

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

All Graduate Plan B and other Reports

Graduate Studies

5-2017

Effective Strategies for Foreign Language Teaching: A Focus on Russian

Marina Krutikova
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Krutikova, Marina, "Effective Strategies for Foreign Language Teaching: A Focus on Russian" (2017). *All Graduate Plan B and other Reports*. 914.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports/914>

This Creative Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Plan B and other Reports by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING:
A FOCUS ON RUSSIAN

by

Marina Krutikova

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

Dr. Joshua J. Thoms
Major Professor

Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan
Committee Member

Dr. Ekaterina Arshavskaya
Committee Member

Dr. Bradford J. Hall
Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2017

Copyright © Marina Krutikova
All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

Effective Strategies for Foreign Language Teaching:

A Focus on Russian

by

Marina Krutikova: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2017

Major Professor: Dr. Joshua J. Thoms

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio presents the collection of writings that reflect the author's beliefs about effective foreign language instruction. Throughout much of the portfolio, focus is made on teaching communicatively, providing instruction on the target language culture, and enhancing students' motivation to learn foreign languages. The first section of the portfolio is centered around the author's teaching philosophy that was informed by her experience as a teacher of Russian as a foreign language, observations of other language instructors, and studies in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. The following section consists of the language, literacy, and culture papers in which the author elaborates on her views of effective foreign language teaching. The portfolio concludes with three annotated bibliographies that establish the links with the author's teaching philosophy and demonstrate her professional growth throughout the program.

(159 pages)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Studying in the MSLT program was a wonderful time in my life. That time would have been impossible without support and encouragement that I received from those special people whom I met in the program, as well as my family and friends. I must first thank the Head of the Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies at Utah State University, Dr. Bradford J. Hall, for the tremendous opportunity to teach Russian classes during my MSLT training. I must then thank Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan for being an amazing academic advisor and a wonderful person from whom I learned a lot about the teaching profession. Her wisdom, resourcefulness, and optimistic disposition inspired me to do my best as a student and a foreign language teacher. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Joshua J. Thoms for his interesting classes and skillful guidance that he provided to me during the completion of my Teaching Portfolio. His rich and encouraging feedback helped me become a more confident student and to believe in my future academic career. I am also grateful to Dr. Ekaterina Arshavskaya, who expressed her willingness to help me with my Teaching Portfolio. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini and Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante for being inspiring professors who were always ready to share their time and expertise with students.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank my fellow MSLT colleagues Aaron Salgado, Alexander Gatica, and I-Chiao Hung. Their sincere support and smiles became an indispensable part of each day that I spent in the program. Thank you, Aaron, Alex, and I-Chiao for rising together to challenges and sharing our small victories. I am also thankful to my friends Ekaterina Kliueva and Richie Gutierrez. Their love and encouragement helped me immensely in achieving my academic and professional goals.

On a final note, I am endlessly thankful to my family who supported me from afar. Particularly, I owe a debt of gratitude to my mother Varvara and my sister Irina whose unconditional love carries me through.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
INTRODUCTION.....	1
TEACHING PERSPECTIVES.....	3
Apprenticeship of Observation.....	4
Professional Environment.....	8
Teaching Philosophy Statement.....	9
Professional Development through Teaching Observations.....	28
Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement.....	33
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES.....	42
LANGUAGE PAPER.....	43
Orientation & Reflection.....	44
Learner Self-Assessment in Foreign Language Instruction.....	46
LITERACY PAPER.....	58
Orientation & Reflection.....	59
Exploring Effectiveness of Processing Instruction for Teaching Past Tense Verbs in Russian	61
CULTURE PAPER.....	79
Orientation & Reflection.....	80
Building Intercultural Competence in Russian Language Learners through Folktales	82
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES.....	96
Communicative Approach to Teaching Foreign Languages.....	98
Motivation in Foreign Language Learning.....	113

Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language.....	125
LOOKING FORWARD.....	143
REFERENCES.....	144

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

ALM = Audiolingualism

CALL = Computer-Assisted Language Teaching

CDSs = Can-Do Statements

CEFR = Common European Framework of References

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

EI = Explicit Instruction

ESL = English as a Second Language

FL = Foreign Language

IDs = Individual Differences

IP = Input Processing

L1 = First Language / Native Language

L2 = Second Language

MSLT = Master of Second Language Teaching

NCSSL = National Council of State Supervisors for Languages

NS = Native Speakers

NNS = Non-native Speakers

OVS = Object – Verb – Subject

PACE = Presentation, Attention, Co-construction, Extension

PI = Processing Instruction

PPP = Presentation, Practice, Production

RFL = Russian as a Foreign Language

SATS = Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

TBAs = Task-Based Activities

TBLT = Task-Based Language Teaching

TI = Traditional Instruction

TL = Target Language

USU = Utah State University

WTC = Willingness to Communicate

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1. Suggestions on improving my teaching following the first observation.....35
2. Table 2. Suggestions on improving my teaching following the second observation.....39
3. Table 3. Can-Do Statements for the thematic unit “How can I get there?”.....54

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is the pinnacle of my studies in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University (USU). It is comprised of the writings that I prepared as part of my course work and then elaborated to include in the final document. Throughout the portfolio, I discuss teaching Russian as a foreign language (FL) and provide examples from my teaching of this language to USU students to better illustrate my viewpoints. The focus on Russian was inspired by my first-hand experience of working as a graduate instructor of Russian during the MSLT training.

The central part of the portfolio is my Teaching Philosophy Statement that presents my vision of the approaches and strategies to best assist FL learners in acquiring a new language. I believe that effective FL instruction should rest on a teacher-student dialogue in which all parties are equal, responsible, and reflective participants. I start my teaching philosophy with discussion of the roles that teachers and students perform in the FL classroom. I picture an effective instructor as the one who carefully guides students in their learning journey, rather than authoritatively teaches them. As a guide, the teacher tailors learning activities to students' interests and needs, creates a friendly classroom atmosphere to overcome learners' anxiety and stress, and serves as a resource person who can aid in answering difficult questions. Entering into an educational dialogue with the teacher, students accept their roles as active learners to collaborate and learn from each other and, ultimately, become autonomous in learning a FL.

In my teaching philosophy, I further dwell upon three macrostrategies that I consider crucial for supporting a teacher-student dialogue and achieving the best results in FL instruction. Particularly, I discuss such principles as teaching communicatively,

providing instruction on the target language culture, and enhancing students' motivation to learn a FL. I explore these topics in detail in the language, literacy, and culture papers, as well as the annotated bibliographies that are included in the present portfolio.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

My background in formal education, overall consisting of eighteen years of study at various schools and universities, turned me into a savvy student who has simply seen and experienced a lot. I took many courses, met several instructors, made a lot of discoveries about learning, and had some disappointments too. Any educational setting that implies teacher-student interaction can become an environment where a student experiences success or frustration and, naturally, the teacher plays a major role in this experience.

An archetypical image of a teacher usually carries us back to the ancient man of wisdom who fathomed the laws of the Universe or to a math instructor one might have in the third grade and was painfully afraid of. Be it the first or the second case, a teacher is an influential figure who makes a difference in one's learning experience and sometimes even one's course of life. If I try to specify the qualities that most accomplished teachers I have had share in common, they will come as following.

First of all, a good teacher has a big heart. A good teacher is generous in sharing knowledge, time, and passion for their subject with learners. Indifference towards students' curiosity about the course or towards their academic achievements is incompatible with good teaching. In high school, I had an English language teacher who applied a lot of effort to opening the big world to her students. Mrs. L. initiated and took an active role in the development of the exchange program between my school in Russia and one of the high schools in Sweden. I was lucky to participate in the program and took advantage of the tremendous opportunity to use my knowledge of English in the real

world interacting with peers from a different country. I can still remember the joy and excitement that I experienced speaking to foreigners for the first time in my life, as well as pride in my ability to understand and be understood. Participation in that program also contributed to my awareness of other cultures and promoted my appetite for traveling, which developed strongly afterwards. Looking back, I realize that that experience sparked my interest in foreign languages (FLs), particularly English, and aroused a steady desire to speak them as often as possible.

Another ‘must-have’ for a distinguished teacher is a high level of expertise in the chosen field of knowledge. Fortunately, I have been blessed with brilliant teachers during my school and university years. Perhaps, the professor, whose in-depth knowledge of the subject and a gift to deliver truly insightful lectures amazed me the most, was Mrs. S. who taught a course on medieval literature in St. Petersburg University in Russia. In her lectures, Mrs. S. used an interdisciplinary approach. Telling us about Hamlet’s tragedy, adventures of Don Quixote, or Dante’s journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, she drew a holistic picture of the epoch, integrating three academic disciplines: literature; history; and philosophy. Her lectures would always be more than mere literature discussions; she opened the entire world for us and made us feel cultured people. Thanks to Mrs. S., I realized that a good teacher always teaches more than just a subject, and this can be applied to teaching FLs as well. For instance, telling students about effective learning strategies, cultivating a constructive attitude towards mistakes, teaching target language culture, among other things can enrich any FL class.

Finally, a good teacher is always responsive to students’ needs and ready to change the way of teaching as circumstances may require. Giving students a cold

shoulder when they express disagreement with an instructor's general approach to teaching seems next to impossible, yet still can be seen in classrooms around the world. Naturally, when such a situation arises in the FL classroom, one can hardly expect successful learning outcomes. My efforts to learn French (which spectacularly failed) can serve as a graphic example of how I do not want to and hopefully will never teach a FL myself.

The approach that my instructor Mrs. O. used to teach us French was based on the grammar-translation method. The regular class would normally start with Mrs. O. explaining new grammatical structures, proceed with us doing exercises to practice those structures, and finish with checking homework that was always a sentence translation from Russian into French. Our suggestions about including speaking activities in the lesson plans were regularly ignored. Mrs. O. strongly believed that grammar was the rock that created the basis of the French language that her students must scrupulously sculpt from all sides. Fortunately, this experience did not deter me from FLs as such (I am still dreaming of learning French one day) and, most importantly, did not quench my desire to become a FL teacher.

This desire grew stronger every year I worked in the bank sector that turned out to not be my cup of tea. At the age of 17, when one chooses one's future profession, it can be hard to make the right choice and I do not blame myself for studying economics. On the contrary, I am grateful to the years I spent in front of the computer screen holding bank clients' financial statements in my hands for what they taught me. Particularly, I realized that I lacked communication with people, could barely survive the routine office life, and did not get any joy or satisfaction from the work I did. I managed to stay in that

field for five years only because at my first place of work, English was the first working language.

This is the way I decided to become a FL teacher and of course my fascination with English defined what that language should be. After studying one semester at Utah State University (USU) as an exchange student, I was charged with enthusiasm and grew stronger in my intention to study languages and become a teacher. As a FL instructor, I want to bring into my teaching practice the best and avoid the worst that I observed as a student. I am strongly intended to make kindness and generosity, high expertise and wisdom, willingness to collaborate with students, rather than to authoritatively teach them parts of my teaching philosophy. The Master of Second Language Teaching program at USU has provided me with opportunities to turn this intention into action. Learning about second language acquisition theories, FL pedagogies, and classroom practices, and applying this knowledge in teaching elementary Russian language courses at USU, has allowed me to combine theory and practice and increase my chances to grow into a professional FL instructor.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

I entered the program Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) at Utah State University (USU) with the two goals that I set for myself in the field of teaching. Firstly, I was eager to develop my teaching skills and apply them in a real classroom environment. In this respect, the program offered me an absolutely unique opportunity to blend theory and practice by teaching my native, Russian language to USU students. This teaching experience went hand in hand with my studies in the program and shaped me as a language teacher.

However, I have always pictured myself as an English language teacher, and by the time I began my graduate studies, I still had to work extensively to acquire the desired level of proficiency in English. The two years that I lived and worked in the USU academic environment helped me master my knowledge of English and solidified my intention to try teaching English for non-native speakers.

Thus, completing the MSLT program, I envision myself in one of two professional settings. On the one hand, I can teach Russian as a foreign language both in an English-speaking country or in Russia itself. On the other hand, I also consider myself competent to teach English for Russian-speaking learners. Regardless of the particular professional environment that I will choose to enter in the future, my primary goal as a language teacher is to provide my students with an enjoyable learning experience via highly effective language instruction, both of which will help them become part of the present-day multilingual and multicultural society.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The decision to become a language teacher was not an easy one to make. It does take courage to start working in a completely new professional field and, through trial and error, try to develop into the best professional I have pictured myself becoming. I came to the idea of teaching through dissatisfaction with my previous field of occupation – banking – where I lacked communication with people, saw the routine office life as a burden, and most importantly, did not feel my efforts made any difference. My passion for foreign languages and a steady inner call for self-actualization helped me make a life-changing decision.

For me, the most important and appealing part about teaching is sharing. One shares one's knowledge, time, and passion for the subject with one's students. Sharing creates the connection between one's inner and outer worlds – the link essential to live a content and meaningful life. Entering the field of teaching has marked two new interrelated periods in my life: redefinition of myself as a professional and, eventually, redefinition of myself as a person, since what we do undoubtedly affects whom we become.

In my Teaching Philosophy, I introduce the main principles that shape me as a foreign/second language (FL/L2) teacher. These principles reflect my present view on what constitutes effective language instruction and I expect their further development as I gain more experience in the field. My Teaching Philosophy consists of two parts. In the first part, I consider the roles of teacher and learners in a FL classroom. In the second part, I expand on the three macrostrategies that I find most essential for successful FL instruction.

Focus on Teacher and Learners

Attending the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University (USU), I am lucky to combine academic studies with work as a Graduate Instructor of Russian. My teaching practice is mainly driven by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach that emphasizes the role of communication in one's acquisition of a new language. Although numerous studies have demonstrated the validity of applying CLT in the modern FL classroom (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Brandl, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Lee & VanPatten, 2003), I have noticed that this approach still faces a certain resentment on the part of the students who might be accustomed to more traditional instruction. Sometimes students are confused by the absence of abundant grammar explanations. At other times, they would expect word by word translation from the target language (TL) into their mother tongue. A student's complaint "I don't know where we are in class. I need a list of words with their English translation" can signal teacher-learner mismatch of expectations about the goals and dynamic of FL instruction.

I have witnessed aforementioned students' expectations in the classes I taught. Such learner attitudes may provoke a teacher into taking a defensive position or becoming a victim of the "Atlas Complex" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 6), a classroom dynamic in which teachers "assume full responsibility for all that goes on. They supply motivations, insight, clear explanations, even intellectual curiosity. In exchange, their students supply almost nothing but a faint imitation of the academic performance" (Finkel & Monk, 1983, p. 85, as cited in Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 8). Another

manifestation of the Atlas Complex can be described by the teacher role as “codling mother” (Freire, 2005, p. 83). Though Freire talked about the fallacious “parenting role that devalues teaching” (p. 7) in the context of the social and political stance that teachers should adopt in democratic societies, his words are applicable to the FL classrooms in which teachers are in charge and students are passive learners.

