students to do this and say that when offered tea for example is not enough. Students should understand the background history of Arabic customs to understand why a speech act is pragmatically acceptable in Arab culture. In my conclusion, I demonstrate a lesson plan that I will use in my Arabic teaching for learning how to decline an invitation, gift, or offer according to Arabic pragmatics.
Abstract

This paper addresses the Arabic etiquette or cultural pragmatic strategies of declining an invitation and refusing an offer. Based on previous research on how pragmatics and culture have been defined, and how pragmatics has been included in language teaching, I will propose means through which instructors of Arabic can familiarize Arabic learners (ALs) with how to decline an invitation to dinner or refuse a gift, or simply say “no” to something politely without causing offense. Moreover, research shows that speech acts introduced through authentic cultural texts help learners understand the values behind these cultural social norms or behaviors. I present examples of such authentic texts that serve as an introduction to practicing these speech acts in the Arabic language classroom.

Introduction

For many ALs, what makes the Arabic language interesting to learn is not solely the beautiful calligraphy or the political situation in the Middle East. It is also the rich Arab culture. Learners enter the classroom with misconceptions about this culture and are intrigued to know the truth behind the stereotypes and generalizations projected by the media. Many Arabic learners intend to visit the Middle East, knowing beforehand that they are in for a unique cultural experience. This cultural experience entails carrying out particular tasks in a culturally appropriate manner that does not strictly entail what LoCastro (2012) calls “Culture with a capital C- that is literature, music and art” (p. 81), but what LoCastro calls culture with a small c, being everyday life interactions between people of a culture. Moreover, Geisler (2008) states, “students need to know the central cultural metaphors or ‘key words’…that are generated by various historical traditions and
discourses” (p. 234). Such key words include swearing to God to show sincerity and “Inshallah” meaning God willing to show optimism. ALs should know such keywords and practice using them in order to carry out cultural tasks appropriately.

Learners are aware that they should be prepared to apply Arab etiquette in the appropriate situations, which according to Byram (2008) is called “intercultural competence”, meaning the ability to adapt to the pragmatic interactions between people of the target culture in the target language according to their cultural social norms. If we want our students to avoid misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and possibly cultural taboos, we should help them gain intercultural competence.

**Speech acts**

According to LoCastro (2012), a speech act is human language use as an instance of action to interact and create social relations with other human beings in the world. For example, to invite someone for dinner, to make a promise, to apologize, etc. Any speech act considered pragmatically appropriate is measured based on particular cultural norms. However, before we go into culture we must understand what we mean by pragmatically appropriate. Previous researchers have defined pragmatics in different ways and have added to each other’s definitions. Pragmatics, as defined by Crystal (1985) is “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (p. 364). This describes how people of a certain culture use their language in social interaction and how this usage affects others in the society. Another definition by Ferrara (1985) is that pragmatics is “the systematic study of the relations between the linguistic properties of
utterances and their properties as social action” (p. 138). LoCastro (2012) adds and comments on both definitions by stating that we should delve deeper into the ‘interactions’ that take place between speakers and go beyond the linguistic meaning of words, and not limit our understanding of social actions being linguistic elements and exclude non-linguistic or nonverbal messages. An example of a non-verbal interaction is in Appendix C-figure 1, which shows a guest refusing more coffee by shaking his empty cup signaling he has had enough.

Regarding the Arabic language and the verbal and non-verbal interactions that occur between Arabs, Ryding (2013) sates “the richness of these interactions, the depth and extent of the Arab literary tradition, collective experience and memory, and the interplay of spoken and written language give Arabic culture a high degree of vibrancy and complexity” (p. 219). These interactions refer to the everyday communication that occurs in Arab communities that reflect Arab cultural values. I will first present the simple interaction of saying ‘no’ in the Arab culture. Learning the speech act of declining an invitation or refusing an offer can begin with knowing how to say ‘no’.

‘No’ in Arab culture is communicated in many different ways. Many of these ways include gestures that Arabic learners find confusing. For example, raising one’s eyebrows and tilting one’s head up and back, often accompanied by a little “tsk” noise (which does not indicate impatience or displeasure as in the American culture) means ‘no’. As an Arabic instructor, I would not advise my students to emulate this way of saying ‘no’ because as non-native speakers they could come off as very rude. Yet, it is important to be familiar with such gestures in order to understand them when used by native speakers. On the other hand, a polite way to say ‘no’ for Arabic learners to
emulate, is saying “Shukran-(thank you) as they smile and put their hand over their heart and slightly lower their head. This is a very useful gesture in all kinds of situations. It softens a “no, thanks” even to a street-seller or a “sorry” to a beggar.

Learners of Arabic need to gain pragmatic competence in communicating the speech act of refusing. Pragmatic competence as DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) define it “entails knowing how to encode, decode, and sequence discourse within a communicative interaction” (p. 246). The appropriate words are chosen according to the context of the communicative interaction. Speech acts occur in specific contexts. According to LoCastro (2012) “Why did X say Y to Z in this context?” (p. 6) is the question we should be asking when analyzing speech acts. Furthermore, context is a central part of pragmatics. Lund (2006) claims that “speaking is a continuous process of contextualization” (p. 75). The process of declining an invitation includes continuous signals from speaker and hearer that indicate the context of the conversation. The status of the host inviting the guest, the relationship between them, and the place the invitation takes place all signal to the hearer the appropriate way to respond according to the context. Lund (2006) calls these signals “contextualization cues”. The signals or cues help the speaker and hearer understand the meaning behind each utterance in relation to the social interaction at hand. It is clear that speech acts and pragmatics are inseparable and that within the study of pragmatics, speech acts are analyzed to help us describe how people interact in social contexts in a culturally appropriate manner.

As defined by Moran (2001), culture is “the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social
contexts” (p. 24). If we are to analyze the speech act of declining or refusing according to the cultural dimensions in this definition, we will find that Arabs constitute the persons or individuals who practice this speech act appropriately, both verbally and nonverbally. They refuse or decline something tangible like a gift or intangible like a dinner invitation or even an invitation to join a political or religious group. The acts of refusing and declining follow the set of beliefs and values of the Arab community or social context. Moran (2001) illustrates how we can present cultural experiences to learners once we define how each of these cultural dimensions fit into the experience or speech act at hand.

According to Tatsuki and Houck (2010), teachers have been concerned with how language learners are perceived by native speakers when they produce grammatically correct yet pragmatically inappropriate utterances. Most language learners have experienced embarrassing moments in the target culture when they either said the wrong thing or remained silent not knowing the appropriate thing to say. Sometimes this does not cause any real damage, yet at times, it could ruin business deals or relationships, or even cause arguments if one is not careful and aware of appropriateness. Therefore, learners of any language need instruction in pragmatic strategies and in ways of softening speech acts with words, gestures, and timing.

**Refusing Politely**

Politeness entails what Brown and Levinson (1987) define as positive and negative face. Positive and negative face can involve both the speaker and the hearer. Positive face is wanting to be liked and acknowledged by others as a good person, whereas, negative face is wanting to be involved and acknowledged by others without feeling obligated to take part in anything at the expense of their independence and free
When making refusals, one must consider being polite and saving face for both the speaker and hearer. This does not mean using what Brown and Levinson call positive strategies only, which make the hearer feel appreciated. Negative strategies are used as well, which are those used to soften words in consideration of the hearer’s feelings. The speaker chooses the type of strategy that best accommodates the face needs of both speaker and hearer. LoCastro (2012) mentions that there are face–threatening acts which are those that cause the speaker, the hearer, or both, to feel uncomfortable.

A cultural experience visitors of Arabic countries often experience is being offered a gift. One should politely refuse gifts at least twice. For example, in Appendix C- figures 2 and 3, the foreign guests admire the hanging picture, which leads the host to offer it as a gift. Two face-threatening acts occur in this interaction. The first is the admiration of the picture. What the guests thought of as being polite, using positive face strategies and trying to show appreciation of perhaps the host’s taste in decor and wanting to be perceived as likable guests, was actually face-threatening towards the host. This is because anything admired by the guest in the Arab culture obligates the host to offer it as a gift. The second face-threatening act was towards the guests. Once the host takes down the picture and offers it to the guests, they are surprised and embarrassed and refuse to accept it. The host uses positive politeness wanting to show appreciation and generosity towards her guests by saying “please accept this as a gift.” The host, coming from an Arab background is accustomed to doing this and probably does not realize how uncomfortable the guests are actually feeling. She then says “I insist!” which is negative politeness because the host wants to alleviate the guests’ feeling of uncertainty about the host’s sincerity in gifting the picture by softening the request for acceptance, making the
guests feel less embarrassed and more comfortable. In this particular situation, Arab guests would know never to admire something aloud. Keeping silent is actually negative politeness because the guest wants to avoid putting the host in a position of obligation. I personally made the mistake of admiring a friend’s pin aloud. My friend then took it off and gave it to me saying “This is yours now”. I refused to accept it three times to save my face wanting to be liked and not seen as greedy (positive), and hers being left alone and not imposed upon (negative). This is why ALs should be given real-life examples of refusals in the Arab culture, to prevent losing face.