That said, teachers who strive to liberate themselves from the Atlas Complex and their roles as codling parents by no means delegate all power to students or allow for all-permissiveness. It would be also self-deceptive to think that no power difference exists between teachers and students in a formal classroom. A constructive attitude towards teachers’ power was expressed by Hooks (1994) who, referring to her own teaching experience, shares: “I began to understand that power was not itself negative. It depended what one did with it. It was up to me to create ways within my professional power constructively” (pp. 187-188). In the context of FL instruction, this means that teachers should be empowered to set goals, design curriculum, plan learning activities, and create a classroom atmosphere that they deem most effective for the task of FL teaching and learning. In this sense, I believe that rejecting the role of Atlas, who holds the entire FL instruction ‘sky’ on his shoulders, a language teacher should accept that of a guide. Expanding on Greek mythology metaphors, I suggest that as a guide, FL instructors should provide learners with Ariadne’s thread to lead them to successful second language acquisition (SLA).

The guiding role of a teacher involves multiple functions. One of them can be referred to as a “Resource Person” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 68) who is ready to share the knowledge of a TL, but does so responding to students’ questions and learning

interests, rather than in an authoritative manner. I also believe that such sharing goes far beyond TL teaching per se since students often want to know *how* to learn a language. In other words, they are interested in mastering FL learning strategies that will help them become more efficient learners.

Abandoning the authoritative position and accepting the role as a resource person, FL instructors should be prepared for situations when they can be challenged by their students. Readiness to be challenged does not imply cramming encyclopedias and striving for perfection beyond common sense. It rather implies humility that “helps us to understand this obvious truth: No one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything” (Freire, 2005, p. 72). Humility that “by no means carries the connotation of a lack of self-respect” (p. 71) and helps teachers “avoid being entrenched in the circuit of [their] own truth” (p. 72) has important implications for creating a learner-oriented environment in the classroom where teacher and students are partners who carry on the educational dialogue.

A teacher’s role as a resource person is closely connected to another one which Lee and VanPatten (2003) describe as that of an architect:

When the instructor takes on the role of *architect*, the one who designs and plans but is not responsible for the final product, then students become *builders* or *coworkers*, who put it together... Students begin to share some of the teaching functions that instructors ordinarily assume for themselves and that students typically concede to them. (p. 71, italics in original)

When teachers are no longer victims of Atlas-like behavior, students are more likely to accept responsibility for their own learning and act as a team whose members each contribute to achieving success in a FL learning endeavor.

Undoubtedly, mastering a FL is not a walk in the park. It is often a long and sometimes even a life-long process accompanied by numerous ups and downs. One common pitfall along the way is learners' unawareness that learning a new language is a slow process (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Giddy with success experienced in the entry-level classes, FL learners might be frustrated by the absence of noticeable gains in the more advanced courses. Another frequently observed phenomenon is learner anxiety that normally produces a devastating effect on TL performance (Dörnyei, 2005). Besides, inexperienced FL learners are often unfamiliar with the impact that their native language may produce on learning a particular L2. In the SLA literature, such impact is described as either positive or negative transfer depending on the similarities or differences that exist between particular languages (VanPatten & Williams, 2007). These and many other challenges expand the teacher's role as a guide to acting as a stress manager.

Indifference is incompatible with good teaching, for students "respond to people who care" (Kottler, Zehm, & Kottler, 2005, p. 46). As stress managers, teachers show that they and the students are in the same boat and need to collaborate to overcome the difficulties of learning a FL. At times, students might benefit from a comforting and encouraging talk in which the instructor helps them develop a constructive attitude toward errors, teaches memory tricks, or provides other tips to make learning smoother.

Roles that the teacher performs as a guide, in other words, those as a resource person, an architect, and a stress manager imply learner-centered lessons that "shift a sense of autonomy of learning onto the student" (Cushing-Leubner & Bigelow, 2014, p. 250). By establishing an emphasis on learners' individual contributions, teachers underscore the value of autonomous learning that ultimately allows students to become

resourceful and independent in their life-long learning process. Autonomous learning is implausible without one's desire and ability to think critically, which by default excludes the "banking" (Freire, 2005, p. 58) type of education when learners digest knowledge without questioning their 'diet'. Yet, performing a guiding role in FL instruction, teachers need to help learners become autonomous (Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017). Such help may involve "psychological preparation and strategic training" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 40), as well as specific features of instruction design that provide students with the opportunities to "select their own learning materials and evaluate their own learning progress" (Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017, p. 128). In my teaching practice, I repeatedly (and to my own pleasure) encounter students asking me about what they can do to achieve better results in learning. For me, this is the first sign that students are moving towards autonomous FL learning. Familiarizing them with learning strategies, tips to boost motivation, or even basics of SLA has become part of my role as a teacher. I now turn to describing the various macrostrategies that I consider to be the most salient for successful FL teaching and learning.

Macrostrategies for Teaching Foreign Languages

The title and organization of this section was inspired by Kumaravadivelu's (1994) seminal article in which the author discusses the implications of the "postmethod condition" (p. 27) for FL pedagogy and identifies ten macrostrategies for teaching FLs. While the macrostrategies described in the present paper differ in number from those offered in the article, they generally correspond to the spirit of Kumaravadivelu's framework. The latter led to the pedagogical approach usually referred to as principled eclecticism or "the integration of eclecticism into classrooms and other language learning

environments coupled with intentional decision-making, rooted in theoretical understanding of language acquisition, concepts of cognitive and social-emotional development and understanding of motivating factors for learner investment and engagement” (Cushing-Leubner & Bigelow, 2014, pp. 248-249). This approach promotes teacher autonomy in making pedagogical decisions informed by students’ needs and purposes of learning a language. Some researchers consider principled eclecticism a “synthesis of various methods under CLT” (Barrot, 2014, p. 436), a fair observation based on Kumaravadivelu’s appreciation of negotiation of meaning and learner-centered environment in a FL classroom. Yet, for me, the major advantage of principled eclecticism is that it is based on “strategic relativism” (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 43) that gives FL instructors freedom to teach based on the here and now of their immediate classrooms. Under strategic relativism, teachers are open to continuing improvement of their pedagogical skills “based on ongoing feedback” (p. 43) and the opportunity to adjust and expand their teaching practices.

Inspired by Kumaravadivelu’s (1994) ideas of principled eclecticism, I define the key macrostrategies of my own teaching practice as the following: a) to teach communicatively; b) to teach TL culture; and c) to enhance students’ motivation to learn a FL. Below I discuss each of these macrostrategies, as well as particular learning activities that help me apply these macrostrategies in practice.

Macrostrategy I: Teach Communicatively

When one starts learning a new language, the motives behind such a decision can vary. Yet, learners are usually unanimous in their desire to start using the TL as soon as possible, with interpersonal communication playing center stage among their learning

goals (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). To meet this requirement, FL teachers may want to use the CLT approach that is “organized on the basis of communicative functions” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 2) of a language and “real communication rather than simply on learning the vocabulary, grammar, and structure of a language” (Hiep, 2007, p. 194). In this way, CLT manifests a practical approach to learning languages and puts communicative goals of individual learners in the center of attention.

In CLT, communication is viewed as “expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning in a given context” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 60). The role of negotiation of meaning in one’s acquisition of a FL was emphasized by Long (1996) in the Interaction Hypothesis, according to which “*negotiation for meaning*, and especially negotiation work that triggers *interactional adjustments* by the NS [native speaker] or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition” (pp. 451-452, italics in original). Interactional adjustments in Long’s Interaction Hypothesis are “repetitions, confirmations, reformulations, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, clarification requests” (p. 418); in other words, strategic devices that a FL speaker may want to use to get the intended meaning across. In classroom settings, negotiation of meaning can be facilitated through communicative activities. Brandl (2008) defines communicative language-learning activities, contrasting them with traditional drills as following:

... communicative language-learning activities distinguish themselves from traditional drill types in several ways. The meaningful principle is fundamental and is strongly adhered to. Furthermore, the primary focus is not the practice of grammar structures, but the actual use of language and the development of communicative skills. While such a goal does not exclude a focus on form, it emphasizes contextualized language practice. (p. 186)

In his definition, Brandl (2008) highlights the key features of the communicative activities that I always try to keep in mind when preparing to teach a class.

Firstly, FL learning should be based on meaningful interaction between learners. To meet this criterion, it is recommended to “make activities personalized and to give students a choice of answers” (Brandl, 2008, p. 187). Personalized activities spark students’ desire to express themselves, while a choice of answers allows them to approach a real-life interaction in the classroom settings. Such learning activities as interviews, information-gap activities, and task-based activities (Ballman et al., 2001) all meet the requirement of a meaningful information exchange.

Secondly, any real-life language use happens in context, or the totality of the “setting, topic, situation, purpose, actors, roles, cultural assumptions, goals, and motivation” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 47). For the purposes of FL instruction, one’s learning experience should not be detached from reality (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). In this regard, planning a FL syllabus around topics of high communicative potential (e.g., family and friends, hobbies, travelling) rather than around a grammatical agenda, allows to avoid language use in artificial contexts that do not relate to either learners’ individual experiences or situations to be found outside the classroom.

Finally, as stressed in Brandl’s (2008) definition of the communicative language-learning activities, grammar is not the driving force of instruction. Foreign language teachers embracing CLT avoid taking a “grammar for grammar’s sake” (Ballman et al., 2001, p. 34) position. Instead, they find a happy medium in defining the content and amount of grammar interventions in accordance with the communicative goals of instruction.

As can be noticed, communicative activities such as interviews, role plays, or information-gap activities are output-oriented. While SLA is inconceivable without TL input, traditionally defined as the “language the learner hears (or reads) and attends to for its meaning” (VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p. 9), output, or TL production, is given the same high priority. Initially, the importance of TL production was underscored by Swain (1985) in the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis. Swain defined comprehensible output as the “delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately” (p. 249). In the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, she maintains that:

Comprehensible output ... is a necessary mechanism of acquisition ... Its role is, at minimum, to provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test out hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it. (p. 252)

Communicative activities provide FL learners with the opportunities to produce comprehensible output in which negotiation of meaning plays an important role. In contrast, language use in drill-like activities is subject to the targeted grammatical structures and bears no signs of genuine communication.

Following the tenets of CLT when teaching entry-level Russian classes at Utah State University, I received positive feedback from my students who appreciated a lot of group work and opportunities to interact with their peers in class. Yet, CLT is not perfect and often criticized for “its heavy focus on oral, functional language use” (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016, p. 7). Excessive focus on interpersonal oral communication leaves crucial literacy skills such as reading and writing unattended. As a result, FL learners are often not prepared to move to the advanced language and literature courses where they

need sound discourse competence and well-developed academic writing skills (Paesani et al., 2016). To avoid such an adverse turn of events, it is crucial to balance the four language skills even in the lower and intermediate-level FL courses. For instance, teaching elementary level Russian courses, I always combine communicative activities with writing tasks. The latter would normally start at the word or phrase-level (e.g., writing down one's schedule or stating New Year resolutions) and gradually proceed to more coherent and genre-specific texts such as writing a letter to a friend or writing a postcard.

Secondly, CLT is often blamed for its “superficial treatment of cultural and textual content” (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016, p. 7), with the textbooks being written in a culturally impoverished manner (Allen & Paesani, 2010), often without the use of authentic texts. FL instructors seem to be particularly subject to the risk of providing culturally neutral TL input when teaching basic vocabulary to the novice-level learners. For instance, teaching entry-level Russian classes, I noticed that it might be challenging to provide culturally rich instruction discussing such general topics as physical appearance, parts of the body, or housing.

Providing culturally neutral TL input, teachers deprive learners of the opportunities to develop interpretation skills, notice differences and similarities between TL and L1 cultures, as well as reflect critically on one's individual values and attitudes. In other words, teaching language in a culturally impoverished context is detrimental for educating individuals who understand and respect cultures other than their own, yet are capable of articulating their own viewpoints. Since TL culture is paramount to one's FL education, I address this issue in my second macrostrategy for teaching FLs. Overall,

addressing the limitations of the communicative approach in lower and intermediate-level FL courses is an example of strategic relativism that can be practiced by autonomous teachers who advocate balanced FL instruction.

Macrostrategy II: Teach Target Language Culture

Since the advent of the CLT approach, TL culture has been viewed as part of learners' communicative competence, the latter broadly defined as the ability of a FL speaker to successfully achieve the desired communicative goal relying not only on the knowledge of the TL grammar and vocabulary, but also on that of the sociocultural norms established in the TL community, as well as various strategies for getting one's message across (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). One of the notable, early models of communicative competence belongs to Canale and Swain (1985) who defined it as a combination of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences. The role of TL culture is particularly articulated in sociolinguistic competence that implies the development of learners' sensitivity towards sociocultural contexts involving "topic, role of participants, setting, and norms of interaction" (p. 30). Focus on TL culture and communicative competence in its full manifestation can be lost in a FL classroom when the instructor gravitates towards teaching the language "in generic contexts" (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016, p. 7). To provide culturally rich FL instruction, several steps can be taken.

First, teachers may want to use authentic TL materials that are initially "prepared by and for native speakers of the target culture" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 85). The major advantages of including authentic texts, video, and audio materials in FL lessons can be summarized as following. First, working with such sources, learners attend to real

language as opposed to the textbook's input that is often artificially tailored to present particular grammatical structures or vocabulary (Marzban & Davaji, 2015). Secondly, authentic materials "reflect the details of everyday life in a culture as well as its societal values" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 85), thus placing language learning in a meaningful and culturally rich context. The latter provokes a genuine curiosity on the part of the learners and is reported to have a strong positive impact on their motivation to learn the language (Tucker & Lambert, 1973).

Despite the aforementioned advantages, one may object that authentic materials are not suitable for novice learners who can be easily confused and frustrated by the complex language used in authentic contexts (Castillo Losada, Insuasty, & Jaime Osorio, 2017). In this regard, Shrum and Glisan (2010) recommend FL teachers to "edit the task, not the text" (p. 196). I found this suggestion very helpful, for I saw how it worked successfully in practice. In my Russian classes at USU, I enjoyed showing authentic cartoons and other videos. The language used in those videos was rather complex, yet students were normally able to grasp the main ideas of what they watched and answer subsequent questions about what they observed. Besides, they enjoyed immensely learning about Russian cultural topics, be it folklore characters or national food habits.

Another way to infuse learning materials with TL culture is to teach pragmatics, or "the relations between the linguistic properties of utterances and their properties as social actions" (Ferrara, 1985, p. 138, as cited in LoCastro, 2012, p. 5). When FL learners interact with the members of a TL community, they need to be aware of and adhere to the sociocultural norms established in that community for successful communication to take place. Sociocultural norms of behavior are reflected in the language through various

politeness devices. Using these devices, FL speakers avoid the risk of pragmatic failures (LoCastro, 2012; Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Studying in the MSLT program, I took the course on teaching FL pragmatics with Dr. deJonge-Kannan. In one of the classes, she noticed how hard it is to be polite for somebody who knows only the basics of a language and, as a result, possesses few or none of the pragmalinguistic formulas to communicate in a socially appropriate manner. This is undoubtedly true, with the situation aggravated by the prevalence of FL textbooks that present only limited and sometimes misleading pragmatic information (Eisenclas, 2011; Vellenga, 2004). In this way, instructors, acting as architects of a FL learning enterprise, may want to devote more attention to designing pragmatically salient learning materials.