The first step to gaining positive and negative politeness strategies is comparing between cultures. The Arab world is considered a high-context, collectivist culture. According to Hall (1976), people in high-context cultures rely on implicit meanings that they share when they communicate. On the other hand, low-context cultures tend to be found in highly individualized cultures that are characterized by more explicit communication. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) give an example of when Arabs respond to a request with *Inshallah* adding optimism and hope to a refusal. In this case, Arabs implicitly know that a response with *Inshallah* could indicate a *yes* or a *no* depending on the circumstances. Also, when the person being invited knows that more than likely she or he will be busy and unable to come, *Inshallah* serves as a good softener for ‘no’. It also shows that the person may try to come, but in reality, she/he will not. Collectivism as defined by Cornes (2002) “is the extent to which individuals feel controlled by the collective will of the society in which they live and were raised” (p. 111). Understanding this concept relates to refusals in Arab societies because refusing once before acceptance of food, drink, gift, or a favor, indicates that the guests first want
to be certain of the host’s intention as a form of courtesy. Americans on the other hand, being part of a low-context individualistic culture think differently. When offered something as a guest, they either say *no thank you* or they appreciate the offer and accept it with a smile the first time to show the host that they are happy to accept it.

This cultural difference is illustrated in the movie *Babble* (2006) that shows a scene set in Morocco where, after a poor Moroccan man has done everything in his power to help an American couple that was in a life-death situation, one of the Americans offers him a sum of money as a gift for all his help. The Moroccan refuses and says ‘no’ despite being very poor. The American smiles then gets into the helicopter and takes off. The Moroccan obviously refused out of courtesy and would have probably accepted the money if he was offered a second time. Such clips show cultural differences and serve as a good means to start classroom discussions in the target language and help students make comparisons.

**Refusing an Offer**

Al-Issa (2003) examined the motivating factors behind the choice of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners, native Arabic speakers, and American native English speakers. He made comparisons between their refusals through semantic formulas as units of analysis and interviews with the students asking why they used certain expressions when making refusals. These comparisons between Arab and American refusals help ALs understand how refusals are made by native Arabic speakers. They can consequently predict the sincerity and implicit meanings of these refusals because they understand the cultural and religious values behind them. ALs can also practice them in spoken and written form in similar scenarios or through role-play. Arabic teachers can use examples
of scenarios taken from the Al-Issa’s discourse completion task Al-Issa used. For example, (Al-Issa 2003: 596):

- A classmate who frequently misses class, asks to borrow your class notes but you do not want to give them to him.

  *Your classmate*: You know I missed the class. Could I please copy your notes from that class?

  *You refuse by saying:*

- You are a senior student in your department. A freshman, whom you met a few times before, invites you to lunch in the university cafeteria but you do not want to go.

  *Freshman*: I haven’t had lunch yet. Would you like to join me?

  *You refuse by saying:*

The following table is adapted from Al-Issa’s (2003) results showing the motivating factors behind Jordanian speakers’ refusals compared to American refusals:

Table 5: Motivations behind Jordanian Refusals:

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<tr>
<th>Jordanian Refusals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rank-conscious and willing to show respect to those of higher social status using for example <em>dear sir</em> when addressing a professor or doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt obliged to show interest in the offer to protect the hearer’s face and avoid confrontation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When refusing a friend’s offer to pay, Arab speakers refused by acting angry and...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
returning the favor by stating “Don’t upset me. I’ll pay for me and for you.”

When refusing financial help from a friend, Arab speakers must first praise him/her for being such a good friend. “You are a nice person but I’ll manage.”

Arabs justify refusals and have a desire to be believed. “W’allah (I swear to God) I cannot because………, please believe me.”

Future Acceptance: “I can join you next time Inshallah.” (God willing)

The Americans did not use such formulas and found them to be unnecessary or inappropriate. Therefore, Americans need to become aware of the cultural expectations of Arab refusals so they can refuse appropriately in Arabic contexts.

**Declining an Invitation**

It is almost inevitable that during one’s time in any Arab country that person will be invited to drink tea with people, either in their shops or homes. It is very likely that at some point one will be invited for a meal at someone’s house. Arabs take hospitality very much to heart, and are honestly interested in talking with guests and making them comfortable. However, as a visitor to an Arab country, one can receive so many offers that it would be difficult to accept each one, yet people are often so eager it can also be difficult and potentially rude to refuse outright in a direct manner. As teachers, we should keep in mind that our students who are studying the target language would be visiting the target culture not as a tourist but as someone who wants to understand the culture. Therefore, the focus should be on the culture with a small c as mentioned above. Hall (1976) explains that, “all over the world suitable environments have been created for tourists that shield them from the reality of the life of the people” (p. 57). Teachers do the
same when they discuss big C culture with their students and leave out the daily social interactions that take place.

Previous researchers have proposed frameworks describing cultural differences to help learners make comparisons between cultures. Teachers can use cultural frameworks to prepare learners for different cultural experiences through planning what to expect in which places, with whom, and in what contexts. For example, as discussed in this paper, what should one say to remain polite and respectful when declining an invitation? In order to plan a framework, teachers have to determine what is important for learners to know about the target culture that will help them function in society and be seen as polite and respectful people. Cornes (2002) states, “for those planning to travel in a different culture, what is important is not just knowing about and understanding cultural differences, whether in the form of a framework or not, but when and how to use that knowledge and when and how not to use it” (p. 103). Cornes describes how frameworks can be useful in letting learners know what behavior will help them the most when they enter a new cultural context. Yet, as Hall (1976) mentions, “no matter how well prepared one is intellectually for immersion in another culture, there is the inevitability of surprise” (p. 58). Teachers must tell their students that no matter how concise or appealing these frameworks are, they are still generalized. All cultural behavior remains individual behavior. Students should be prepared for the unexpected.
Culture in the Classroom

Researchers have developed frameworks that offer a foundation for designing language courses for pragmatic competence. Regarding the Arabic language, Ryding (2013) states, “What has been missing from many curricula in Arabic language and culture is a sense of the value of everyday sociopragmatics, creativity, and aesthetics, and how understanding these helps a learner to integrate language, behavior, and appreciation of difference” (p. 220). To address this, I believe that teachers should begin with discussing the cultural values behind the speech acts.

Knowing why these speech acts exist in the first place can be explained by indicating cultural sources that show why Arabs behave the way they do. Such sources for the specific task of refusal or declination include Arabic proverbs, traditional Arabic stories, anecdotes and tales. After students understand the origin of these speech acts they can learn how to apply them. Students can learn and practice these pragmatic tasks inside and outside the Arabic language classroom. Such strategies include role-play, videos, picture dialogues, and contact with other fluent Arabic speakers.

For example, why do Arabs tend to refuse a gift so many times yet they also insist so many times when offering a gift? Yes, most students are aware that Arabs are known for their hospitality and generosity. Yet, is this enough to tell students? Telling students to refuse a dinner invitation twice before saying “yes” is only going half way. In my opinion, a good way to introduce the reasons behind Arabic manners or Arabic etiquette is presenting them with authentic sources showing them why Arabs take hospitality very much to heart, and are honestly interested in talking to guests and making them feel comfortable by inviting them to dinner. Where does this cultural value stem from? If
students get a glimpse of the culture through stories, proverbs, and religious texts, they will then begin to understand why the Arab culture has become what it is today, and why its people behave in the ways they do.

An example of this is a translated paragraph from a short story ALs can read in Arabic titled “More Generous than Hatim” taken from a book called *Arabic Stories for Language Learners* by Brosh and Mansur (2013). “A man named Hatim Al-Ttaie was famous for his generosity and loyalty. He lived during Al-Jahiliya [the pre-Islamic period], and his fame spread among the Arabs [Bedouins], who made a proverb about him: More generous than Hatim.” (The story goes on).

These cultural sources also help students compare Arab culture with their own, both different in so many aspects yet similar in the sense that the core of every culture is human. According to Ryding (2013), teachers should show students tangible or visual human creations that are evidence of their cultural values. Only then will students understand why intercultural competence is important and why, if a student were not to act appropriately, Arabs may be offended. In other words, students should be explained the reasons behind cultural norms before they are told how to respond to them. This need not require multiple, full-length class periods. Students need exposure to cultural thought patterns behind social norms that they will eventually try to embody.

Moran (2001) uses pictures to illustrate cultural dialogues in different social situations. He recommends that students write the appropriate statements, questions, answers, or expressions in the speech bubbles. Students can also look at illustrative handbooks such as *Very simple Arabic incorporating simple etiquette in Arabia* (Peters, 2004) and *diwan baladna Arab Culture From an Arab’s Perspective* by (Azban, 2010)
that is full of simple drawings showing appropriate pragmatic manners in the Arab world. The figures in (Appendix D and E) are adaptations from Moran’s idea and these handbooks on the speech act of refusal in Arab culture.

Another activity that is an effective and engaging way to allow learners to embody the social cultural norms of Arab speakers, are role-play explained by Brosh (2013). I present an example where students act as visitors are at the market place or *souq*. As they are passing shops, whether they are interested or not, they must take the time to chat civilly; nothing is more offensive than walking on without a word or making an impatient gesture. If they are invited and they do not want to accept, a broad smile with their head lowered, their right hand over their heart and “shukran shukran” (“thank you, thank you”) is a clear, and socially acceptable ‘no’. Adding “marra okhra, insha’allah” (“another time, if God wills it”) softens the “no” still further, indicating that they will not forget their kind offer.

**Specifically refusing food or drink:**

Another scenario can involve refusing food or drink since it entails specific pragmatic rules. For example, according to Jordanian Bedouin customs, once the food appears and the host has wished the guests “sahtayn!” “May you eat with two appetites!” they should eat strictly with their right hand and not reach across. The host may toss bits of meat over to the guests’ section, possibly the tongue or brains, which, if they land in front of the guest, it would be inexplicable to refuse. Students should remember that Arab society is more conservative and demands conformity from its members. Therefore, in certain situations, refusal is not an option.
In Arab culture in general, when offered snacks, one should accept what is offered, but only after modestly refusing the first offer. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) mention that in Egypt for example, when guests are offered something to eat or drink they should refuse the first time, and only after the second or third offer are they to accept. Only then are the guests to know that the offer is truly sincere. Beverages will then be served. According to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence US Army Training and Doctrine Command (2006), when offered tea at least three times, say yes at least twice. Guests are expected to accept the beverage, be it tea usually or coffee offered as an expression of friendship. It is considered rude to decline the offer of drink. It is the host’s duty to keep the tea flowing whatever happens, so after guests have had enough or if they do not want any at all, a polite way to refuse the last offer without bringing too much attention to one’s refusal, is by saying “da’iman” (“may it always be thus”) and then the guest can simply ignore the full glass.

Moreover, while there are situations in which refusal is expected as a means of politeness, there are others in which refusing an offer is considered extremely rude. Therefore, Arabic learners must know the difference. For example, from my experience living in Jordan, I was paying my condolences at a funeral, which in the Arab world is not just the burial. After the burial, family and friends visit the mourning family for three days straight to keep them company. I was served lunch during my visit and I refused to accept the dish of food thinking I was being polite. An elder woman then whispered to me telling me to accept it the first time because food was being offered in the name of the person who passed away. Another example is not to refuse anything offered by elders. They take the time and physical effort to serve guests to show them ultimate respect,
therefore, to refuse the offer keeps them on their feet. Guests in this case are to accept without any refusal.

Understanding how to refuse food or drink is not the same as physically practicing this speech act in the classroom. For learners to successfully respond to being offered a gift or a cup of coffee, they should practice this exchange in a variety of contexts. The following section demonstrates two lesson plans that will allow students to engage in roleplay, discussion, and practice in two different scenarios.

Lesson Plans for Practical Implication in the Classroom

In this section, I will explain two lesson plans for teaching the act of refusal according to Arabic pragmatics. The lesson plans include roleplay, discussion, and practice.

Lesson Pan 1:

Teaching the Act of Refusal According to Arabic Pragmatics: Welcoming and Serving Guests (Arabic Beginners/Intermediate Level)

This pragmatics lesson is for university level students ranging from ages 18 and older. Most of whom speak English as their native language and come from American culture backgrounds. The number of students can range from five to fifteen students. This lesson is for students who have covered at least three months of Arabic. Therefore, they have learned the alphabet, can read and write at a basic level, and know how to use basic terms.
**Communicative Goal:** Students will be able to welcome guests, offer and refuse food and beverages according to Arabic pragmatics. More specifically: Hosts will walk behind the guests and sit down after they have sat down. Hosts will serve coffee and sweets with their right hand, and the guests will take sweets and coffee with their right hand as well.

When they want to refuse a second cup of coffee, they will shake the cup to indicate they have had enough.

**Standards:** Interpersonal Communication and Cultural Comparison.

**Terms they will use include:**

- أهلاً وسهلاً، لا شكرًا، شكرًا جزيلاً، شاي، قهوة، حلويات، عصير، تفضل

**Activity 1:** هيا لنتزور صديقنا! Let’s visit our friend! (Role-Play)

**Time allotted for activity:** 30 minutes

**Teaching aids include:** Arabic native speaker as a guest, plates, cups, a coffee pitcher, a tray, real sweets if possible or pictures of food and beverages.

**Description of Activity:**

For modeling the role-play, instructor will be the host and the Arabic native speaker will play the role of the guest. Both of them will engage in a typical dialogue that you find in Arab houses receiving guests. Instructor will offer him or her coffee, tea or juice; the guest will refuse at the beginning and then choose a beverage. Instructor will put sweet pictures on the guest’s plate.
Students will be in groups of five (two hosts and three guests) or in the case of a class of only five, in one group, each student will take turns being the host and practice welcoming guests and serving them.

**Activity 2: Speech bubble scenarios**

**Communicative goal:** Students can negotiate and judge what will be the most pragmatically appropriate phrase to interject into the scenarios.

**Standards:** Interpersonal speaking and writing, and Cultural comparison.

**Time allotted for activity:** 20 minutes

In pairs, students will negotiate what should go in the speech bubbles. (See Appendix D)

**Formative Assessment:** Students will act out each scenario with the phrases they chose for each one.

**Lesson Pan 2:**

Teaching the Act of Refusal According to Arabic Pragmatics: Refusing a gift.

(Arabic Intermediate Level)

This pragmatics lesson is for university level students ranging from ages 18 and older. Most of whom speak English as their native language and come from American culture backgrounds. The number of students can range from 5 to 15 students. This lesson is for students who have covered at least two semesters of Arabic. Therefore, they can understand and form decent paragraphs. They have a basic grasp of the Arab culture beyond Arab cuisine and clothing. Some have perhaps been to the Arab world and have experienced a bit of day-to-day pragmatic exchanges in the Arab culture.
Communicative Goal: Students can make pragmatically appropriate refusals to gifts.

Standards: Interpersonal speaking and writing, Culture Comparison, and Presentational speaking.

Activity 1: هل أرفض هدية؟ Do I refuse a gift?

Time allotted for activity: 20 minutes

Teaching aids: Native Arabic speaker

Description of Activity:

For modelling, the instructor and native Arabic speaker will act out a scenario where he/she admires a pin on the instructor’s jacket. The instructor then takes it off and offers it as a gift. He/she tries to refuse in the most appropriate way possible. The instructor insists and manages to make him/her accept.

Both the instructor and class guest then make a point to the students that despite the acceptance of the gift, it was important to refuse many times to show politeness otherwise he/she would be perceived as extremely rude and ungrateful if he/she accepted the pin from the first offer. Most importantly, students are advised not to admire Arabs belongings because most likely they will offer it as a gift which can be an embarrassing situation.

The instructor and guest act out another scenario where one gives a gift to the other. The class guest refuses the gift then praises the instructor (gift giver) before accepting. In pairs, students offer each other gifts in turn. (Of course, for pretend). Students can choose to admire belongings if they want.
**Formative Assessment:** Students in pairs receive speech bubble dialogues (in Arabic) to negotiate and judge what appropriate phrases pragmatically fit into the scenario. Students then act out their scenario (See Appendix D).

**Conclusion**

Since ALs are learning a language that is part of a culture very different from their own, they should be introduced to the pragmatics and values that make up this culture. Every language is comprised of verbal speech acts and nonverbal interactions that follow certain pragmatic rules allowing fluent speakers to use politeness strategies to avoid breaking these rules and losing face. Where these strategies come naturally to Arabic native speakers, they certainly do not with ALs. Speech acts such as refusals require patience, understanding, practice, and time before ALs are able to reach a level of intercultural competence. The research literature provides frameworks and materials that instructors can implement and use to help learners understand Arabic pragmatics.
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
INTRODUCTION

The following section of this portfolio is a collection of three annotated bibliographies composed of articles that helped answer questions I had regarding particular topics in second language teaching, and which add more details to what I consider essential in my own teaching philosophy. These topics include: The benefits of translation and list-learning, how to help students cope with foreign language reading anxiety, and how to apply communicative language teaching in different contexts. For each annotated bibliography, I explain the reasons why I found each article interesting and beneficial for my own language teaching.
TRANSLATION AND LIST-LEARNING WITH ARABIC LEARNERS

Translation is considered a taboo in the communicative language classroom, as the students’ native language is accorded a minimal role, if any, in CLT. Nevertheless, previous research has pointed out that there are ways to implement translation tasks to enhance vocabulary acquisition in today’s language classrooms. In Jordan, I recall translation being beneficial for students who were trying to improve their English proficiency and their understanding of English vocabulary in various contexts. Translation also helped me increase my Arabic vocabulary knowledge in particular topics such as history and politics. For me, it strengthened my writing skills in Arabic as well as my communicative skills because of the comparisons I made between English and Arabic in terms of appropriate usage of words in context. I experienced undeniable improvement in my Arabic proficiency and wanted to search for strategies to implement translation in my Arabic teaching without it disrupting the dynamics of a communicative classroom.