Teaching pragmatics easily fits the CLT framework since cross-cultural communication “involves the continuous evaluation and negotiation of social meaning on the part of the participants” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 29). In a FL classroom, instruction on pragmatics can be intertwined with established communicative goals, for communication is never free from the social and cultural contexts. Teaching entry-level Russian language courses at USU, I would normally provide an explicit explanation of pragmatic points for such communicative situations as meeting new people, ordering a meal in a restaurant, or asking a stranger for directions. However, explicit instruction can be coupled with a deductive approach when students, through a self-discovery process, compare and contrast pragmatic norms in their TL and native cultures (Chen, 2015). To implement this approach, a sufficient amount of authentic examples of language use should be provided to the students.

Of course, teaching culture is not new to FL teachers and students. As far back as in my junior school years, when I learned English as a FL, I kept firmly in mind that the British have a 5 p.m. tea time tradition, call their national flag the Union Jack, and adore the royal family. This set of cultural stereotypes that limited one's perception of British culture was provided to me as an ultimate truth to be memorized, but not questioned or explored further. As such, I particularly appreciate Kumaravadivelu's (1994) view of teaching TL culture, according to which "raising cultural consciousness minimally requires that instead of privileging the teacher as the sole cultural informant, we treat the learner as a cultural informant as well" (p. 41). Departing from the students' own cultural identities is the first step towards developing their intercultural awareness. Learning activities that pose reflective and compare and contrast questions or contain creative tasks can be used for teaching TL culture and developing learners' critical thinking skills. Since the cultural component has become a salient part of FL education, I explore this issue in greater detail in the culture paper *Building Intercultural Competence in Russian Language Learners through Folktales*.

Macrostrategy III: Enhance Students' Motivation to Learn a Foreign Language

As a FL instructor, I want to know how to spark interest in my students to get them truly involved and ready to devote significant time and effort to the challenging task of learning a new language. This readiness "to engage in action, expand effort and to persist in action" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 3), otherwise defined as motivation, is what FL instructors are eager to see in their students. As Dörnyei (2005) mentions, "It is easy to see why motivation is of great importance in SLA: It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often

tedious learning process...” (p. 65). Paraphrasing Shakespeare’s most famous words, FL teachers should not be puzzled over the problem ‘to motivate or not to motivate’, but rather seek answers to the question “*How* can I motivate my students?” Of course, there are at least two parties in the teaching-learning process: the teacher and the students. Instructors cannot control all circumstances of their students’ learning experiences nor can they bend learners to their will. However, helping students figure out where they are on the L2 motivation scale and what can be done to raise the bar is a crucial task for a teacher as a guide.

Students’ motives to master a non-native language vary drastically in their origins and intensity. For that matter, a unique combination of factors affects a classroom dynamic and only those teachers who are flexible in applying various motivational tools required by a particular learning situation are most capable of providing effective instruction. Despite the fact that I do not believe in the possibility of discovering a universal recipe for accomplishing my ‘motivation mission’ in any FL class that I teach, I can draw the following conclusions from the two years of my teaching experience at USU.

One of the basic rules regarding L2 motivation that I follow in my teaching practice is that learning materials should reflect students’ interests. “If students find the course interesting and relevant to their needs and if they experience success and satisfaction in that success, they are motivated to participate and persist” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 15). To achieve this goal, at the beginning of every semester, I conduct a brief survey among my students to ask them about their TL learning experience, course expectations, and particular topics they would like to discuss in class.

This information helps me plan lessons that will be relevant to my students' preferences and life experiences. Among the topics my students frequently mention in such surveys, one can find the TL (i.e., Russian) culture. Learners' curiosity about life in Russia and its people refers to what L2 motivation researchers define as integrative motivation, or FL learners' desire to become part and share the experiences of a TL community (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). To enhance this type of motivation, I provide students with opportunities to attend to the authentic Russian materials discussed above.

Discussion of L2 motivation would be incomplete without considering the teacher next to the learners. I believe that teachers are essential members of their learners' motivational equation because the teaching-learning process is two-sided in itself. In other words, not only do the teachers have to strive to enhance their students' motivation, but under no circumstances should they neglect their own professional inspiration. As an architect and a stress manager, the teacher wields power to create and regulate the emotional climate in class.

Observing my MSLT colleagues teaching, I noticed in what high spirits some of them enter the classroom and how infectious their enthusiasm proves to be for the students. In psychology, this phenomenon is known as emotional contagion that leads to the "attentional, emotional, and behavioral synchrony" (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994, p. 5) both in individuals and groups. The name of the phenomenon speaks for itself: people, often unconsciously, translate their mood in the social realm where it is caught by the others. The power of emotional contagion is striking, for instance, in Barsade's (2014) study, where the groups infected with positive emotions demonstrated "more cooperation, less interpersonal conflict and felt they'd performed better on their

task than groups in which negative emotions were spread” (para. 5). This can be the direct implication for a FL classroom. Being aware of what emotions they bring to class, teachers can make emotional contagion work for the benefit of their students. A good saying I always keep in mind before teaching a lesson is ‘Smile and the world smiles with you’.

Yet, emotions are fleeting and reflexive of what happens in one’s inner world. I believe that to increase the chances of experiencing and translating positive emotions in class, FL teachers should pay closer attention to their intrinsic motivation to teach a language. Intrinsic motivation is generally defined as the motivation driven by one’s inner love and dedication towards an activity regardless of the benefits that this activity may or may not bring to an individual (Dörnyei, 2005). Analyzing my own intrinsic motivation to become a FL teacher, I realize that it is nourished by various sources such as my desire to share knowledge with people and through this sharing make a social contribution, my wish to become a good communicator, and my exposure to the inspirational FL teaching provided by other FL instructors. I discuss further the role of motivation in SLA and the tools available for teachers to support it in their students in the annotated bibliography on L2 motivation included in this Teaching Portfolio.

Conclusion

Working with people is always unpredictable, a fact that makes teaching both intriguing and risky. “The master has failed more times than the beginner has even tried” (McCranie, n.d.). This is what I need to brace myself for in the field of teaching. Sometimes, when I come to class with new learning activities and am fully confident that my students will enjoy them, they do not willingly accept my ideas. Other times, when I

have doubts that some tasks will be successful but still introduce them to the class, students surprise me with their enthusiasm and active participation. Such situations make me realize that taking on the role of a guide requires great power of observation combined with creativity and patience. These are the qualities that I am cultivating as part of my evolving teacher identity. Becoming a teacher has affected other sides of my personality as well. Most importantly, I am learning to take on other people's perspective and stay open to the ideas, views, and interpretations that differ from my own. For instance, when students consider a particular learning material difficult, even though as a teacher, I think that it is rather easy, this is a sign for me to change the perspective and adjust my teaching.

As a guide, a teacher plans FL instruction to maximize students' contributions to achieving the shared goal of learning a language. Sensitivity towards learners' interests and needs is reflected in each manifestation of a teacher in the guiding role; in other words, in being a resource person, a stress manager, and an architect in the FL classroom. Performing these roles helps create a learner-centered environment in which students share the power of decision making with the teacher, learn to accept responsibility for their TL performance, and prepare themselves for the continuing learning process outside the classroom.

Focusing on communication, the TL culture, and learner motivation helps FL instructors teach engagingly, passionately, and strategically. I believe that these basic macrostrategies that I have stated in this Teaching Philosophy and have embraced in my teaching practice will help me develop into a professional instructor with whom students are destined to experience more ups than downs in their FL learning journey.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

During my time in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program, I took advantage of a wonderful opportunity to observe teaching provided by my MSLT colleagues and other foreign language (FL) instructors working at Utah State University (USU). I observed Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish classes that were taught to students of varying levels of language proficiency. Observing those lessons, I attempted to catch every detail in the instructors' teaching approaches, students' behaviors, and general atmosphere in the classroom. As part of the MSLT training, I also took an introductory course in Spanish, the language that I had never learned before. That experience allowed me to combine the roles of a novice learner and a teacher's observer who was given an exciting opportunity to learn from her colleague. Overall, teaching observations were crucial for my development as a FL instructor who, acting as a guide in students' FL learning experience, strived to be open to new pedagogical ideas and improve her own teaching. Below, I present my reflection on the practices of other FL instructors in light of my personal Teaching Philosophy.

One of my teaching macrostrategies is to teach communicatively. During teaching observations, I was pleased to notice that almost all of the lessons that I attended were planned around communicative goals. For instance, in the Chinese class, students learned how to ask each other out for a date. In the Russian class, students engaged in a role play to buy souvenirs, while in the Spanish class, students practiced interviews to participate in a study abroad program. Those activities reflected real-life situations that students might encounter when engaging in authentic communication in the TL.

A strong focus on communication in a FL classroom implies ample pair and group work. In the observed classes, students learned to collaborate and act as a team or a community of learners who help each other complete a task. In this sense, I particularly enjoyed a ‘*signe-ici*’ (Eng. *sign here*) type of activity that I learned from my MSLT colleague who taught French. Doing this activity, students moved around the classroom and interviewed as many of their classmates as they could. That activity was a graphic example of a learner-centered environment with abundant practice to help students develop their TL speaking skills.

Observing other instructors in action, I witnessed excellent teaching of TL culture that is another cornerstone of my Teaching Philosophy. In the novice and intermediate-level classes, cultural elements were skillfully woven throughout the communicative activities. For example, the Chinese instructor started the class with a warm-up activity in which students exchanged Chinese lanterns when interviewing each other about the qualities of an ideal life partner. That seemingly tiny detail immediately created a cultural atmosphere that motivated students to speak in the TL.

In the intermediate-level Russian class, the instructor brought souvenirs from Russia and the Ukraine and used them in a role play activity, which provoked genuine curiosity on the part of the students. In the Russian class for advanced learners, an authentic video became central for leading a discussion on retail trade in Russia. Students watched the documentary about one of the famous grocery markets in Moscow and then engaged in a whole-class discussion around that topic. In that class, the majority of the students were returned missionaries who served their religious mission in Russia. As a result, students possessed a first-hand experience of living within the TL community that

allowed them to relate to the documentary and share their own practices of buying food in Russia.

Importantly, in all classes that I observed, students were highly responsive to class formats and participated actively in the activities that were offered by the instructors. In this regard, I particularly enjoyed observing a Spanish lesson taught by one of my MSLT colleagues.

For that class, devoted to learners' preparation for a study abroad program, the instructor translated a common USU study abroad form into Spanish, invited another professor to make a brief presentation about Spanish study abroad programs available at USU, and organized committees of other Spanish instructors to talk to his students. I was deeply impressed by my colleague's pedagogical creativity, collaboration with other instructors, and overall dedication to the teaching profession. In this sense, Freire's (2005) words about teachers' tasks to develop "a certain love not only of others but also of the very process implied in teaching" (p. 5) could be fully addressed to my colleague. His exemplar teaching made me think of the connection between teacher and learner motivation that I later reflected in my Teaching Philosophy. Instructors' own intention to excel in their profession is able to produce a synergy effect on students' motivation to learn a FL. When in evaluations of my teaching, students mention that I teach passionately, I take it as a compliment. Such words mean that as an instructor, I manage to show my keen interest in working with students and teaching them the language that they want to know.

Last but not least, the Spanish course that I attended as part of my MSLT journey taught me a great lesson. In my own teaching practice, I used to start classes with

providing TL input to my students. That input normally contained vocabulary items or grammar structures completely unfamiliar to the students. In other words, those were the very first times when students attended to that language. In the Spanish course, learning new material was organized in a different way. Particularly, it was part of the homework that students had to do before coming to class. At first, I met such a reversed order with resentment since it was against my expectation to be taught by the teacher. However, I gradually realized the benefits of such practice and changed my attitude for a more positive one. Studying material on their own, students exercised greater independence from the teacher and learned to accept responsibility for their own learning. The teacher, in her turn, performed the role as a coach rather than an ultimate authority figure in the classroom who had to control the entire process of language teaching and learning.

Interestingly, I later learned about the theoretical framework for the teaching approach that I observed in my Spanish class. Participating in one of the workshops on empowering teaching excellence at USU, I became familiar with flipped classroom approaches that “rely on ‘flipping’ or ‘inverting’ what is done inside the classroom and what is done outside the classroom” (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015, p. 2). Moving content presentation (e.g., that of a new TL vocabulary) outside the classroom, teachers reserve in-class time for the learning activities that allow students apply this knowledge in practice. From the perspective of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives, in a flipped classroom, lower-level learning such as remembering and reproducing factual information should be done outside the classroom, while application, analysis, evaluation, and using the acquired knowledge in new and creative ways should be promoted during in-class sessions (Honeycutt, 2017). The flipped approach to teaching and learning

corresponds to my experience in the Spanish course where students were responsible for pre-class preparation, while class time was allocated for abundant TL practice. Overall, a flipped classroom is what I as a FL teacher may want to experiment with to develop students' higher-order thinking skills and promote the idea of autonomous learning.

In summary, the aforementioned classroom observations helped me greatly in developing my own vision of effective FL instruction. They provided me with the examples of excellent teaching that brought to life the key concepts, theories, and approaches in the field of FL pedagogy. Teaching observations have also become a source of professional inspiration for me from which I can learn about new pedagogical ideas and implement them in my own teaching practice.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STATEMENT

In this section, I evaluate my teaching of two Russian classes that took place during my time in the Master of Second Language Teaching program. These evaluations were informed by my own critical reflection on the video-recorded lessons, as well as by the comments and suggestions that were kindly shared with me by Dr. deJonge-Kannan who came to observe my classes. As a result of my teaching evaluations, I prepared two Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement (SATS) reports following the model offered by Spicer-Escalante (2015). In the SATS reports, I analyzed strong sides of my teaching, as well as the areas where I had room for improvement.

First Observation

The first observation took place on February 16, 2016. I taught a lesson to eleven students enrolled in a second-semester course of the first-year Russian program at Utah State University. All students in that class completed the first-semester elementary-level Russian course, except for one student who gained basic knowledge of Russian during her religious mission in the Baltic countries.

Following one of the major principles of my teaching philosophy, I planned the lesson to achieve a particular communicative goal. Namely, students were to learn how to ask each other out to spend some free time together. To attain that goal, I designed the following lesson plan. At the beginning of the class, students in pairs shared what they did during the past weekend. My pedagogical goal was to briefly review vocabulary on hobbies and everyday routine that was needed for the subsequent activities. In the second task, students watched a silent cartoon about a young man who had troubles waking up in the morning and then answered questions about his morning routine. Thus, students got

more practice on the topic-specific vocabulary. The third activity was a role play introduced by a reading task. First, students read a textbook dialogue that pictured a situation of asking a friend to go out, then they modeled this situation in pairs. The subsequent activity was planned to reinforce students' ability to talk about their leisure preferences. Students conducted a whole-class survey asking each other the question 'What do you usually do when you have free time?' The final activity was a board-racing game: divided into two teams, students conjugated the verbs denoting every day actions.

After watching that class's video-recording and reading Dr. deJonge-Kannan's observation notes, I reflected on both strong and somewhat weak aspects of my teaching. On the positive side, I was patient and confident when teaching that class. My good teaching demeanor was also mentioned by the observer among my strengths as a teacher. Students, in their turn, were both relaxed and focused, which made working with them easy and enjoyable. I was particularly pleased with the variety of answers that students provided during the warm-up activity demonstrating their progress in learning Russian. I also enjoyed the way students worked together in the board-racing activity being competitive and at the same time supportive of the members of their teams. Dr. deJonge-Kannan mentioned such positive sides as a thoroughly prepared lesson plan, teaching a real-life communicative goal, and abundant TL practice during the survey activity.

Along with aforementioned positive sides, my lesson was not deprived of the moments that could have come smoother. Following my own self-evaluation and Dr. deJonge-Kannan's suggestions, I summarized the areas for potential improvement of my teaching in table 1 below.

Table 1. Suggestions on improving my teaching following the first observation.

Observer's suggestions	My suggestions
Before class starts, make small talk with students in the TL.	Finalize speaking activities such as surveys by making students share results with the rest of the class.
When showing a somewhat long (i.e., up to 10 minutes) video, stop it at equal intervals and ask students comprehension questions.	When possible, group students for pair work following the scaffolding principle.

As mentioned in table 1, my observer expressed concern about the silence that enveloped the classroom before the lesson started. In Western culture, silence is usually perceived as a sign of disapproval, boredom, or threat (Jandt, 2013). Yet, even without such cultural explorations, any teacher would probably agree that a friendly and communicative classroom atmosphere that promotes comfortable learning can hardly be associated with a silent class. Being aware of the power of emotional contagion, I now try my best to be always positive, cheerful, and talkative with my students.

Another area of potential improvement of my teaching was related to the second activity in which students watched a cartoon and then had to describe what they had seen on the screen. It was a nine-minute cartoon that I showed without breaks. Dr. deJonge-Kannan suggested pausing such relatively long videos at least twice to help the novice learners bind visual images with the TL vocabulary. That was an important recommendation for me as a teacher since, at times, I need to remind myself of the difficulties that learners may experience in a FL classroom. Things that may seem easy

and obvious for me as a native speaker of Russian can present a challenge for those who learn Russian as a FL.

Watching the video recording of that lesson, I also noticed that wrapping-up the survey activity could have been done differently. Instead of ‘jumping’ to the next activity, I could have asked students to share the results of the survey in class. Such a closure would have allowed students to stay focused until the end of the activity, produce more TL, and experience a sense of fulfillment. In my current teaching practice, provided there is enough time, I ask students to share their findings with the rest of the class.

Finally, teaching that lesson and later reflecting on the video, I became aware of the importance of scaffolding in FL learning defined as “the interaction between the expert and novice in a problem-solving task” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 26). During the observed class, one of the advanced students worked with a less resourceful student during a paired work activity. The more advanced student patiently explained to her classmate the meaning of the unfamiliar words, gave her classmate time to process new information and respond, and overall helped her classmate complete the task or, in other words, provided scaffolding. Despite the fact that scaffolding has been proven to be effective in developing one’s TL system (Shrum & Glisan, 2010), I also realize that pairing advanced learners with struggling ones on a regular basis might be a misleading strategy. Advanced students might experience boredom and be deterred from participating in class at their full capacity and, thus, might not achieve their best results in learning. In this way, I implement this type of scaffolding in my classes carefully.

Second Observation

The second observation of my teaching took place on October 5, 2016. I taught a Russian language class for nineteen novice learners who had already completed five weeks of instruction. By the time of the observation, students learned the Cyrillic alphabet and numbers from 0 to 10, could participate in a basic conversation when meeting new people, and moved on to the topic of student life. In particular, students could talk about their activities using the verbs ‘учиться’ (Eng. *to study*) and ‘работать’ (Eng. *to work*) and could give their opinion about the subjects they studied saying whether or not particular subjects were easy, difficult, interesting, or their favorite. Grammar instruction was provided to support these topics and included grammatical genders, verb conjugation, noun and adjective agreement, and other features. In this way, by the time of this observation, students acquired the TL knowledge sufficient to succeed in tasks that I planned for the observed lesson.

The communicative goal of the class was to teach students how to arrange a meeting using such expressions as ‘I am busy’ and ‘I am free’ and days of the week in Russian. The lesson consisted of a warming up phase along with three major learning activities. In the warm-up activity, students practiced a tongue twister to work on pronunciation of the soft consonants, a common problematic area for Russian language learners who speak English as their mother tongue. The next part of the lesson was allocated for TL input. Students watched a PowerPoint presentation and a video tutorial and learned to answer the question ‘When?’ using days of the week in Russian. They then conducted a whole-class survey telling each other on what days of the week they were busy (e.g., worked or studied) and free. After that, students engaged in a role play ‘Let’s

go to the cinema!’ As a setting-up task, students read the dialogue that modeled the communicative situation of inviting a friend to go to the cinema. I modeled the respective conversation with one of the students and then the rest of the class practiced the conversation with their personal information. As homework, students had to write down their class schedules.

The fall semester of 2016 was my third semester of teaching Russian at Utah State University. Although I was at the beginning of my professional journey as a teacher, I could already observe some improvement in the way I created an unthreatening learning environment in the classroom. As was noticed by Dr. deJonge-Kannan during her previous observation, I should have worked more on building rapport with my students so that they could learn in a low-anxiety atmosphere. In this regard, I made it a rule to make small talk with my students in the TL before the beginning of each class. For instance, before the observed class began, one of the students, talking to me in Russian, made a compliment regarding my choice of a scarf. Our conversation attracted attention of another student who did not know the word ‘scarf’ in Russian. In this way, small talk, while setting students’ minds into the TL, can also provide them with additional learning opportunities.

In general, I was happy with the way in which my students worked during the observed class. They were highly responsive to my teaching, expressed curiosity by asking me a lot of questions, and succeeded in achieving the communicative goal of the lesson. Among strong points of my teaching, the observer mentioned my ability to provide comprehensible input while staying in the TL and my resourcefulness when answering students’ questions. Yet, there were some areas in which I could improve as a

teacher. The results of my self-evaluation, as well as my observer's recommendations are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2. Suggestions on improving my teaching following the second observation.

Observer's suggestions	My suggestions
Add motion to the lesson with activities that would make students leave their seats.	During the lesson, call upon all students in class, not only upon the most active.
Do not forget about modeling when teaching novice language learners.	Provide students with multiple opportunities to attend to the key points of instruction.

My observer mentioned that in that class period, students stayed in their seats almost all the time. In addition, some of the students had a tendency to carry on private conversations in English. As a possible remedy, she offered the bicycle chain activity when students had to get into two lines and practice the targeted conversation several times each time with a new partner. Although I have not yet tried this activity in my classes, I now have it in my teacher toolbox.

Another area in which I could improve was modeling of the TL production that I strived to elicit from my students. At the end of the observed class, students were slightly confused about their homework. They received handouts with a weekly schedule to fill out. Yet, I did not project on the screen a partial example of what students were expected to write (i.e., the names of the university courses that they were taking that semester). As a result, some of the students switched into English to clarify the task. Modeling is an important part of a FL classroom that helps students stay on task. As a FL instructor, I should pay closer attention to modeling in my teaching of novice learners.

Teaching that class, I also noticed that some of the students did not feel comfortable when I called upon them during the lesson. In general, I call upon active and confident students rather than silent-type learners. I do this deliberately to keep affective filters of my 'quiet' students low (Krashen, 1985). However, as that lesson showed me, even active students may feel uncomfortable when asked by the teacher too often. Particularly, when I asked a pair of students to present their dialogue in the final role-play activity, one of the students overtly dropped my invitation. This incident made me reconsider my usual practice since my task as a teacher is to provide all students with equal opportunities to participate, even though the final decision whether to do that or not will always remain with the students.

Finally, looking back from the distance of several lessons that I taught under the topic of student life, I noticed that I could improve my lesson planning skills. In the observed class, I presented a new phrase 'Let us go to...' that was not given in the textbook. Reviewing the situation of asking a friend to go out before the test turned out to be insufficient for several students to grasp that important expression. In this way, I need to keep in mind the importance of revisiting the material multiple times so that students can better progress in their learning.

Final Thoughts and Future Actions

When I compare my teaching of the observed classes with the major principles of effective FL instruction that I outlined in my Teaching Philosophy, I realize that so far I have succeeded the most in the application of the first macrostrategy which is to teach communicatively. Indeed, I rely on this principle when planning both Russian course syllabi and lessons. Teaching communicatively allows me to switch the focus of attention

from me as a teacher to the students. In the observed classes, students did a lot of group and pair work collaborating with each other and acting as participants of a FL learning community. For those classes, I planned communicative goals relevant to real-life situations that supported my students' motivation to actively participate in suggested learning activities. I also paid a lot of attention to building rapport with my students and creating a low-anxiety environment favorable for language learning and practice. However, in the observed classes, I was less successful in teaching TL culture. Carefully selected authentic materials would have made lessons more appealing to the students and supported their genuine interest in the Russian language.

Preparing SATS reports was both a useful and challenging experience. As Freire (2005) mentions, "teaching requires constant preparation and development on the part of teachers, as is made clearer and clearer by their teaching experience, if well lived and apprehended. Such development is based on critical analysis of their practice" (p. 32). Refusing to play an authoritative role in the classroom, I accept my own vulnerability as a teacher who experiments and is not immune to errors. Out of that vulnerability arise the opportunities for professional growth, once I learn to evaluate my teaching critically and become a reflective professional.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

LANGUAGE PAPER

Learner Self-Assessment in Foreign Language Instruction

ORIENTATION & REFLECTION

I first got interested in learner self-assessment studying the ACTFL (2015) guide to using Can-Do Statements (CDSs) in foreign language (FL) learning. My interest in this topic deepened when I learned more about critical pedagogy, learner autonomy, and student-centered language teaching and learning. The very idea of learner self-assessment speaks to my soul as a FL instructor, for it encompasses the concepts of learner motivation, responsibility, and independency. As a result, I wrote this paper for the developing teaching portfolio course that I took with Dr. de Jonge-Kannan.

Originally, the paper included my exploration of the theoretical issues related to learner self-assessment and a practical part in which I shared my first steps in using this type of task in the form of CDSs in my teaching practice. The initial paper also formed the basis for the presentation “Learner Self-Assessment as Instructional Tool for Foreign-Language Teaching” which I delivered at the sixth annual Lackstrom Linguistics Symposium at Utah State University in October 2016. Yet, gaining more experience in teaching, I started offering the CDSs task to my students not sporadically, but on a consistent basis. I came to the conclusion that the original paper would benefit from an additional section devoted to my students’ feedback on using CDSs. Overall, I received very positive feedback accompanied by some valuable suggestions on further improvement of this task.

Though my teaching experience at the time of this writing involves implementation of only one type of learner self-assessment task (i.e., CDSs), I am eager to try out other activities in the future. My long-term professional goal is to create a set of carefully designed learner self-assessment tasks with clear goals and feedback

procedures. Coupled with engaging classroom activities, such a set would help maximize students' participation and involvement in learning a FL.

Abstract

This paper is devoted to learner self-assessment in FL instruction as a type of assessment complimentary to the traditional grading system used in academic training. Learner self-assessment is presented as a teacher tool that can be used to promote a learner-centered environment in a FL classroom, make teacher-learner feedback more effective, and transmit to students the idea of personal accountability when learning a new language. In this paper, the author explores advantages of using self-assessment tasks for learners' autonomy, motivation, and self-efficacy, presents a brief teacher guideline for implementation of such tasks in FL instruction, and concludes with a reflection on her own experience of using a learner self-assessment task presented by the Can-Do Statements as conceptualized in the ACTFL (2015) publication.

Key words: Can-Do Statements, formative assessment, learner self-assessment, summative assessment

Introduction

In foreign language instruction, two types of assessment are traditionally identified: summative and formative (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). While summative assessment is evaluative in nature and carried out to assign grades, formative assessment is implemented “for the purposes of repair and improvement” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 401) of the learners' performance before official grades are provided. The increased interest towards formative assessment in general and its use for teaching FLs in particular is due to the recent shift from teacher-centered to learner-oriented instruction accompanied by the expansion of instructional principles and ideas under communicative language teaching philosophy (Butler & Lee, 2010; Geeslin, 2003; Shrum & Glisan,

2010). This shift has provided teachers and students with new roles “dependent on classroom pedagogy that instills an increased sense of responsibility and ownership on the part of the student” (Geeslin, 2003, p. 858). At the same time, a teacher’s contribution to the L2 learning endeavor should be by no means underestimated for the teacher acts as “mentor and facilitator” (Geeslin, 2003, p. 858) who leads learners on their way to mastering a new language. That said, formative assessment provides both teachers and learners with benefits invaluable for entering into an educational dialogue in which contributions of all parties are recognized and appreciated.

Though formative assessment encompasses several types of activities, including a learner portfolio, peer feedback, teachers’ observations, among other components (Butler & Lee, 2010; Shrum & Glisan, 2010), in the present artifact I focus on learner self-assessment as an instructional tool that reflects my teaching philosophy principles to the fullest extent. I will highlight the benefits that self-assessment tasks bring to FL instruction, explore the major principles for their successful application, suggest a self-assessment task designed for the students in the second-semester Russian course I taught at Utah State University, and conclude with reporting results of a brief survey on self-assessment that I conducted with my students. For the purposes of the present paper, I follow the definition of learner self-assessment offered by Geeslin (2003) who considers it as an “assessment of learner performance in which an individual learner plays an active role in evaluating and monitoring his or her performance” (p. 858).

Benefits of Learner Self-Assessment

As found in the research literature, learner self-assessment tasks can serve both as instructional and measurement tools (Brown, Dewey, & Cox, 2014; Butler & Lee, 2010;

Geeslin 2003; Suzuki, 2015), which reflects the distinction between formative and summative types of assessment. The advantages of using learner self-assessment are usually reported when this type of assessment is implemented as an instructional tool to bring about positive changes in students' L2 learning experience. Particularly, positive correlations have been established between self-assessment and learner autonomy (Gholami, 2016), self-efficacy (Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2013), and motivation (Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, & Crowley, 2011). The concepts of autonomy, self-efficacy, and motivation are related in that they bring the learner to the center of attention and thus deserve closer consideration.

Autonomy is generally viewed as learners' ability to "take control and responsibility for their learning" (Nation, 2001, p. 394, as cited in Gholami, 2016, p. 47). Autonomous learners in this way cannot be satisfied with their roles as "receptive vessels" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 6) or "passive audience" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 6), rather they display clear intention and ability to make decisions regarding their learning. In my opinion, an important indicator of autonomous learning is students' readiness to expand their knowledge beyond the course syllabus and their actual efforts to learn outside of the formal classroom setting. As shown by Gholami (2016), self-assessment tasks aid in developing learner autonomy by increasing students' independence from the teacher and the classroom. This is achieved due to the "feedback immediately available [to the students] to determine language proficiency and to reflect on learning strategies" (p. 49). Self-assessment tools in this way help students "find out about how to learn a language more economically and productively" (p. 46).