I am not advocating for the Grammar Translation Approach. Rather, I am trying to justify the benefits of learning vocabulary through translation activities and L2-L1 vocabulary lists, which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) does not encourage. Despite my experience with translation as a vocabulary learning strategy, I needed to learn what research has shown about translation and the role of the L1 in second or foreign language learning. First, I wanted to learn more about vocabulary instruction in CLT, second, to understand the potential role of the L1 in L2 vocabulary learning, and third, to confirm the positive effect translation and vocabulary lists can have on vocabulary acquisition.
Unlike the Grammar Translation Approach, in which vocabulary is taught strictly through vocabulary lists to memorize and prepare learners for the regular task of translating texts, not much focus is given to vocabulary instruction in CLT. Augustyn, (2013) states that, “research on the positive or negative effects of translation is notoriously scarce, because SLA research has quite simply ignored the possibility of translation as a useful communicative activity” (p. 365). In my opinion, ignoring the potential benefit of a learning strategy just because it does not exactly fit the ideology of a particular approach does not make sense. The author explains that translation can be used as a bridge between one’s L1 and L2 and that it is impossible to prevent learners from using their L1 as a foundation to learning their L2, despite how much teachers try to eliminate the use of the L1 in the classroom. If my students are not verbally using their L1 in the classroom, they are still making comparisons and translating in their minds. I believe that there are ways to turn this L1-L2 bridge into an advantage.

Regarding vocabulary tasks in CLT, Augustyn disagrees with conventional dogma in CLT that binding (linking meaning to form) is the only fundamental process of vocabulary acquisition. She argues that bilingual practice such as translation should be reassessed as a strategy for learning vocabulary as well. She claims that binding works for learning low-frequency vocabulary, yet translation is a more effective strategy for learning high-frequency vocabulary.

Lastly, translation as a vocabulary learning strategy encourages more use of dictionaries, which fosters autonomous learning. The use of Arabic dictionaries takes a lot of practice and as an instructor of Arabic, I must begin training my students to use dictionaries as early and consistently as possible due to the organized lexical root system
in Arabic. Meanings are searched by root, not alphabetically, making it confusing for novices to use without guidance. Translation tasks can help learners become more accustomed to using Arabic dictionaries, leading them to discover new vocabulary words. This article, while not offering me evidence that translation can increase vocabulary knowledge, helped me see that empirical research is on the rise showing that translation is a productive strategy.

On the same note, Rogers, (2008) gives an insightful literature review of the perception of translation in the field of second and foreign language learning and teaching through the years. I learned about the shifts of focus that translation has undergone in terms of relevance and importance to language learning theory and application. I was reminded that theories, practices, and approaches change due to new research, experience, and observations. Thus, as a foreign language instructor, I can learn from my own research, experience, and observations and draw my own conclusions on what works in the dynamics of my classroom and the language I teach.

Furthermore, Rogers (2008) acknowledges the difference between translation training where students learn translation skills and translation as a language-learning task where the focus is on the cognitive process of translating rather than the outcome. The author explains translation in the former sense as a process that ends with a final product: a process-product framework with two stages: a prior stage of making translation decisions and a final stage of evaluation. With translation training, the outcome of being accurate and correct is most important. On the other hand, the priority for translation as a language-learning task is the actual process of translation itself, during which students make interlingual lexical and textual comparisons between the L1 and the L2. Rogers
affirms that after students translate, they need to be able to judge and justify their errors and translation decisions through explanations, which can be considered a pedagogical process. I have asked my students to sit in pairs and discuss and compare their translations. The discussions that go on between students are a mixture of Arabic and English, but they are no doubt beneficial ones because students compare vocabulary words and usage of these words in context. Students look up words together from the dictionary or the textbook and take advantage of being in class where they can ask their peers or me questions.

Rogers confirms that translation can indeed be of benefit to language learners particularly because it is dependent on and inclusive of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). She concludes by stating that, “language learning and translation are both complex cognitive activities which lead to language production events” (p. 121). Following translation tasks that I have given Arabic learners, my students have voluntarily stated that translation helps strengthen their vocabulary knowledge, comprehension, use of vocabulary while speaking, and even spelling. They enjoy translation as an activity because it gives them the opportunity to analyze the language together in a scholarly manner by making comparisons between Arabic and English contexts.

Regarding L1 use in foreign language classrooms, Nation (2003) explains that the L1 has a small but important role to play in communicating meaning and content and gaining the knowledge needed for a high level of L2 performance. Nation confirms that out of all the ways to convey meaning of a new word to students through imagery, L2 explanations, L2 context clues, or an L1 translation, none can be considered the best way
because it depends on the word. However, when comparing these strategies, L1 translations are highly effective for vocabulary learning, and list-learning is a highly effective strategy for increasing vocabulary growth. This article confirmed my belief that translation and list-learning are no doubt beneficial for vocabulary acquisition.

Nation (2003) claims that sometimes allowing students to discuss texts first in the L1 leads to better performance when discussing it in the L2. I disagree with this approach because learners should not get used to relying on their L1 for understanding a text before trying to discuss it in the L2 first. I realized that despite his belief that L1 discussions of the text increases comprehension of the text, I firmly believe that it should not be the first resort. He concludes by stating that, “the L1 needs to be seen as a useful tool that like other tools should be used as needed but should not be over-used” (p. 5). This concluding statement reminds me to always question first whether translation is necessary before deciding to implement it in my classroom. Nation’s article left me wondering more about the role of the L1 as a tool to learning vocabulary in the classroom.

I found more research on the role of the L1 including Schmitt (2008) who also explains the influential role of the L1 in L2 vocabulary learning, and how according to psycholinguistic studies, it is active during the lexical processing of the L2. Learners naturally compare between both languages, which helps them make connections to form patterns and sequences. I believe that learners can also make comparisons and connections between the L2 and images or gestures which I use all the time in my own classroom, yet since the L1 remains active in the process of learning the L2, it can serve as another tool for processing L2 vocabulary. Schmitt states that, “translation is a natural vehicle for achieving this process” (p 337).
Moreover, he points out that it is more important for intermediate and more advanced learners to guess meaning from context to enhance their contextual word knowledge, lessening L1 value. Schmitt concludes by saying, “L1 is appropriate at some stages along the vocabulary learning process but not others, which suggests using different teaching methods at different stages of vocabulary learning” (p. 338). I agree that the learner’s level plays a part in translation. Guessing word meanings from context when the learner is able to describe, explain, and find synonyms in the L2 is unlikely for beginners, also making it less necessary for advanced learners to translate. Yet, in my opinion, it depends on the level and content of the text as well. If the text does not contain abstract or difficult pragmatic concepts (high frequency words), then I do not see a significant role for translation. However, translating advanced texts with words such as “حسد” meaning ‘envy’ or ‘evil eye’ for example would increase an understanding of this word and its usage even for advanced learners. Guessing the meaning of a word such as “حسد” from context is very difficult. I wanted to search for more justifications of using L1 equivalents in class to help students understand the meanings of certain words.

Folse (2004) investigates numerous myths about L2 vocabulary teaching and learning. The first myth states that guessing words from context is as productive for L2 learning as it is for L1 learners. Folse (2004) justifies why this is considered a myth by saying that “for a native speaker, there may be only one unknown word in a passage, the L2 reader with the same reading passage on the other hand, most likely faces multiple unknown words that serve as non-clues or misleading clues” (p. 6). From my experience teaching Arabic, translation is never the first task I ask my students to do with a text, rather I ask students to first try to understand the new vocabulary from context. Then I
use binding for the words for which binding is possible. Then students do a communicative activity with the information, then finally if there are high-frequency words in the text, I ask students to translate in pairs with their dictionaries and discuss and compare translations. I have noticed that after this final step students have a full and clear understanding of the text.

The second myth is that the use of translation is a poor way to learn new vocabulary. Here, Folse makes it clear that he is not advocating returning to the translation method, yet he mentions previous studies indicating that word retention scores were higher for students who worked with translations than for those who had pictures. Moreover, L2 learners at the beginner level prefer translation as a vocabulary learning strategy. Finally, less proficient students were able to recall more vocabulary in the translation condition than in the context condition. Folse concludes by saying that our question should not be whether translation is an effective strategy or not, rather we should ask during what proficiency level is translation most effective and with what kinds of vocabulary, be it low frequency words, high frequency words, verbs, idioms etc. This article made me realize that working with translation depends on the level of the learner and the level of the text itself. Moreover, list-learning can help translation be an effective strategy for students. My final question was about whether vocabulary list-learning was about more than just forcing students to memorize words and definitions.

Regarding vocabulary list-learning, Fitzpatrick, Al-Qarni, & Meara (2008) conducted a single case study on one L1 English speaker learning a vocabulary list of 300 Arabic words at a rate of 15 new words a day over a period of 20 days. The learner studied these words through list-learning, in which the learner was presented with the
target words in their written form together with an L1 translation. They tested her production and reception of those words through straightforward translation tasks. These series of translation tasks resulted in the learner not having difficulty in acquiring almost all 300 words, yet retaining them only as she rehearsed them, and that this retention was temporary.

They concluded that “in terms of initial acquisition and longer-term retention of target items, list-learning vocabulary should not be dismissed as outdated and non-communicative but should be valued as a means to threshold-level acquisition” (p. 248). I found this article interesting because it talks about short and long-term retention of words. I am quite certain that the reason behind her short retention was because she did not use any of the new words communicatively. Memorizing vocabulary L1 equivalents and translating will not lead to long-term retention on its own. From my experience in teaching Arabic vocabulary, long-term retention of words occurs when students use both list-learning and communicative activities such as binding, role-play, info-gap activities, etc. When students memorize new words and their meanings and then use them communicatively or vice versa, students have a better chance of gaining long-term retention of words than if they only memorized lists or only tried using the words in class.

In summary, it is clear that there is a place for translation and list-learning in the foreign language classroom and that communication-based activities alone are not enough to learn both high and low frequency vocabulary. There is no convincing reason for entirely neglecting the positive use of the L1 in the process of learning the L2. This research allowed me to gain confidence in implementing translation tasks while
maintaining a communicative classroom environment. I learned when translation can be most effective, and when it is unnecessary. I also learned that the L1 can be used as a tool along with images, gestures, L2 explanations, etc, to help students learn the L2.
When teaching a foreign language, especially at the beginner’s level, some teachers including myself focus mainly on communication and forget the importance of in–class reading practice as part of enhancing FL acquisition. However, every time I asked my students to read aloud or silently in class, I noticed how nervous and anxious they became. I knew my students were not reading at home as much as I hoped. Yet, I became hesitant to ask my students to read in class because I saw how uncomfortable it made them. I needed to find ways to encourage my students to read silently and aloud in and outside class with the ability to comprehend what they read and without the fear of making mistakes. First, I wanted to know exactly what causes FL Reading Anxiety (FLRA), and second, what to recommend Arabic Learners (ALs) to decrease their level of anxiety when reading Arabic texts.

My initial understanding of FLRA was established by Saito, Garza, and Horwitz (1999), who inform educators that FLRA can have a significant interference with FL learning as a whole, and that we assume reading is the FL component that causes the least anxiety compared to speaking and writing, which is not true. Two aspects of FL reading can cause FLRA: unfamiliar scripts and unfamiliar culture material. This research measures FLRA in three different languages, French, Russian, and Japanese hypothesizing that levels of reading anxiety vary across these three languages. I found this article interesting because Arabic, as Russian and Japanese, have different writing systems that can slow down the process of FL reading, therefore, this study helped me
understand the extent to which a different writing and sound-symbol correspondence can affect FL reading proficiency.

Students who were taking French, Russian or Japanese were given a questionnaire called the FL Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) asking about their FLRA. Results indicated that Japanese had the highest level of FLRA then French then Russian. Despite French being a cognate language with the similar Roman alphabet, authors suggest that French learners may have been deceived only to realize later in the course that it was phonologically complex. Whereas, the Russian learners were more prepared from the beginning, and since the Cyrillic symbols are phonologically dependable once learned, they were more confident in their reading. Arabic is very similar to Russian and Japanese where students from the beginning expect to work hard and therefore students are not shocked by the major discrepancies between English and Arabic script and pronunciation helping them build confidence in reading.

A very high percentage of students of the three languages felt the hardest part of learning a FL is learning to read, especially on unfamiliar cultural topics. According to Saito et al. (1999), “Anxiety is also anticipated when a reader can decipher the words of a FL text, but not its sense, because of incomplete knowledge of the cultural material underlying the text” (p. 203). Recommendations for language instructors include informing students and acknowledging from the beginning that anxiety can occur between decoding a text and the actual processing of meaning, they also recommend that instructors teach students successful reading strategies, choose texts that are level appropriate -especially when working with authentic texts and be careful when asking students to read aloud.
Moreover, with noncognate languages like Japanese, teachers tend to focus more on oral practice and assume reading and writing will follow oral proficiency without extra instructional effort. As an Arabic instructor, I have to make sure I dedicate enough time to both reading and writing instruction from the beginning especially when applying the Communicative Language Teaching approach, which initially focuses more on oral proficiency.

Learning about Arabic reading for (ALs) in particular is essential in order to adapt recommendations and strategies I read elsewhere for foreign language reading in general. The *Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language* guidebook by Ryding (2013), is very useful to me because it covers every aspect of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. In the chapter titled *Reading Comprehension in Arabic*, the author begins with pointing out what makes Arabic especially difficult in terms of reading. First, Arabic has right-to-left directionality with a non-Roman alphabet containing letters that change shape according to their position within the words, making words difficult to decode while reading. Therefore, teaching Arabic reading requires me to gain knowledge of strategies to help ALs not become discouraged or lose interest in reading because it is too different or difficult. This chapter offers such strategies including rereading texts, reviewing them, and recycling them later in the course, which has shown to be an effective strategy to decrease reading difficulty and anxiety. Ryding (2013) clarifies this by stating, “The idea is to build a foundation of deep familiarity with the script, with words in context, and with key texts” (p. 150). I try to write my own texts that recycle the vocabulary from the original text form the textbook instead of students rereading the
same text over again and losing interest. Reading aloud is also a good classroom exercise that improves accuracy and speed in pronunciation and identifying short vowels.

Second, the short vowels (harakat) are invisible in ordinary unadjusted scripts. Arabic has orthographic depth, meaning it has “shallow” and “deep” orthographies. When short vowels are marked it is called shallow script and when they are not it is called deep script. For elementary school L1 speakers of Arabic, learners begin reading shallow texts, and then gradually read deep texts. I find this an important note for Arabic teachers to keep in mind when looking for authentic texts to give ALs because they are mostly written in deep script. I usually add the short vowels to the words myself when I find a level appropriate text I think my students will enjoy, or I write my own text with short vowels. Either way I think it is important for students to read shallow texts for as long as possible before reading deep texts in order to avoid FLRA, because short vowels change pronunciation therefore change meaning. Ryding (2013) emphasizes, “The absence of short vowels is immediately and consistently problematic for developing word-knowledge and literacy” (p. 151). Many students when reading deep texts feel anxious because they do not know how exactly to pronounce the word and are unsure of the meaning. For example, a word my students get confused with is “شعر” ‘shaa’r’ meaning ‘hair’ or ‘poetry/verse’ depending on the short vowels, which is determined by on context and meaning. Some students recognize the correct pronunciation and meaning of the word from context and some do not. Yet, both prefer shallow script.

Third, ALs find difficulties in understanding cultural texts that contain unfamiliar pragmatics, customs, and beliefs, which require support from the teacher to help students understand, interpret, and appreciate the text. For texts with difficult content, skimming,
scanning, and finding the gist are simple strategies to engage students in reading, rereading, and comprehending specific parts of the text without overwhelming them with the whole text at once.

As I mention in my teaching philosophy, I find it essential for students to become autonomous learners, which includes autonomy in reading. Bektas-Cetinkaya (2011) analyzes a Turkish graduate student’s academic reading process in English. This was done through interviews to gain a general view of his reading habits, recall protocols to investigate his reading strategies, and a think-aloud protocol verbalizing his thoughts while reading. The author describes this student’s reading habits in both Turkish and English, the difficulties experienced when reading academic English texts, and the reading strategies he uses when reading such texts.