Self-efficacy is another construct that reflects learners' confidence in their ability to master an FL. Outside of the second language acquisition (SLA) field, this idea was expressed with precision by Henry Ford who noticed "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right" (<https://www.goodreads.com>). From this perspective, a teacher's task as a stress-manager is to support and enhance learners' confidence, and introduction of self-assessment tasks may prove to be effective. As shown in the study by Baleghizadeh and Masoun (2013) conducted for Iranian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), "implementation of a self-assessment component on a formative and regular basis enhances EFL learners' self-efficacy" (p. 51).

Finally, there is some evidence regarding positive influence of learner self-assessment on L2 motivation based on the sense of control that performing such tasks evokes in FL learners (Butler & Lee, 2010). On the one hand, self-assessment tasks allow students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses as learners. On the other hand, evaluating their progress, students perform the function traditionally fulfilled by the teachers. Geeslin (2003) argues that "[s]tudent motivation is linked to several features of self-assessment" (p. 863). Like Baleghizadeh and Masoun (2013), she emphasizes the sense of ownership self-assessment gives students with respect to their learning process and advocates its use as a formative assessment tool when "students are given the time and opportunity to modify behavior ... to focus on specific aspects of their performance and monitor their improvement in those areas" (p. 863).

The use of self-assessment to measure learners' language proficiency usually brings mixed results (Butler & Lee, 2010; Lapin-Fortin & Rye, 2014; Suzuki, 2009; Suzuki, 2015). For instance, the study conducted by Suzuki (2015) showed that "less

experienced second language speakers appeared to overestimate their ability, whereas those with more experience underestimated their language skills” (p. 63). Lapin-Fortin and Rye (2014) reported on relatively accurate self-assessments made by the learners of French, however with the general tendency to give “more generous” (p. 315) evaluations.

Thus, researchers tend to question the validity of the learners’ judgements and having used self-assessment in my Russian 1010 and 1020 classes, I cannot but agree with a cautious attitude teachers are advised to develop in this case. For instance, in my Russian class, I have noticed that some of the students are unduly modest when evaluating their own performance, while others are overly optimistic. Though I am not inclined to use self-assessment as a tool to assign grades for the reasons mentioned above, I believe that potential discrepancy between learners’ and teachers’ evaluations should not be left unattended. If the gap is profound and the teacher relies on his own judgement of the students’ achievements (which he will certainly do) there is a risk to translate the idea that students’ opinions are of no value and thus to undermine the learner-centered atmosphere in the classroom. To avoid this and other possible pitfalls, it seems imperative to acquire deeper understanding of the principles which will allow FL instructors to implement self-assessment to the maximum benefit of their students.

Major Principles of Implementation

It is only reasonable to start any learning activity (and self-assessment, when used as a formative tool is, in essence, a learning activity) with what Butler and Lee (2010) call “initial guidance” (p. 23). Firstly, such an introduction should include an explanation of what students are expected to do. For instance, they can be asked to evaluate their class participation, respond to the Can-Do Statements, or do something else. Secondly, it is

essential to highlight the role of self-assessment in the learning process. As mentioned in Butler and Lee's (2010) study, it is "critical to consider how to make the students serious about performing the self-assessment" (p. 23). One of the possible ways is to let learners know that their responses have actual power to modify instruction.

Also, due attention should be devoted to the rubric design (Geeslin, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Rubrics can be viewed as road maps to successful language performance. They should contain a "clear articulation of what students are expected to achieve and how such achievement will be demonstrated" (Geeslin, 2003, p. 860). In this sense, rubrics are a goal-setting tool which can be used by the instructor for the lesson and course planning. Rubrics also facilitate the task of providing teacher feedback since they contain "rich descriptions of [learners'] performance" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 412). It is also important to stress that the items in rubrics should be those to which students attended multiple times during the classroom sessions, which are believed to increase the accuracy of learner self-assessment (Geeslin, 2003). In other words, the principle of 'test what you teach' is as imperative for self-assessment as for any other type of assessment. Additionally, a teacher may want to consider what language to use in learner self-assessment. As found by Oscarson (1997) (as cited in Butler & Lee, 2010), students tend to provide more realistic judgements of their performance when self-assessment questions are written in their L1 rather than in the TL.

Finally, another factor which deserves consideration is teacher feedback. Learner self-assessment can hardly be justified from a pedagogical standpoint unless teacher feedback is provided or unless such self-assessment is carried out by a highly conscientious student. Providing feedback, teachers perform the role as an architect to

shape their students' learning experience and, what is equally important, enter a student-teacher dialogue which "provides multiple opportunities to negotiate perspectives and to communicate to students the behavior necessary to improve performance" (Geeslin, 2003, p. 862). This dialogue, or the opportunity to "improve without penalty," (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 401) is what distinguishes formative types of assessment from summative ones. Teacher feedback normally takes the form of additional learning activities focused on the areas where students experience major problems (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Can-Do Statements as a Learner Self-Assessment Tool

In the practical part of the present artifact, I focus on Can-Do Statements (CDSs) as a graphical example of self-assessment for FL learners. CDSs are a popular self-assessment tool that are used both for summative (e.g., Brown, Dewey, & Cox, 2014; Lappin-Fortin & Rye, 2014; Suzuki, 2009; Suzuki, 2014; VanPatten & Hopkins, 2015) and formative (e.g., Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2013; Butler & Lee, 2010; Ghomali, 2016) assessment. As a FL instructor who takes on the role of an architect, I am interested in considering CDSs for the formative assessment purposes. Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, and Crowley (2011) mention L2 teachers' positive perceptions of CDSs:

... teachers reported an increase in student motivation and attributed this predominantly to the Can Do statements. Teachers indicated that the Can Do descriptors gave students a sense of accomplishment and eagerness to try using the language more than they would otherwise. (p. 14)

CDSs are "self-assessment checklists used by language learners to assess what they "can do" with language" (ACTFL, 2015, p. 1). In the USA, the CDSs were introduced by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSL) and the

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). In the European Union, CDSs are part of the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) for Languages. The focus of the CDSs are entirely practical – they represent the “specific language tasks that learners are likely to perform at various levels of proficiency” (ACTFL, 2015, p. 2). While the CEFR CDSs are developed for the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Council of Europe, 2001), the NCSSL-ACTFL CDSs cover aforementioned skills with an emphasis on various modes of communication: interpersonal speaking, presentational speaking, presentational writing, interpretive listening, and interpretive reading (ACTFL, 2015).

CDSs can be easily weaved into the fabric of FL instruction to achieve long-term (e.g., semester-long) and short-term (e.g., unit or lesson) goals. In this way, whether a CDS is highly specific (e.g., *I can congratulate a friend with a birthday*) or provides a general description of learner’s abilities (e.g., *“I can communicate on some very familiar topics using single words and phrases that I have practiced and memorized”*) (ACTFL, 2015, p. 6), will depend on the short- and long-term goals of instruction. The above-mentioned examples of CDSs for speaking demonstrate whether learners are able to attain the desired communicative goals or not. Moreover, they reflect what “learners ought to expect to encounter in authentic real-world situations” (Brown, Dewey, & Cox, 2014, p. 264). For me, the primary value of CDSs is their compatibility with communicative approaches to teaching languages.

Another important question for FL instructors is when to introduce CDSs in class. As suggested by Shrum and Glisan (2010), CDSs can be used as “part of a review for a test on a thematic unit” (p. 429), such as several times during the course. Students’ work

on CDSs can be followed by peer collaboration (Shrum & Glisan, 2010; VanPatten & Hopkins, 2015) in the tasks addressing those problematic aspects in TL use that were revealed in the replies of the individual students.

Table 3. Can-Do Statements for the thematic unit “How can I get there?”

<i>Can-Do Statements</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes, with help</i>	<i>Not yet</i>
Chapter 19. Как доехать? (How can I get there?)			
1. I can say what means of transport I usually use to get to the University or work.			
2. I can ask how to get to a particular place in the city.			
3. I can answer this question using basic vocabulary (e.g., You can get there by bus #12).			
4. I can ask for and give directions using such phrases as <i>go straight/turn right/turn left</i> .			
5. I can ask questions #2 and #4 in a polite manner as if I am addressing a stranger.			

In Table 3, I present the CDSs designed for second-semester learners of Russian as a FL. These CDSs are formulated to reflect the content of Chapter 19 “How can I get there?” in the textbook *Beginner’s Russian* by Kudyma, Miller, and Kagan (2010). The CDSs offered in Table 1 are a modified version of the statements that I offered to my USU students enrolled in the Russian 1020 course in the spring semester of 2016. The modification was mainly done to reinforce the focus on specific communicative goals rather than on separate vocabulary items and grammatical structures. My students’ replies to these CDSs were a formative assessment before writing a formal test.

As follows from Table 1, these CDSs were designed to reflect Russian language learners' ability to navigate in a city. Taking VanPatten and Hopkin's (2015) advice to "deconstruct the broader statement(s) into doable classroom assessment tasks" (p. 3), I came up with five statements that were tailored to the content of the textbook chapter and the learning activities my students did in class. According to the ACTFL (2015) framework, these statements reflect learners' interpersonal speaking skills that were the main focus of instruction for this topic. The statements are followed by the three options of response: yes; yes, with help; and not yet as suggested by Shrum and Glisan (2010).

Filling out the table, most of my students identified difficulties with respect to the fifth statement which included the pragmatic aspect of politeness. To help my students improve in this area of concern, I planned a specific task for the subsequent lesson. The next day I presented in class two dialogues in which the speakers engaged in brief conversations about how to get to: a) the public library, and b) the university. I then asked students to identify the signs of a polite conversation in both dialogues, which ranged from vocabulary items to verb forms to the Russian-language specific way of asking polite questions via negation. After such a revision was completed, my students modeled their own communicative situations in which they had to get to a particular place in the city but needed to ask for help from a passerby. This series of learning activities allowed my students to revise the material and get better prepared for the test.

Students' Feedback on Using Can-Do Statements

During my second year of teaching Russian at Utah State University, I started using CDSs more consistently. I introduced this learner self-assessment task as a review activity before every formal test. At the end of the fall 2016 semester, I asked my

students to share their thoughts and ideas about using CDSs throughout the course.

Overall, I received very positive feedback. The majority of students considered CDSs an effective study guide and expressed their desire to use this self-assessment task in the next language course. In my students' opinion, CDSs accurately reflected the content of the instruction and were helpful in preparation for the tests. Some of the students also believed that CDSs helped them become more confident language learners and users.

Listening to my students' feedback, I also noticed that there were several areas of potential improvement for designing this type of task. Firstly, as an instructor, I should tailor test materials to CDSs in a more consistent and direct manner. This is likely to enhance my students' confidence in practicing Russian and make their test-writing experience more positive. Secondly, I should prepare more specific CDSs with Russian words and expressions given as examples of what students are expected to know. Besides, CDSs can be given earlier than in a week before an upcoming test to provide learners with more time to study for the test. Finally, one of the suggestions that I really enjoyed was asking students to practice CDSs with a partner in class to minimize the gap (if any) between students' actual language performance and the way they assess it.

In my teaching, I position a CDSs task as the one that helps students better prepare for a summative assessment with a formal grade, such as a test. Probably, because of this, when sharing their feedback, students focused mainly on the benefits of CDSs as a review activity. Yet, I was happy to hear several comments that took a self-reflexive turn not focused on tests. Some students appreciated CDSs for providing benchmarks of learning a new language, as follows from the comment "Replying to Can-Do Statements helped me gauge where my language skills should be at that point in the

semester.” Another student shared: “CDSs helped to establish what I needed to practice more. It helped me to modify my study habits,” thus admitting the power of CDSs to modify learning strategies and make them more effective.

Conclusion

It must be stressed that in learner self-assessment, like in any activity, success depends on consistency and regularity of the efforts applied. A single self-assessment task is unlikely to bring noticeable improvements in either learners’ TL performance or a student-oriented climate a teacher may want to create in class. A wide variety of learner self-assessment tasks allows FL instructors to be creative and effective in their teaching practice. As a FL instructor, I am interested in adding other CDSs tasks to my learner self-assessment toolbox to achieve best results in educating responsible, motivated, and independent language learners.

LITERACY PAPER

Exploring Effectiveness of Processing Instruction for

Teaching Past Tense Verbs in Russian

ORIENTATION & REFLECTION

This paper is devoted to the ways in which processing instruction, as coined and methodologically developed by VanPatten (2002, 2004, 2015), can be used to teaching Russian grammar; in particular, past tense verbs with masculine and feminine inflections. I wrote this paper for the SLA theory and practice course that I took with Dr. Thoms during my MSLT training. I decided to present this paper as a literacy artifact in my Teaching Portfolio because of the strong influence that grammatical knowledge has on learners' ability to comprehend oral and written messages in Russian, and, as a consequence, on their ability to become fluent speakers, readers, and writers. Russian is a highly inflected language with inflectional morphemes typical of all content words except adverbs. While teaching Russian for beginners at Utah State University, I noticed that once a word is modified by an inflectional morpheme, students tend to have difficulties in recognizing this word, with things becoming even worse when such a modification is done to a relatively short, two to three syllable word and accompanied by changes in spelling. Of course, language learners rely on lexical cues for comprehension, and Russian is not an exception. Yet, this can be problematic for novice learners with moderate exposure to the language.

Following this observation, I realized how important it is for my students to 'tame' Russian grammar once their goal is to become literate users of the language. While enrolled in the SLA theory and practice course, I got tremendously interested in processing instruction as a grammar teaching technique alternative to a common practice of grammar explanations followed by the exercises to practice targeted grammatical structures. The major characteristic of processing instruction, connecting grammatical

form with its meaning, is in concert with meaning-oriented L2 teaching as opposed to the aforementioned instruction that is primarily based on mechanical drills. Structured input activities, an integral part of processing instruction, are tasks of interpretation that relieve learners from the stress of immediate production of a target grammatical structure and can become a pleasant deviation from a traditional grammar teaching approach.

Within the topic of processing instruction, I also seek to understand whether explicit grammatical explanations actually help learners acquire L2 grammar. Though the experimental studies do not answer this question directly, I came to the conclusion that explicit information on a grammar topic can be helpful provided it does not overload learners' working memory. In other words, this can be the case when less is more. Besides, such an approach is likely to be appreciated by the adult L2 learners who expect grammar explanations and feel frustrated and lost if they do not receive them.

As a FL teacher and learner, I have never encountered instances of processing instruction in a real classroom. That is why I am curious to introduce this technique to my Russian class. I believe that it can become an effective grammar intervention for teaching morphologically complex languages such as Russian, once it is tailored to the carefully selected grammatical forms. Past tense verbs with masculine and feminine inflections are examples of such forms, however, writing this paper, I learned about other grammatical structures that can be used within the framework of processing instruction. Interested in learning more, I continue my exploration of applicability of this technique to teaching Russian grammar in the annotated bibliography on teaching Russian as a FL.

Abstract

This paper is a research proposal seeking to explore two questions in relation to processing instruction and teaching Russian grammar. The first question is whether this grammar intervention can be effective for teaching past tense verbs in Russian. The second research question is focused on the role of explicit information in processing instruction. The targeted grammatical structure was chosen by the author due to the lack of experimental studies investigating applicability of processing instruction to teaching verbal morphology in Russian. The literature review is focused on the tenets of processing instruction, its applicability to teaching Russian grammar, and the debate about the role of explicit information in learners' acquisition of FL grammars. The paper proceeds with a methodological section, in which the target grammatical structure and a possible research design are presented. Treatment materials offered in the paper can be used as instructional materials for teaching past tense verbs in Russian provided they are further elaborated. The paper ends with discussion of the limitations identified by the author for processing instruction and grammatical structure in question.