The author also discusses the factors that play a role in FL reading comprehension, such as FL proficiency, reading skills in native and FL, background and cultural knowledge, and reader’s affective reactions. The author chose to focus on reader’s affective reactions since previous research has conducted studies on FLRA based on quantitative data using instruments that do not conduct full expression of one’s feelings and perceptions of reading in a FL. According to Bektas-Cetinkaya (2011) “This study aims to focus on one individual’s lived experiences of reading, and thus may allow a more comprehensive picture of the whole process to emerge” (p. 46). I found this article useful because it analyzes detailed FL reading strategies and reactions to FL reading from the point of view of an individual. I kept imagining each of my students in his shoes experiencing the same anxiety while reading Arabic texts. As I read on about
his strategies, I planned to put them in a list to give to my students to help them with their reading in class and at home in hope that their FLRA will decrease.

Comparisons between reading in his native language versus English show that he experiences no problems in reading for pleasure in Turkish, but feels it is mentally demanding and time consuming when reading in English. His difficulties reading English academic texts include planning time efficiently to complete reading assignments on time, needing breaks after every chunk of reading, and requiring a particular environment to read. He also needed to stop after almost every sentence to check his comprehension covering maximum two pages before needing a break. He felt he had to know the exact meaning of every word and every idea in the text. I think all language teachers should keep in mind the struggles language learners face, be aware that FL reading can be exhausting, and offer students strategies that can work for them individually.

The strategies he used include checking all the visuals such as tables, figures, diagrams to get the gist before beginning to read as a pre-reading strategy, indicating that visuals activate his schemata. He also paid attention to important parts in the text in bold, italic words, cited ideas and quotations as a comprehension strategy. He also indicated that when reading in English for pleasure he guesses the meanings of words, but when reading academic texts he uses a digital dictionary. He also took notes on the side of the paper to help with comprehension. Lastly, he read before sleep believing that he could recall more reading that way. In conclusion, this reader faced reading anxiety in English due to having low tolerance to unfamiliar vocabulary or context blocking his comprehension.
He also had negative beliefs about his English proficiency and reading ability causing a negative attitude towards reading English texts especially academic texts causing anxiety. This reminded me that learner’s confidence in reading is very sensitive, and language teachers must remind students that they are more than capable to learn the language and develop their FL reading proficiency skills that will allow them to read various types of texts.

I am not only concerned with FLRA with students learning Arabic, but English for native speakers of Arabic as well. I find this article by Ahmad, Al-Shboul, Nordin, Rahman, Burhan, and Madarsha (2013), about Jordanian students studying English to be insightful because before coming to Utah, I was teaching EFL in Jordan and will probably do so again in the future. I recall students’ struggles and anxiety reading academic English and I want to learn what my students can use to overcome their FLRA. This research proposes a theoretical framework representing the sources of FLRA measured through questionnaires, interviews, and learner diaries. The study reveals two aspects of FLRA in the Jordanian EFL context: personal factors (afraid of making errors) and text features (unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topic, and unfamiliar culture). In Jordan, English is taught in public and private schools from first grade to college where it is the medium of instruction for many subjects, making reading in English important in order to achieve modern-day knowledge. Thus, despite students learning English throughout their schooling, they are still self-conscious about making mistakes while reading, which may also come from the pressure of society telling students they must be highly proficient in English.
The results for text features showed that the largest percentages of students found unknown vocabulary as a source of English reading anxiety. The second largest percentage was due to unfamiliar topics in English. Third, reading unfamiliar cultural texts made students worry about the miscellaneous meanings. The results for personal factors showed that the largest percentage of students found being afraid of making errors reading aloud causing anxiety. “They are concerned more with pronunciation if they were expected to read in front of their peers and teachers” (Ahmed et al., 2013, p. 107). The second largest percentage was due to worrying about reading mistakes rather than comprehension, causing them to prefer reading privately.

From my experience, teachers in Jordan tend to focus on output and ignore the negative effects of motivation, self-esteem, and personality on students’ confidence in reading. This article offers recommendations for teachers that include admitting the existence of anxiety in FL reading which affects performance, addressing the sources of anxiety, choosing better reading materials that contain common vocabulary and topics that do not overwhelm the students, and focusing on performance rather than production.

After understanding what FLRA is and learning about new strategies to prevent it, it is also important for teachers to select the proper reading strategies for students. Capan and Pektas (2013) investigate the relationship between FLRA and reading strategy training for students in FL reading courses through the FL Anxiety Scale (Saito et al. 1999), and semi structured interviews with 39 Turkish freshman students studying English at a public university. The interviews elicited their perceptions about possible difficulties pertaining to different aspects of FL reading. More specifically, it investigates if reading strategy training makes any difference in FLRA.
Despite the assumption that reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, keeping reading journals, and reflective thinking can facilitate the comprehension of reading texts, thus decrease FLRA, the results show that there was actually an increase in FLRA. Yet, the data elicited from the participants’ interviews yielded contradictory statements explaining how the strategy training was useful and informative, increasing their reading pace and comprehension. However, some participants stressed that it was their first time reading such difficult long academic texts making them think they would fail the class. This emphasizes the proposition that teachers must choose topics and texts wisely. Some students were intimidated by the instructor teaching these strategies and were afraid to ask questions. This also stresses how teachers can have a big impact on how they teach reading. According to Capan and Cukurova (2013) “it can be suggested that a warm, learner-friendly classroom environment may help relieve learners’ concerns about reading in a foreign language” (p. 187). I found this useful because I had thought that if I taught strategies in class, their FLRA will automatically decrease but apparently, that is not always the case. I have to be aware of how I teach these strategies using what types of texts I’m using if I want students to find them useful and actually decrease their FLRA.

I learned more about in-class reading strategies in a book titled *Content Area Reading and Literacy* by Alvermann, Gillis, and Phelps (2013) which despite including strategies not specific to foreign language reading but reading in general, demonstrates a strategy called “guided oral-reading procedures”. I found this strategy to be applicable to ALs to help decrease FLRA. These procedures included rereading until a specified level of read-aloud proficiency is reached, shared reading or paired reading between students.
or between student and tutor to maximize the time students spend practicing their literacy skills, and lastly independent silent reading to increase students’ comprehension in reading.

I tell myself that I must encourage my students to read on their own time, yet I know not all students are willing to search on their own for what they find interesting to read in Arabic. Therefore, it is important I offer level-appropriate reading material from various sources to my students such as Al-Jazeera ‘learn Arabic’ (see Appendix F) where I can choose excerpts from articles based on their interests instead of leaving them to search for reading material on their own that may be too advanced, causing more anxiety. I have had students in my class who can do their own research in Arabic if they know exactly what to search for, but still they found it to be difficult. Regarding read-alouds, I usually read the first two paragraphs in class before I ask students to read to each other in pairs. I found that it decreases their anxiety when they read themselves after reading along silently with me listening to correct pronunciation, intonation, and emphasis.

Moreover, this book offers an example of using an “interactive reading guide” which is designed to guide the in-class reading of students as they read in pairs and interact with the text. Students are given guides that show what paragraph and what page they will each read, following what questions they will ask their partner, opinions they will give, or what they will summarize, etc. Applying this in my classroom showed me how much interaction with the text and between pairs reduces anxiety while reading. I walked around the class, listened, and corrected only if the students did not correct each other first. After this activity, my students mentioned how they preferred reading in pairs
rather than individually in turns to the whole class, which made them feel less nervous and self-conscious of their mistakes, allowing them to focus more on comprehension.

In summary, I learned that FLRA is a result of difficulties in comprehension, pronunciation, and being self-conscious of speed and proficiency when reading silently or aloud. I also learned how to help my students cope with these difficulties and enhance their confidence and proficiency in reading. Finally, I now have the ability to explain what exactly makes reading in Arabic as a foreign language difficult for ALs and what strategies to teach my students to apply in the classroom or on their own in pairs or individually.
I was first introduced to the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) during my undergraduate studies in Jordan. My linguistics professors emphasized how Jordan is still applying old approaches in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). I knew this to be true due to taking EFL classes in Jordan for 13 years. I had become accustomed to the traditional ways in which Jordanian schools and universities teach EFL. Thus, learning about CLT for the first time made me think of words such as ‘too modern’, ‘American’, and ‘rich private schools’. I viewed CLT as an approach that English majors in universities learn about but could not actually apply in mainstream Jordanian schools. Towards the end of my undergraduate studies, I began having discussions with peers and a few professors who were advocates for this approach about the possibility of successfully applying CLT in Jordan. I began to understand the importance of classroom communication leading to communicative competence. After graduation, I began assisting university-level English major students with their linguistic and literature studies. I realized they could read about Charles Dickens and Noam Chomsky but struggled with speaking about daily topics. Students did a lot of listening and reading but no speaking, leading me to realize the true need of communicative teaching in EFL classrooms. Since then, I have learned much more about CLT in the MSLT program and have developed two goals regarding CLT, first, how to apply it in my Arabic language teaching and second, to investigate the possibilities of applying it to teaching EFL in Jordan.

I learned most of what I know about CLT from two books: The Communicative Classroom by Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) and Making
"Communicative Language Teaching Happen" by Lee and VanPatten (2003). The definition of CLT that I derived from these two books is that it focuses on providing learners with opportunities to practice real-life, meaning-bearing communication inside the classroom through student-to-student interaction. In my opinion, student-to–student interaction is what really makes CLT unique, because even if the activity at hand is not an exchange of information, students are still correcting each other’s mistakes or helping each other write in the target language. Even if some of the interaction is in the L1, it is still helping students become accustomed to interacting comfortably without being self-conscious of their mistakes that allows for better real-life L2 communication and negotiation of meaning between students. According to Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) “Students use all of the resources at their disposal, both internal and external, to create and express meaning” (p. 8). The more confident they are in interacting, the more they can focus on the quality of interaction.

From my experience coming from an educational background with absolutely no classroom student-to-student interaction until the MSLT program, interacting with my peers in pairs and groups was at first uncomfortable. I did not want to stand out as the one in the group who spoke the least or the one who did not come up with a clever answer or idea. Yet, the more I interacted with peers the more I became engaged and the quicker I thought of well-articulated answers. Therefore, experiencing this shift in my own learning allowed me to embrace and encourage my own students to interact with each other in Arabic.

Furthermore, while learning about CLT in the MSLT program, I had many opportunities to create hypothetical communicative activities, lesson plans, and teach
Arabic to my peers as they pretended to be my students. I also pretended to be a language student as my peers practiced teaching their L2. I realized that the best way to apply an approach is to experience it firsthand. Yet, as I continued learning about CLT, I came across articles expressing negative notions about CLT and recalled my first linguistics professor say that there is no “perfect approach”. I wanted to know what could be imperfect about CLT.

I found *The end of CLT: a context approach to language teaching* by **Bax (2003)** to be intriguing because the author states that CLT should not be our main approach to language teaching, instead the importance of context should come before any methodology in teaching. This was an interesting point, considering being taught during my graduate studies that context is extremely important to consider for any language classroom. At the same time, communication being the goal to any language teaching method is essential. Bax states false assumptions that teachers who do not follow CLT are considered backward and are missing what true language learning should be. Looking back at English classes in Jordan, it was very audiolingual and grammar-translation based. Yet, students in Jordan speak English very well due to English being the mainstream language in media and entertainment. But, what about teaching other languages besides English, especially non-romance languages? Bax includes examples of CLT advocators being surprised at the positive results of other methods used instead of CLT, but the English language was the only example. I am sure that the learners Bax mentions in both the Czech Republic and in Holland are exposed to English outside the classroom, as are learners in Jordan.
Bax (2003) further illustrates that the context of society, classroom, and culture is a crucial part of language learning situations. I agree. He states, “Good teachers naturally take account of the context in which they teach the culture, the students, and so on even when they hold that CLT is essentially the answer” (p. 284). However, the main essence of CLT is allowing learners to engage in real-life communication. I do not agree with putting the goal of communication second to context. I find them equally important in the process of learning a language. Teachers from different educational systems can try CLT as a whole or parts of it and then adjust it as they see fit.

Perhaps the English-speaking world created CLT due to teaching foreign languages that are not often spoken outside the classroom. My students cannot turn on Utah radio stations to hear Arabic music, whereas Jordanians find it easy to listen to English music on numerous local radio stations. Still, learners of English in all places would still benefit more in the classroom if they could hear themselves actually speak it. It became clear to me that there is a discrepancy between EFL teaching in Jordan and foreign language teaching in the United States. I wanted to learn more about introducing CLT in other contexts.

Li (1998) reviews previous research conducted on the difficulties implementing CLT worldwide, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language not a second language. These difficulties include incorporating CLT into traditional teaching systems, class size, and English proficiency and competencies of teachers. The author focuses his study on analyzing the opinions of South Korean EFL teachers on applying CLT. Despite South Korea’s new policy to encourage better means to enhance students’ English skills, teachers and students were still reluctant to welcome CLT. Beginning with
an overview of key distinctions between EFL contexts and ESL contexts, he states that CLT can be more challenging for EFL contexts because in such societies, there is a lot less use of English and therefore communication practice in English is not students’ number one priority. Instead, their concern is with exams that test them in grammatical structures. It is similar in Jordan, however, many students rely on English media to improve their speaking and comprehension skills but rely on school for learning grammar for the tests.

Moreover, the biggest problem discouraging the application of CLT mentioned by the Korean teachers in this article was themselves. The teachers said they were highly proficient in grammar, reading, and writing but not in listening and speaking. Even if teachers ventured into having meaningful conversations with students and allowed them to give their opinions, this would generate questions teachers are paranoid of not being able to answer correctly in English, causing teachers to lose face and respect from their students, which is considered shameful in the Korean culture. However, CLT is about students practicing the language with each other under the guidance of the teacher. Allowing pairs and groups to engage in activities should not put teachers on the spot of testing their own English skills. In his conclusion, the author recommends the South Korean EFL teachers depend not too strictly on Western methodologies, rather learn from these countries and develop their own version of CLT that fits their local context.

Keeping in mind that Jordan has an entirely different language-learning context, I was very interested to find an article talking about the cultural appropriateness of CLT by Ellis (1996). I learned additional reasons why CLT is not eagerly accepted by other cultures. The article focusses on the cross-cultural interactions that occur when
introducing new methodologies like CLT to other cultures. The author points out that although the instructors who wish to promote CLT have knowledge of the culture and the specific behaviors within it, this still does not lead to smooth cooperation between negotiators, but instead to judging and false assumptions. The biggest assumption in this context as many researchers argue, is that Western societies believe CLT is the answer to every teaching problem and can be adapted to any cultural context as well as serving ESL and EFL as having the same priorities for learning English. The closest solution Ellis mentions is for CLT advocates to be “cultural mediators” meaning they remain true to their own thinking yet need to be aware of the other culture’s differences. I think there is a huge difference between what you know of a culture and being aware of any differences unknown to you that you can expect to experience. The former is limited. Some CLT advocates think they know exactly what to expect once they introduce CLT. Yet the latter shows that CLT advocates should be open to negotiation and understanding regardless of what the differences are.

The author concludes with urging promoters of CLT to seek for similarities between teaching ideologies leading to more accepting attitudes. I agree with seeking similarities but I believe acknowledging and embracing the differences is equally important. Different cultures need to know that CLT promoters do not think Western ways are better. Instead, CLT is a new approach the West happens to find effective for enhancing EFL proficiency in the global world we are living in today. Perhaps other places will find at least part of it effective as well.

Finally, I was very interested in the article Cultural Mismatch in Pedagogical Workshops: Training Non-native Teachers in Communicative Language Teaching by
Spicer-Escalante and DeJonge-Kannan (2014) because it involves CLT teacher training with EFL teachers from China as well as Iraq/Kurdistan. This article discusses the increasing demand for English language learning in non-English speaking countries, the reasons behind the reluctance toward CLT, and the outcomes of training EFL teachers from China and Iraq/Kurdistan in the characteristics and applications of CLT. According to the authors’ research, China, in spite of its increasing need for proficient English speakers in the global workplace, is still not applying EFL teaching methods that promote real-world speaking abilities. Furthermore, according to the EFEP report of 2014, the authors point out that Iraq/Kurdistan is farther behind in its EFL proficiency than any other country. (EFEPI, 2014). It is clear that both are in need of change in their EFL methodologies. According to Spicer-Escalante and DeJonge-Kannan (2014), “As countries start to respond to the rise of global requirements, the need for the implementation of CLT becomes greater” (p. 2438). Jordan, like China and Iraq/Kurdistan, is facing reluctance from teachers or students or both in applying new teaching methods. Teachers in these countries are also concerned more with students scoring high on standardized grammar-focused tests than they are on speaking proficiency, and are unable to break the tradition of teacher-centered classrooms. I found these similarities helpful in that I can learn how to present CLT or even justify my own application of CLT, to Jordanian EFL instructors based on how it was presented to Chinese and Iraqi EFL instructors in this study.

The workshop conducted in this study consisted of participants that were EFL instructors from China and Iraq/Kurdistan. Before the workshop began, the authors, who were also the trainers, asked the participants to read chapters from two prominent books
on CLT. When the workshop began, the trainers and participants reviewed and discussed these chapters together while modeling the main principles of CLT. Participants also engaged in co-teaching where they had the opportunity to create lesson plans according to the CLT approach and teach their lessons to the class. Some participants volunteered to be interviewed offering insights on what the participants actually thought of the possibility of applying CLT in China and Iraq/Kurdistan. I found their answers to be insightful because they could be similar to opinions of Jordanian EFL instructors. For example, the participants in this study claimed that CLT does not help improve grammar-based test scores, and that they do not have time to implement CLT when they are under pressure preparing students for these tests. Nevertheless, Western countries require test scores from EFL students around the world who wish to study abroad, which are the TOEFL and IELTS exams; both these exams involve a speaking part. CLT can definitely prepare students for the speaking part of these tests.