Key words: explicit and implicit language learning, input, processing instruction, Russian as a foreign language, teaching grammar

Introduction

Teaching entry-level Russian courses at Utah State University, I noticed that Russian as a synthetic and highly inflected language presents a challenge for learners who speak English as their mother tongue. This challenge originates in the syntactic structure of the Russian language, in which grammatical meanings are expressed by the inflectional morphemes within the word, for example, by prefixes, suffixes, or endings,

rather than by the unbound words such as auxiliary verbs or prepositions in the English language. Besides, the major characteristic of Russian inflectional morphology is that a particular inflectional morpheme simultaneously expresses several grammatical meanings. For instance, the verbal suffix -л as in the verb 'делал' (Eng. *did*) indicates the past grammar tense, masculine gender of the agent of the action, and the singular number; the adjective ending -ой as in 'красивой' (Eng. *beautiful*) indicates singular feminine adjective either in the Genitive or the Dative case to be defined by the noun in the respective form. Rich inflectional morphology of the Russian language causes a lot of confusion among learners and inevitably impedes grammatical accuracy of their target language (TL) production.

In this way, focus-on-form types of instruction have always been among my professional interests. Processing Instruction (PI) suggested by VanPatten (2002, 2004, 2015) attracted me as a grammar teaching technique which is feasible to carry out in second language (L2) classroom settings. The focal point of PI, linking meaning and form, is promising in view of common Russian language learners' 'immunity' towards inflectional morphology. In addition, the discussion of any L2 grammar teaching technique is commonly followed by the animated debate on the necessity of explicit grammar explanation, with PI not being an exception. Initially presented by its main proponent as a technique that involves explicit information (EI) on the targeted structures, PI now may or may not include such an explanation (deKeyser & Botana, 2014; Lee, 2015; VanPatten, Collopy, & Qualin, 2012). Intrigued by this dilemma, I decided to explore the effectiveness of PI for teaching past tense verbs in Russian combined with the issue of EI as a causative variable affecting learners' performance.

Literature Review

Input Processing and Processing Instruction

In many SLA theories, it is now acknowledged that “input is fundamental for acquisition and is needed for the creation of an underlying mental representation of the linguistic system” (VanPatten, 2002, p. 763). L2 input, commonly defined as any target language which learners attend to, is considered an initial step in the process of SLA. Yet, input is not what gets into learners’ minds. It is intake, or the language, which learners derive from input and hold in working memory for subsequent processing (VanPatten, 2002), that comes into play. Exploring the ways in which L2 learners turn input into intake, VanPatten (2015) coined the concept of input processing (IP) to refer to the “moment-by-moment connection of surface formal features/formatives with meaning” (p. 92). The principles, or default strategies, that guide L2 learners in establishing connections between form and meaning are presented in VanPatten’s model of IP.

It is possible to encounter two to four processing strategies in various publications on IP as, for instance, in Lee and VanPatten (2003), VanPatten (2002), and VanPatten (2004). In the recent article published in 2015, the researcher identifies three IP Principles: the Lexical Preference Principle, the First-Noun Principle, and the Sentence Location Principle. Below, I comment on the Lexical Preference Principle since it directly relates to the grammatical structure targeted in the proposed study.

According to the Lexical Preference Principle, “if grammatical forms express a meaning that can also be encoded lexically (i.e., that grammatical marker is redundant), then learners will not initially process those grammatical forms until they have lexical forms to which they can match them” (VanPatten, 2015, p. 95). In other words, L2

learners first process input for meaning and then for form. Significant for this processing strategy is the concept of communicative value of grammatical forms defined by VanPatten (2002) as “the meaning that a form contributes to overall sentence meaning” (p. 759). Communicative value of a particular grammatical form involves its inherent semantic value and redundancy revealed in a given utterance (VanPatten, 2002). As a result of desemantization and high redundancy, inflectional morphology presents a particular challenge for processing on the part of L2 learners. The latter would rather rely on lexical items to retrieve semantic and grammatical meaning of the message, with inflectional morphemes often staying unattended and unprocessed.

In the SLA literature, ideas similar to VanPatten’s (2002) concept of communicative value of grammatical forms have been expressed. For instance, Ellis (2008) compares perceptual salience of lexical cues with that of grammatical morphemes. He argues that grammatical morphemes are often “overshadowed” (p. 236) by the lexical items that provide L2 learners with the same information regarding grammatical number and tense. On the word level, derivational morphology (i.e., morphemes that affect semantics of a word) is perceived as more salient than inflectional morphology (Larsen-Freeman, 2010).

The Lexical Preference Principle combined with the other two principles form the basis for Processing Instruction (PI) – a grammar teaching technique whose main goal is to aid L2 learners in making proper form-meaning connections by pushing them away from erroneous processing strategies (VanPatten, 2002). PI is characterized by the following key features: a) learners are provided with information about the target grammatical form, as well as about the default strategy that is likely to negatively affect

IP; b) learners never produce the target form during intervention; and c) learners engage in structured input activities presented by referential and affective tasks designed to connect meaning and form (VanPatten, 2002; VanPatten, 2015). These key features are reflected below in the design of the proposed study in the Methods section.

While VanPatten (2015) believes that “basic findings on its [PI] efficacy are “given” (p. 107), not all scholars share his opinion. Below I highlight the main points of the ongoing debate on applicability of PI to teaching Russian grammar. I finalize this section of the literature review with the first research question which I intend to explore in the proposed study.

Processing Instruction for Teaching Russian

The debate about applicability of PI to teaching Russian grammar started with the journal article *The Evidence is IN: Drills are OUT* written by Wong and VanPatten (2003). In this article, the authors provided arguments against using mechanical drills in foreign language instruction citing findings from communicative language teaching research and PI studies. Relying on a limited number of studies conducted mainly for the Romance languages, they concluded that positive evidence of PI effectiveness could be generalized to other grammatical structures in other languages, in fact, to any structure. Wong and VanPatten then argued that would-be difficulty of certain languages was not a valid reason to reconsider the role of mechanical drills in the acquisition of those languages, referring to Russian and Japanese as examples. With a few caveats, meaningful and communicative drills were not considered valuable for language acquisition either, with their role limited to production skill development.

Wong and VanPatten's (2003) optimism about universal applicability of PI across languages and grammars was not shared by Leaver, Rifkin, and Shekhtman (2004) who, in their critique article, focused on "setting the record straight about Russian" (p. 125). First, the authors clarified why Russian is considered a more challenging language to acquire for learners who speak English as their mother tongue. Points made by Leaver et al. (e.g., complex morphology, case markings, "aspectual/semantic nature of the verbal system" (p. 126), flexible word order, and others) are indeed valid and require development of totally new categories of linguistic knowledge from learners. Leaver et al. argued that such development cannot be achieved by means of comprehensible input only and is unlikely "without direct instruction, including explication and controlled practice" (p. 127). The authors favored traditional instruction (TI) for teaching Russian with "meaningful, communicatively-oriented, learner-centered drills" (p. 130), thus taking position opposite to that of Wong and VanPatten.

Interestingly, as an argument in support of traditional instruction, Leaver, Rifkin, and Shekhtman (2004) referred to the research of teacher and learner beliefs. For instance, "teachers of Russian ... believe very strongly in the role of direct instruction and the value of drills for creating automaticity" (p. 129). Likewise, students who reached advanced levels of proficiency in Russian were reported to associate their achievements with traditional instruction and learning grammar.

The fact that Wong and VanPatten (2003) called upon SLA principles that "cannot change because of language or context" (p. 416), while Leaver, Rifkin, and Shekhtman (2004), who possess extensive first-hand experience in teaching Slavic languages, addressed teacher and learner beliefs about grammar instruction underscores,

in a sense, the existing opposition between theory and practice. As a Russian language instructor, I can sympathize with Leaver et al. to a certain extent. I sometimes hear my students' concerns about insufficient overt grammar instruction in my lessons, which in their extreme manifestations take the form of "She doesn't teach us grammar", obviously indicating that learners neither *always* recognize grammar instruction devoid of drills as such, nor do they *always* benefit from it.

Wong and VanPatten's (2004) reaction to Leaver, Rifkin, and Shekhtman's (2004) critique was the call for experimental research on teaching Russian grammar that would prove or disprove whether drills associated with TI could be more effective than PI. To date, such research is scarce and seems to be limited by two studies both conducted by Comer and deBenedette (2010, 2011), with the third study by VanPatten, Collopy, and Qualin (2012) changing focus to causative variables within PI.

In their first experimental study, Comer and deBenedette (2010) explored whether PI could be an effective intervention for teaching locational (i.e., being at a place) and destinational (i.e., going to a place) expressions in Russian. The respective expressions require the use of a place noun in the prepositional and accusative cases respectively. For Russian language learners, the difficulty in distinguishing between these syntactic structures lies in the preposition *в/на* which is used with both of these grammatical cases. In locational expressions, *в/на* means "in/at", while in destinational expressions *в/на* means "to". Since the preposition *в/на* is not exclusive of either the prepositional or the accusative case, learners rely on the meaning of the main verb to distinguish between locational and destinational expressions. In this way, Comer and deBenedette's study targeted the Lexical Preference Principle as a default processing strategy of the learners.

The participants of the study were 30 university students enrolled in beginning-level Russian classes and divided into PI and TI groups. The study consisted of a pretest, a 35-minute treatment, and a posttest. The pretest included interpretation tasks only, while the posttest consisted of both interpretation and production tasks. PI treatment materials included grammar explanation and information on the appropriate processing strategy, as well as visual, aural, and written input presented in referential activities. TI treatment consisted of grammar explanation and mechanical drills only.

As a result of Comer and deBenedette's (2010) experiment, "neither instructional treatment was revealed as statistically superior" (p. 130). This finding was attributed to the drawbacks in the research design, such as absence of the control group, small sample (only 18 participants completed all tasks), short duration of PI and TI treatments, mistakes in the choice of Russian vocabulary, and others. The researchers expressed their intention to replicate the study "with a more robust implementation" (p. 134), which was accomplished in 2011.

In their second study, Comer and deBenedette (2011) focused on the same processing problem (i.e., distinction between locational and destinational expressions in Russian), yet introduced major changes in the research design to improve its reliability. The number of participants increased to 60 university students; a 75-minute treatment was provided during two class periods; both the pretest and posttest included tasks on interpretation and production of the target grammatical structures; and finally, PI treatment was expanded to include affective activities and a metalinguistic task in which in destinational expressions students sorted out nouns according to the respective endings in the accusative case. The study showed that "PI is more effective than TI ... because

the PI students improved more than the TI students on the interpretation task, and performed statistically as well as the TI group on the production task” (p. 658).

In this way, Comer and deBenedette (2011) gained evidence in support of applicability of PI to teaching Russian. Yet, their study was unique in its kind and tested PI for noun morphology only. Comer and deBenedette’s (2010) call for the research that would “target other aspects of Russian grammar” (p. 134) and clarify issues in relation to PI and this more morphologically complex language remains relevant to this day. To respond to this call, the first research question in the proposed study is as follows: Is PI for interpreting and producing utterances containing verbs marked with past tense masculine and feminine inflections in Russian more effective than traditional, production-oriented, instruction?

While general applicability of PI to certain languages may still need supportive evidence, the PI research agenda has expanded to encompass other, more specific, questions. One of them is the necessity (or lack thereof) to provide learners with explicit explanation of the grammatical form in question. I consider this issue below referring to both proponents and opponents of providing explicit information (EI) during a PI intervention. I finalize this section of the literature review with the second research question addressing the impact of EI on learning past tense verbs in Russian.

Role of Explicit Information in Processing Instruction

Considering the role of EI in PI is undoubtedly part of a larger discussion in SLA and L2 pedagogy on how foreign grammars are acquired and should be taught. The latter question stems from the debate about explicit and implicit knowledge, which one acquires learning a foreign language, also known as the interface debate (Graus &

Coppen, 2016; Han & Finneran, 2014). The interface debate reveals the three major positions which scholars take up in the question whether explicit knowledge can be ultimately turned into implicit knowledge by L2 learners (Graus & Coppen, 2016). Those taking strong interface position, advocate the value of explicit learning whose result, the declarative knowledge, is the first and imperative step in SLA. Adherents of the middle ground position maintain that “explicit knowledge may help where implicit knowledge fails” (Han & Finneran, 2014, p. 373). For instance, Ellis (2014), while admitting the primary role of implicit knowledge in SLA, believes that explicit knowledge (e.g., that of grammatical rules) can be used “to monitor for accuracy” (p. 15) and in general “facilitates the long-term process involved in the acquisition of implicit knowledge” (p. 15). Finally, proponents of the non-interface position view explicit and implicit knowledge as “dissimilar, separate, and mutually irreplaceable” (Han & Finneran, 2014, p. 373).

In relation to this debate, VanPatten (2015), on the one hand, does not deny completely the role of explicit knowledge in L2 acquisition, stating that learners can rely on explicit processing when comprehending messages in a TL. On the other hand, drawing on the generative, emergentist, and neurolinguistic views of learning, he claims that “explicit learning plays little to no role in how adults’ internal systems develop” (p. 101). In this sense, PI is different from other grammar teaching techniques in that it does not strive to “induce rules in learners” (p. 97), but is focused on the “processing of morpho-phonological units” (p. 98). What gets processed and internalized from input are these morpho-phonological units (e.g., run, runs, or running) that contain a grammatical structure to be “uncovered by the internal processors” (p. 104). Although initially PI was

designed to include explanation of the target grammatical forms and, thus, the role of explicit learning was not questioned overtly, EI has been subsequently viewed as a causative variable that might or might not affect the results of PI intervention (Lee, 2015).

A number of PI studies conducted to explore the role of EI show conflicting results. One of such studies carried out by VanPatten and Borst (2012) focused on the nominative and accusative case markings in German. Addressing the First-Noun Principle, the researchers strove to aid learners in establishing correct connections between the accusative case markings of the masculine nouns and the meaning of the ‘who does what to whom’-type of utterances. The participants of the study were 46 third-semester, university-level learners of German divided into + EI and – EI groups. Using trials to criterion procedure, VanPatten and Borst found evidence in support of providing EI for teaching this grammatical structure, though no statistically significant difference in + EI and – EI groups’ performance on posttest was observed.

VanPatten and Borst (2012) compared the received results with the outcomes of a similar study conducted by Fernández (2008) who focused on Spanish. The study consisted of two experiments in which + EI and – EI groups were taught clitic object pronouns in the first experiment and subjunctive forms in the second. The study did not reveal positive impact of EI on processing of the first structure and did reveal such impact on processing of the second one. Fernández concluded that “the nature of the task and the processing problem” (p. 277) might have accounted for differing results.

Similarly, VanPatten and Borst (2012) explained inconsistent findings by different nature of the processing problems associated with accusative case markings in German

and clitic object pronouns in Spanish. Due to being homonymous to the definite articles, Spanish object pronouns were considered a more complicated structure to process than accusative case marking in German where processing comes down to distinguishing between only two forms – *der* and *den*.