Regarding the lesson plans, the participants had failed attempts of creating their own lesson plans according to CLT. I can relate to that experience. When I first began the MSLT program, I could not make the distinction between a communicative goal and a grammar goal. I still saw the ability to fill in a grammatical blank correctly as something the learner ‘can do’ with the language. It took a lot of practice and learning from my mistakes that I began to create activities that had real communicative goals. I know from this study and my own experience that creating such lesson plans and activities takes a lot of practice.

In terms of teacher-centered classrooms, in Jordan, students expect the teacher to take full charge at all times because students are paying tuition and fees and therefore are
to be lectured by an expert. The only time students use English is when they raise their hand to answer a question. Some students are pleased with this system because they never experienced anything different. Teachers should at least try applying CLT before they blame students’ reluctance. It is a system in which students have as much power to change it as do teachers. I believe that even simple cultural differences can have a big effect on the acceptance or rejection of CLT. Jordanians for example watch many American movies and TV shows where American schools are portrayed as free, too free perhaps. American students wear what they want and say what they want. It is possible teachers assume that if they adopt American teaching methods, they will lose their sense of authority and discipline. If I were to introduce CLT to Jordanian instructors, I would clarify that CLT does not lead to students disrespecting their teacher’s authority, and that communication between students can occur in an organized fashion.

The outcomes of this study show that there is still reluctance towards CLT, which the authors explain as “a clash of trainers’ and participants’ belief systems’ (p. 2441). Due to this clash or mismatch, the authors encourage further research on developing methods in teaching communicatively that could work in different belief systems. I have yet to experience teaching EFL in Jordan according to the CLT approach however, this article has given me a clear perspective on what to expect and how to begin addressing CLT to other EFL instructors.

In conclusion, I learned that CLT is a very broad and dynamic topic that can be further investigated and even redefined. Every time it is practiced in different classroom dynamics or cultural dynamics, something new is learned or added to improve how CLT is practiced in classrooms in the United States and elsewhere around the world.
LOOKING FORWARD

In the MSLT program, learning how to teach while at the same time teaching Arabic as a foreign language allowed me to apply what I learned in the classroom to my own teaching every day, an opportunity that has helped me grow as a teacher and a scholar. Throughout the program, I have received constant feedback from my professors and colleagues on my work and teaching. I have also had multiple opportunities to do research and present at conferences and publish my own paper in a journal. All of these experiences have shaped my next steps in my professional development.

First, I know that Arabic will remain a core part of my academic and professional career; therefore, I wish to focus on improving my own Arabic proficiency as I go on pursuing my other goals. I can do so by perhaps obtaining a master’s degree in Arabic literature or create my own plan to read, write, and translate on a regular basis. I also want to take the Arabic OPI exam in the near future to determine my level of Arabic language proficiency.

Second, I would like to pursue a doctorate degree in applied linguistics or second/foreign language acquisition. Obtaining this degree will allow me to teach at universities in the United States and Jordan, teaching courses similar to those I took in the MSLT program. I also want to conduct more research in the field of second language teaching and Arabic as I continue teaching Arabic in the United States and EFL in Jordan.

My biggest goal is to administer an Arabic language-teaching program in either a school or university, and create or co-create an Arabic textbook in which I illustrate all
the pictures and incorporate activities that are communicative and easy to implement in the classroom. I have already begun collecting activities that I found to be successful in my own teaching that I can improve on and include in my future Arabic textbook.

Finally, my last aim is to one day help establish a Dual Language Immersion program for Arabic. With more speakers of Arabic settling in the United States, I am sure Arabic will continue to be a critical language to learn. DLI programs can immerse young students in the Arabic language and culture as it does with other languages, establishing peaceful and understanding relationships between children and parents of both cultures. I have hope that one day Arabic DLI will arise and I want to be part of its development.
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doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1362168808089921


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Task-Based Activity for intermediate Arabic learners (handout for student one)

عواصم البلاد العربية

الطالب ۱

ما هي عاصمة سوريا؟
ما هي عاصمة المغرب؟
ما هي ألوان العلم الأردني؟
ما هو الرمز المرسوم على العلم الليبي؟
ما هي عاصمة فلسطين؟

بيروت | أبو ظبي | رياض | بغداد | القاهرة

هل زرت بلد عربي من قبل؟
أي بلد عربي تُحب أن تزوره، ولماذا؟
ما هو أجمل علم برأيك، ولماذا؟
عواصم البلاد العربية

طالب 2
ما هي عاصمة عراق؟
ما هو الرمز المرسوم على العلم اللبناني؟
ما هي عاصمة الإمارات؟
ما هي ألوان العلم المصري؟
ما هي عاصمة السعودية؟

الرباط ٨
عمان
طرابلس
القدس
دمشق

هل زرت بلد عربي من قبل؟
أي بلد عربي تُحب أن تزور، ولماذا؟
ما هو أجمل علم برأيك، ولماذا؟
Appendix B
Discussion Prompt for Activity 1-Lesson Plan 1

Envy and the Evil Eye in Arab and Islamic Culture

Can a deep, desirous look cause a big or small disaster or calamity in another’s life? Some people believe so, though not by magic or incantations, but through something known as the “eye of envy” or “evil eye”. Muslims generally believe in the existence and operation of the evil eye, because it is described in the holy Quran. Christians, on the other hand, generally do not. However, in Arab culture, you will find that people are different and personal beliefs vary. Many men and women think they have been envied, women in particular, especially housewives who have a strong sense of protecting their families. Still, some people dismiss it as a matter of illusion or delusion.

Envy is thought to do its work through the human eye, which is often believed to be a portal for envy, evil, and ill-will. Many Arabic proverbs demonstrate the potent role of the eye as responsible for everything bad that happens. For example, “The eye fractured the stone” and “The envying eye causes blindness”.

Arabs thus uphold a belief and fear in the evil eye that tends to dictate a host of social practices and superstitions. Many Arabs may avoid seeing or meeting someone thought to have an envious eye. If that eye falls on a beautiful child, that child may fall ill. Should the envier stare at a fruit farm, the leaves of the tree may fall off and the possibility of them bearing fruit dwindles. If a guest to one’s home gazes at something in the house worthy of envy, it may break.

For protection against envy, many Arabs will look at something beautiful and say ‘Ma shaa’ Allah’ to avoid being envious of the object that is of great beauty or worth. Others recite Quranic verses or place them on their cars or in their homes in order to ward off envy.

(Excerpt from *Diwan Baladna Arab Culture From an Arab’s Perspective* by Ahmad Kamal Azban (2010))

Envy: حسد

Envious eye: العين الحسود

Ma shaa’ Allah (As God wills, May God be the protector): ﷲ مَا ﻣَﺷَاءُ ﷲ
### Appendix C

**Rubric for Teacher Discourse Coding and Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Transcribed Text</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; G</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; G</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; G</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; G (L1ST)</td>
<td>English 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; G (L1ST)</td>
<td>Spanish 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; G (L1ST)</td>
<td>Spanish 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; G (L2ST)</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Eng L1ST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration of Teacher Discourse</td>
<td>Level 1 Questions</td>
<td>Level 2 Questions</td>
<td>Level 3 Questions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question type</td>
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<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Recasts</td>
<td>Clarification Requests</td>
<td>Repetition</td>
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<td>Metalinguistic feedback</td>
<td>Elicitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit correction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Lesson Plan 1: Activity 2: In pairs, students will negotiate what should go in the speech bubbles.
Appendix E

Lesson Plan 2: Formative Assessment: Students in pairs receive speech bubble dialogues (in Arabic) to negotiate and judge what appropriate phrases pragmatically fit into the scenario. Students then act out their scenario.

1. A guest slightly shakes the empty cup of coffee giving it back to signal he has had enough to drink.

2. The guests admire the host’s picture on the wall.

3. The host offers the picture as a gift and the guests try to refuse as the host persists they accept it.
التمَر.. خَبِّرُ الصَّحَرَاءِ

التمَر أكثر فاكهة طبيعية لأنه يكون وجبة صحية خفيفة للإنسان. وعرف العرب وسكان الشرق الأوسط منذ وقت طويل التمر وفوائده.

وهناك فوائد كثيرة للتمر على صحة الإنسان، حيث يحتوي على الكالسيوم والبوتاسيوم والمغنيسيوم والفيتامينات. كما أنه غني بالطاقة، ولذلك يُسمى "خَبِّرُ الصَّحَرَاءِ"، إذ تحتوي كل منة غرام من التمر على ٨٠ سعرة حرارية و٥٥ غرامًا من السكريات.