The idea to relate potential benefits of EI to the complexity of a target grammatical form was further expressed in VanPatten, Collopy, and Qualin's (2012) study of teaching accusative case markings in Russian. This research was similar to VanPatten and Borst's (2012) study in that it targeted the First Noun Principle, noun inflectional morphology, inverted word order, and was conducted in a computer lab without face-to-face instruction. Forty-four third semester, university-level learners of Russian divided into + EI and – EI groups took part in the research. The findings showed that for the given grammatical structure in Russian and the First-Noun processing strategy, EI “does not play a significant role” (p. 266). Comparing the results of the study to the outcomes of VanPatten and Borst's (2012) and other PI studies focused on case markings, VanPatten et al. (2012) concluded that “the greater the amount of explicit information, the less likely it can be used during real-time processing” (p. 267). In this sense, processing Russian object-verb-subject (OVS) sentences containing accusative case markings was admitted more challenging for L2 learners than processing, for instance, German OVS sentences with accusative case markings. Indeed, this conclusion seems solid once one considers the actual number of endings which masculine, feminine, and neuter singular nouns can have in the accusative case in Russian (12, to be precise). Even despite the fact that out of this variety the structured input activities offered by VanPatten et al. (2012) contained *only two* accusative case inflections, *–a* (MASC-ACC)

and $-y$ (FEM-ACC), their processing was likely impeded by syncretism of $-a$ (MASC-ACC) and $-a$ (FEM-NOM) and by the necessity to process masculine zero endings (i.e., those not containing a vowel) in the nominative case.

In this way, VanPatten, Collopy, and Qualin (2012) questioned the necessity of EI, while Swan (2014) in his critique article questioned the validity of that very conclusion. Scrutinizing the research design presented in VanPatten et al., Swan commented on the numerous flaws, including those related to the EI. First, he mentioned different modes of presentation that were used to provide EI (written explanation) and structured input activities (audial input and pictorial images). Secondly, Swan disapproved of the unrealistic expectation for the participants to “grasp and hold in mind complex written explanation” (p. 314) while attending to it only once, since the participants were not allowed to go back to the previous computer screen while reading the explanation. Finally, Swan cast doubt on the pragmatic accuracy of the EI in question. Oversimplification of the inverted structures that were explained by mere word order flexibility in Russian and oblivion of their *discourse*-level nature to be explored only “within a connected narrative” (p. 318) made Swan refer to the EI in VanPatten et al.’s study as to a “white lie” (p. 316) that was told to the participants.

According to Swan (2014), the aforementioned imperfections did not allow learners to benefit from EI in VanPatten, Collopy, and Qualin’s (2012) study. Compatibility of EI and structured input activities, better affordability of EI to students, and correct explanation of the grammatical phenomenon can be considered salient points for a research design and, thus, will be addressed below in the research methodology section.

In this way, studies show conflicting findings on the impact of EI on correct processing of grammatical forms by L2 learners. The observations made by Fernández (2008), VanPatten and Borst (2012), and VanPatten, Collopy, and Qualin (2012) suggest that EI may facilitate processing once the target grammatical structure is not too complicated and does not involve an overwhelming explanation. In the proposed study, the focus is made on two grammatical forms indicating masculine and feminine past tense verb inflections in Russian. Since the amount of respective EI is considered limited, it can be included in the PI treatment on the premise it is a variable facilitative of correct processing. The second research question, thus, is the following: Does EI provided on the targeted structure make a difference in PI?

Methods

The suggested research design is informed by the experimental studies and the various response articles cited in the literature review section, particularly by Comer and deBenedette (2010, 2011), Fernández (2008), Swan (2014), VanPatten and Borst (2012), and VanPatten, Collopy, and Qualin (2012).

Participants

Participants of the proposed study are expected to be university students enrolled in a first-semester Russian language course. The target grammatical structure, past tense in Russian, can be considered relatively easy with only four inflections to be acquired by the learners; that is why it is often introduced in the first part of the textbooks for beginners (e.g., in Kudyma, Miller, & Kagan (2010) and traditionally taught during the first semester of instruction.

The participants are to be divided into +EI, -EI, and TI groups, with 20-25 students in each group. To provide a homogeneous sample and avoid positive transfer from other languages, it is also desirable to engage only those students, who have not previously had experience in learning Slavic or other languages with subject-verb agreement in the past tense.

Instruments and Procedures

The proposed study is to be based on the pretest-treatment-posttest design. In the pretest, participants will complete interpretation and production tasks containing sentences with past tense verbs used for masculine and feminine agents of the action. In case some of the learners demonstrate their knowledge of the target structure, they should be excluded from further participation in the experiment. In the posttest, participants are to complete interpretation and production tasks to demonstrate their gains after treatment has been provided. The experiment may take a regular class period of 50-60 minutes.

Since I am particularly interested in using PI intervention in classroom settings, treatments for the respective groups of participants should be provided in face-to-face type of instruction; in other words, by the teacher and not in a computer lab. This should also increase affordability of EI to the participants (a concern expressed by Swan (2014)), since they will get the opportunity to ask a teacher questions to clarify points they happen to not understand.

Treatment materials

Treatment materials for +EI group should include a) explicit grammar instruction and explanation of the Lexical Preference Principle, on which learners are likely to rely while processing past tense sentences in Russian, and b) structured input activities.

Since a focus on the Lexical Preference Principle implies elimination of any lexical clues that can make a target grammatical inflection redundant for Russian past-tense structures, this Principle determines the choice of a noun that will take the subject position in the sentence. In the Russian language, masculine nouns denoting professions or occupations can be often used to refer to either a man or a woman. For example, the masculine noun ‘врач’ (Eng. *doctor*) is used to mean a doctor who can be a man or a woman. A lot of masculine nouns have feminine equivalents of neutral or negative connotation, such as the pairs ‘врач – врачиха’ (Eng. *doctor* (m.) – *doctor* (f.)), ‘учитель – учительница’ (Eng. *teacher* (m.) – *teacher* (f.)), ‘студент – студентка’ (Eng. *student* (m.) – *student* (f.)), and others. Some of the nouns denoting professions do not have equivalents of the opposite gender, for instance there is no feminine equivalent for ‘инженер’ (Eng. *engineer*) or masculine equivalent for ‘модель’ (Eng. *model*), yet these nouns are used to refer to both a man or a woman in the profession.

The aforementioned specifics of the nouns denoting professions allows to tailor PI to teaching past tense masculine and feminine inflections in Russian. In the sentences ‘Врач читал книгу’ (Eng. *The doctor* (m.) *read a book*) and ‘Врач читала книгу’ (Eng. *The doctor* (f.) *read a book*), the only forms to transmit information about physical gender of the agents of the action are past tense masculine and feminine inflections –л and –ла. Mistakenly relying on the Lexical Preference Principle, learners may interpret the sentence ‘Врач читала книгу’ as telling them about a man because of the masculine noun ‘врач’. To interpret this sentence correctly, learners must process the verbal inflection –ла indicating that the doctor was a woman. In this way, the necessary connection between meaning and grammatical form can be established.

Structured input activities are to be presented by referential and affective activities, none of which involve production of the target forms. In the referential activities, participants can be asked to look at the pictures of men and women in various professions and choose between two sentences that best describe these pictures. The affective activities can mirror the referential ones. For instance, looking at a picture with a description, learners will have to answer whether, in their opinion, the description is correct or incorrect. To provide better compatibility of EI and structured input activities, pictorial images followed by textual information should be included in the grammar explanation.

The treatment package for –EI group is to be the same as for the +EI group with the exception of the information on the grammatical structure and learners' default processing strategy.

Finally, the TI group should receive explicit grammar explanation followed by the production-oriented activities that may include a combination of mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills.

Data Collection and Analysis

The answers to the research questions will be received from the pre- and posttests to be administered to all groups of participants. The results can be analyzed both from the process and product perspectives (Lee, 2015). From the product perspective, the number of correct answers (i.e., correctly interpreted and produced sentences) is to be counted and compared across groups, as well as before treatment and after treatment. From the process perspective, trials to criterion procedure can be used to find out which of the three groups will start processing the target structure correctly sooner. This procedure

was first implemented by Fernández (2008) who defined it as “the number of items that participants completed up to the point when they correctly answered three target items and one distractor item in a row” (p. 289). Trials to criterion are to be implemented to the interpretation tasks in the posttest only.

Limitations and Conclusions

In the proposed research, the focus is made on masculine and feminine past tense verb inflections in Russian, with two other inflections, -лю and -ли, used for neuter and plural subjects respectively staying beyond the scope of the study. This is likely to reflect the limitations of the PI technique with respect to the grammatical structure in question rather than the imperfections of the research design. The whole past tense paradigm in Russian cannot be used in PI because once past tense verbs with neuter and plural inflections are introduced, it is problematic to exclude lexical clues with the same gender/plurality information from the sentences and provide proper form-meaning connections. Yet, as VanPatten (2015) mentions, PI as an intervention “is designed to be used as needed” (p. 105). As long as PI helps learners effectively process certain grammatical forms via their meaning, it can be added as a valuable technique to the range of grammar teaching tools.

The proposed study is to add to the body of experimental research on applicability of PI to teaching Russian, as well as to contribute to a better understanding of the ‘explicit/implicit’ debate in relation to teaching complex grammars with a high number of surface inflections. With due elaboration, treatment packages offered for +EI and –EI groups can be used as a grammar intervention alternative to traditional, production-oriented, instruction targeting past tense verbs in Russian.

CULTURE PAPER

Building Intercultural Competence in
Russian Language Learners through Folktales

ORIENTATION & REFLECTION

I must admit that at the beginning of my career as a FL instructor, my attitude towards teaching culture in a FL course was somewhat superficial. I used to perceive this part of instruction as one of the teacher's tricks that would help entertain students and add life to the tedious lesson plans full of grammar and vocabulary exercises. Yet, while earning my master's degree in teaching second languages, I acquired better understanding of the role that TL culture plays in a FL curriculum. Learning about the ACTFL Standards (2006), observing classes taught by my MSLT colleagues, and attending professional conferences, I came to understand that teaching culture is part of a bigger pedagogical task of educating an open-minded, respectful, and self-aware generation of global citizens who embrace diversity and enjoy communicating across cultures. In this sense, the present paper devoted to FL learners' intercultural competence adds immensely to my expertise as an instructor.

Originally, I wrote this paper for the research in second language learning course that I took with Dr. Albirini. This is a research proposal in which I explore the effects of using folktales to facilitate development of Russian language learners' intercultural competence. I chose folktales as a literary genre because it is one that is familiar to most students. Yet, I was surprised to find out to what extent folktales are the cornucopia of culturally rich material to be presented to and explored with students. Not only do they contain cultural elements such as products, practices, and perspectives, as suggested by the ACTFL Standards (2006), but include other manifestations of culture, such as communities and persons, as presented in other models of culture.

Writing this paper, I realized that developing intercultural competence in FL learners goes far beyond teaching bare facts about customs and traditions, historical events, or national cuisines. Such instruction will inevitably affect students' attitudes towards a TL country, its peoples, and their values. It will also make them think critically about their own cultural background and help develop sense of selves in our modern culturally diverse society.

I presented this paper at the Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies Student Research Symposium in Utah State University in April 2016. I received positive responses from the audience who seemed to instantly become interested in Russian culture and its reflection in the national folklore. During the question-and-answer session, I was asked about the level of language proficiency that students are to achieve in order to participate successfully in the activities I offered. I replied that reading a folktale would most benefit learners who are at least in their second year of learning Russian. This question made me think of the ways how to make authentic materials more approachable to the novice language learners. Using online resources designed for group discussions of textual materials is one of the options I am interested in.

At the time of this writing, my experience in working with folktales involved watching with students animated movies whose plots are based on folklore stories. As this practice shows, students truly enjoy such movies and consider them important sources of culturally rich information. I am confident in that reading and discussing a folktale can become an even more exciting learning activity that will inspire language learners to make discoveries about TL culture and better understand themselves.

Abstract

Teaching and learning culture can no longer be ignored in a foreign language (FL) classroom if the goal of instruction is to provide learners with knowledge applicable in the modern multicultural society. With easy online access to an abundance of culturally rich material, teachers can use fairy tales and folktales as one of the “most common cultural icons” (Davidheiser, 2007, p. 224) to incorporate culture in the foreign language curriculum. The existing body of research on using this literary genre in FL instruction focuses on various aspects ranging from enhancing intercultural awareness in teacher trainees (Elia, 2007; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2012) to implementing critical literacy pedagogy (Hayik, 2016) to storytelling as an effective FL teaching approach (Davidheiser, 2007). However, the effects of reading fairy tales and folktales on developing intercultural competence in FL learners seem to be underexplored. To examine this question, the present research proposal addresses “The Magic Swan Geese” – a Russian folktale which is offered as part of the second-year Russian language university-level course curriculum at Utah State University. As a result of the suggested instruction, the study aims to identify changes in students’ attitudes towards the target language culture, their gains in deep cultural knowledge, and the influence which studying a folktale may produce on the development of the learners’ critical-thinking skills.

Key words: culture, folktales, intercultural competence, Russian language learning

Introduction

Building communicative competence is necessary as soon as communication is attempted. Culture has found its place in various models of communicative competence

as part of sociocultural competence which “involves knowledge of how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context” (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 555). Culture has also been acknowledged as one of the target areas for FL instruction in the ACTFL Standards (2006) that advocate “knowledge and understanding of other cultures” (p. 4). Last but not the least, learners’ motivation to master a new language often originates in their fascination with that language culture. Motivation described as integrative implies learners’ desire to “develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group” (MacIntyre, 2007, as cited in Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 32). In this way, teaching and learning culture deserves a rightful place in an FL classroom.

Culturally rich materials are abundant and accessible through online mediums. Instructors can choose different means to incorporate culture in the FL curriculum ranging from YouTube videos to news broadcasts to Skype sessions with native speakers. The corpora of national literatures are another source that helps familiarize learners with the target language (TL) culture. Reading is a natural way to explore the world in which one uses either a native or second language. The focus of the present study is on the use of folktales to the benefit of FL learners’ intercultural competence.

Literature Review

Culture and Intercultural Competence

The concept of culture may seem overwhelming, especially to be handled in a FL classroom where learners do not necessarily have a background knowledge on which the instructor can readily rely. To understand different manifestations of culture as well as what cultural content to teach, the ACTFL Standards (2006) can be used.

The ACTFL Standards (2006) consider the three components of culture – *products, practices, and perspectives* that act as an integral whole: “Whatever the form of the product, its presence within the culture is required or justified by the underlying beliefs and values (perspectives) of that culture, and the cultural practices involve the use of that product” (p. 6). This framework can be further expanded to include *communities* and *persons* as in the five dimensions of culture suggested by Moran (2001).

Interestingly, such an extension of the model of culture can also be found outside of applied linguistics, for example, in the “Onion Diagram” of culture created by the prominent social psychologist Hofstede (2001). Hofstede emphasizes the importance of anchoring culture in the social context:

The word *culture* is usually reserved for societies... Basically, the word can be applied to any human collectivity or category: an organization, a profession, an age group, an entire gender, or a family. Societies merit special consideration in the study of cultures because they are the most “complete” human groups that exist. (p. 10)

Thus, for the purpose of the present study and instructional materials design, the following five components of culture are considered: *products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons*.

The ACTFL Standards (2006) state that students should “demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives” (p. 4), as well as “between the products and perspectives” (p. 4). For FL instructors, there arises a question *How to ensure that students actually developed the understanding of the TL culture?* In the research literature, learners’ ability to use a new language is now conceptualized in terms of competences (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Intercultural competence is a multifaceted term which has not received a universal definition (Deardorff, 2011; Liu, 2012; Moeller & Nugent, 2014). According to Moeller and Nugent (2014), “an interculturally competent speaker of a FL possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as particular skills, attitudes, values and knowledge about a culture” (p. 2). While the first part of this definition refers to the learner’s language skills, the second half represents the elements often found in various models of intercultural competence. Such models abound (Liu, 2012), however, the most commonly encountered ones (e.g., Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Nugent & Catalano, 2015; Uribe, LeLoup, & Haverluk, 2014) belong to Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006).

Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence consists of “five *savoirs* or dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Porto, 2013, p. 146). The novelty of the model is in skills and attitudes which are viewed as indispensable parts of one’s intercultural competence along with knowledge per se: “Note the inclusion of skills and attitudes, not only knowledge (be it knowledge of the system of language, factual knowledge about a culture), which was something totally innovative at the time” (Porto, 2013, p. 146). Deardorff’s Process Intercultural Competence Model is in concert with Byram’s Model in that the “degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of attitudes, knowledge/competence, and skills” (Deardorff, 2011, p. 67). However, in Deardorff’s model, emphasis is placed on the evolving nature of intercultural competence: “the journey is never ending as the learner continues to learn, change, evolve, and become transformed with time” (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 6).

The departure from cultural knowledge standing alone to intercultural competence implies the inclusion of skills and attitudes. Both researchers agree to a greater extent on

what constitutes attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Attitudes of openness and curiosity in Byram's Model (Porto, 2013), and those of openness, curiosity, and respect in Deardorff's Model (Deardorff, 2011) are considered a starting point in one's understanding and appreciation of other cultures. As Deardorff concludes, "attitudes ... have an impact on all other aspects of intercultural competence. Addressing attitudinal assessment, then, becomes an important consideration" (p. 68). The knowledge component is viewed as cultural knowledge by both Byram (Porto, 2013) and Deardorff (2011) and can be operationalized in terms suggested in the ACTFL Standards (2006) and in the models of culture offered by Hofstede (2001) and Moran (2001). However, Deardorff (2011) also stresses the importance of context, speaking of the deep cultural knowledge which "entails a more holistic, contextual understanding of a culture, including the historical, political, and social contexts" (p. 68). Finally, the skills component addresses critical-thinking skills, such as the skills of relating and interpreting (Deardorff, 2011; Porto, 2013), observing and evaluating (Deardorff, 2011). Critical thinking skills are considered vital for one's intercultural competence since they define "an individual's ability to acquire and evaluate knowledge" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 68).

In this way, the design of the present research is informed by the triad of attitudes, knowledge, and skills as constituencies of intercultural competence, as well as by the five components of culture as suggested in the ACTFL Standards (2006) and Moran's (2001) frameworks.

Fairy Tales & Folktales in Foreign Language Instruction

Before addressing the existing research on using fairy tales and folktales in FL instruction, it is important to make the observation that fairy tales and folktales, though

often used as interchangeable concepts, do have differences. According to the definitions given in the *Cassell Dictionary of Literary and Language Terms* (Ruse & Hopton, 1992), a folktale is a “story that originated in oral tradition among ordinary people and that has been handed down from one generation to the next” (p. 122), while a fairy tale is a “story about the adventures of fairies and similar supernatural beings” (p. 116). That said, it is dangerous to believe that folktales are enriched with culture more than fairy tales. While the former are narratives of the “past native world” (Fabusuyi, 2014, p. 247), the latter are cultural products of their own time, hence, can be as informative for studying culture as the folktales are. Besides, a lot of fairy tales originate in folktales (Ruse & Hopton, 1992), with one of the most vivid examples being the collection of German folk tales gathered and written down by the Brothers Grimm. For the purpose of the present research, a brief literature review is provided for both fairy tales and folktales which are traditionally considered together when it comes to their implementation in the FL curriculum as well as to the benefits they bring to the learners.

The existing body of literature on using fairy tales and folktales in FL instruction focuses on various aspects. One of them is vocabulary acquisition and grammar instruction (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2010; Davidheiser, 2007; Fabusuyi, 2014). The “element of repetition” (Davidheiser, 2007, p. 223) so typical of fairy tales provides L2 learners with enhanced input that facilitates retention of vocabulary items and grammar forms. Some researchers focus on the use of fairy tales and other forms of short discourse which contain a story (e.g., myth, fable, or legend) solely in relation to L2 grammar instruction as found, for example, in the PACE (Presentation, Attention, Co-construction, Extension) model offered by Adair-Hauck and Donato (2010). The PACE model

embraces a dialogic, story-based approach that “invites the learner to comprehend and experience the meaning and function of grammar through integrated discourse in the form of a story” (p. 221). Implementation of this model allows the learner to attend to the target grammar forms in a meaningful and connected discourse and avoid the drawbacks of decontextualized grammar instruction.

Another aspect which is often in the focus of L2 teachers’ attention is the development of learners’ critical thinking skills and literary works are widely believed to aid in achieving this goal (Hall, 2005; Hayik, 2016; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). In the study conducted by Hayik (2016) in an Israeli middle school, a story based on the Cinderella fairy tale, *A Dream for a Princess*, was introduced to the EFL learners following the critical literacy pedagogy approach. The instructor’s agenda in this research was to teach students to read between the lines and particularly to spot the “gender-biased messages” (p. 413) hidden in the text. While the study contained an explicit feminist analysis of the classical fairy story and might have led to some bias in the results due to the facts that a) the researcher was a woman and b) the researcher and the instructor were the same person, it serves as a good example of how FL learners explore their native culture via a TL fairy. In the context of a particular society (Arabic in the present case) the fairy tale may acquire a new meaning.

Fairy tales and folktales’ potential to establish links between cultures is traditionally mentioned as their distinctive feature (Davidheiser, 2007; Elia, 2007; Fabusuyi, 2014; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2012). Davidheiser, sharing her experience as a German instructor, states that fairy tales provide students with possibilities to “see the links between different cultures and times” (p. 224) and gives the example of the Brothers

Grimm's fairy tales that have "French, Italian, and Asian variants of the same plot lines" (p. 220). "Although there are different cultural representations, the collective imagery always includes essential themes of human nature: life, death, friendship, love, fear, and desire" (Elia, 2007). These common themes serve as a source of shared humanity whose importance is rediscovered in the present-day multicultural society.

Interestingly, in FL education, fairy tales and folktales are used to teach cultures not only for language students per se, but for teacher-trainees and already experienced instructors. The studies conducted by Elia (2007) and Ruiz-Cecilia (2012) were specifically focused on enhancing intercultural awareness in those two groups of participants. Elia (2007) describes an experimental workshop held for school teachers of Italian as a second language. Folktales of different nations were chosen to develop teachers' intercultural awareness so that they could teach their multicultural classes based on the principles of cultural diversity and socio-cultural integration. Though no formal analysis of the workshop results was conducted, the participants were reported to give positive feedback on reading fables from an intercultural standpoint. Ruiz-Cecilia (2012), in her pilot study, engaged would-be-EFL teachers in reading and discussing Indian folktales. As a result of the experiment, participants "opened their minds to other cultural interpretations" (p. 238), felt "more able to work in multicultural contexts where cultural diversity is the predominant feature" (p. 237) and estimated their experience of working with folktales genre as highly rewarding.

Despite addressing various issues in FL education, none of the articles mentioned above is a formal study of the effects the use of fairy tales and folktales may produce on FL learners' intercultural competence. This is as if to confirm Hall's observation (2005):

“literature is said to promote intercultural understanding and mutual respect, though how exactly it might do this is left implicit” (p. 73). To bridge the existing gap between FL teaching practice and empirical research in relation to folktales and fairy tales, the present research proposal addresses *The Magic Swan Geese* – a Russian folktale which is suggested as part of the second-year Russian language university-level course curriculum.

Methods

Research Objectives and Research Questions

The proposed study explores the effects that reading a folktale produces on the development of the Russian language learners’ intercultural competence. For this purpose, the author formulated the following research questions:

1. What are the changes (if any) in the learners’ attitudes towards the target language culture as a result of reading, discussing, and reflecting on a Russian folktale?
2. What are the learners’ gains in cultural knowledge after reading a Russian folktale?
3. Are folktales effective in developing L2 learners’ critical-thinking skills?

Participants

The target participants of the research are the second-year university-level learners of Russian. The second year of instruction was chosen following the lexical and grammatical complexity of the authentic text of the fairy tale.

Instruments and Procedures

For the purpose of the research, students will read the folktale *The Magic Swan Geese* which was randomly selected from a variety of the Russian folktales adapted for children and available on the Internet. This folktale tells the story of a girl who rescues her younger brother from the old witch Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga, a female manifestation of evil in Russian folklore, lives in the woods, eats children, and in this particular folktale has the magic swan geese in her service.

All five components of culture were identified in *The Magic Swan Geese*. The first component, products, is presented by both tangible and intangible culture elements. The former refer to such Russian culture realias as ‘баня’ (Eng. *bath house* or *Russian sauna*) and ‘печка’ (Eng. *stove*) and to the Russian folktales realia ‘избушка на курьих ножках’ (Eng. *hut on the chicken legs*); both the stove and the hut on the chicken legs are animated and take part in the events of many folktales. Intangible culture elements can be found in the language per se, for example, in the abundance of the diminutive forms of nouns (in fact, 63% of all nouns used in the text contain the diminutive-hypocoristic suffixes), idiomatic expressions, or polite ways to address seniors. The second component, practices, is reflected in the characters’ actions, such as to rescue a family member or express gratitude for help. The major *perspectives* in *The Magic Swan Geese* refer to such values as family, responsibility for one’s own deeds, hospitality, and respect towards others. *Communities* can be presented as a family and the world outside of the family – hostile when the character is disrespectful and friendly when she follows the rules. Finally, persons in the given folktale are presented by the villains – Baba Yaga and the magic swan geese who help her kidnap children.

To find the answer to the first research question, students will be asked to complete two surveys – one before and one after engaging in a set of learning activities prepared for the chosen folktale. The questions for the first survey may be designed as statements with a five-level Likert scale offering to choose a response to the statement ranging from a strongly disagree to a strongly agree options. Examples of such statements are *I want to learn more about Russian culture; I think that Russian culture is interesting; I want to read Russian literature to understand better Russian people and culture*, and so forth. The statements of the second survey will mirror those of the first one, but with the emphasis on reading the folktale in the students' learning experience, for example, *As a result of reading The Magic Swan Geese, I want to learn more about Russian culture or As a result of reading The Magic Swan Geese, I found Russian culture more interesting than I thought of it before.*

To answer the second research question, pre- and posttests of students' cultural knowledge can be used. A pre-test is essential for informing the researcher about the initial level of the participants' cultural knowledge and for drawing conclusions about the effects of the instruction on learners' intercultural competence since learners may be familiar with some elements of Russian culture from sources other than the formal FL instruction. The pre-test questions can be formulated as following: *What Russian folklore characters do you know? Are you familiar with such Russian expression as 'избушка на курьих ножках'? If yes, explain its meaning. Are you familiar with the concept of diminutive forms in the Russian language? If yes, give an example and explain the shade of meaning of the word in your example.*

To be in concert with the five components of culture identified above, the posttest questions should reflect each of the components. Examples of these questions (allowing students to answer in their L1 to fully express their knowledge and also being open-ended to avoid the possibility of guessing) can be the following:

- For products: *What realias of the Russian culture have you learned about from the folktale? or If someone called your countryside cottage an ‘избушка на курьих ножках’ (Eng. hut on the chicken legs), how would you feel and why?*
- For practices: *Is hospitality important for the Russian people? If a guest rejects a treat, what is a possible reaction on the part of the host? (Refer your answer to what you have learned while reading *The Magic Swan Geese*)*
- For perspectives: *Appreciation of what values are highlighted in *The Magic Swan Geese*? Which of these values is important in your own culture? Which are less important?*
- For communities: *What are the two worlds depicted in *The Magic Swan Geese*? How do they treat the main female character and why?*
- For persons: *What characters from *The Magic Swan Geese* often appear in other Russian folktales? What qualities do they embody?*

To answer the third question, a creative writing task can be carried out by the students. For instance, students can be asked to rewrite the folktale as if it happens in the modern settings of their L1 culture or rewrite the ending of the given folktale.

Tasks

The instruction will include such activities as a) reading the folktale in class, which can be accompanied by visual storytelling; in other words, by the use of pictures to facilitate comprehension; b) restoring the order of events to check students' comprehension of the plot; c) engaging students in a critical discussion about the folktale to address the five components of culture, formulate the moral of the folktale, and consider other stories with a similar plot (e.g., Brothers' Grimm *Hansel and Gretel*) to further establish parallels between the target and L1 cultures; and d) carrying out a creative writing task.

Data collection

In addition to the surveys, pre- and posttests, and creative writing papers, the data should also include the recordings of the classroom sessions to provide observers with in-depth information about the learning that took place.

Limitations and Conclusions

The study is expected to add to the empirical research on using folktales as an instructional material to enhance L2 learners' intercultural competence. It is also expected to contribute to the development of instructional materials for teaching Russian as a strategic yet less commonly taught language in the USA.

The major limitations of the study are considered to be the use of only one folktale and, as a consequence, rather short period of time within which students will receive instruction with a sharp focus on the target language culture. Provided instructional materials include 3-4 folktales to be studied during the semester, the influence of folktales on learners' intercultural competence can be anticipated to be more

profound. This is in concert with the “focus on process in the realm of intercultural competence” (Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 6) where noticeable growth takes time on the part of the learner.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

INTRODUCTION

Below, I present three annotated bibliographies that I wrote as part of my studies in the MSLT program. In these annotated bibliographies, I further explore the issues that I raised in my Teaching Philosophy Statement. The first annotated bibliography is devoted to the communicative approach to teaching FLs. In the second annotated bibliography, I investigate techniques to enhance students' motivation in the FL classroom. Finally, in the third annotated bibliography, I address issues of teaching Russian as a FL.

COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Every time I plan a Russian language lesson for my USU students, I face a broad question: “What are we going to do within these 50 minutes?” The answer mainly depends on the communicative goal I plan for my students to attain, which reflects one of the topics on the syllabus. However, identifying the content of the upcoming class is not enough for teaching communicatively. Communicative language teaching (CLT) is based on a number of principles second language (L2) teachers should follow to provide the most effective instruction for their students. In this annotated bibliography, I will reflect on books and articles that helped me get a firm grasp of CLT principles and taught me to implement them in the classroom.

My exposure to the communicative approach in L2 teaching started with *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen* written by **Lee and VanPatten (2003)**. Thanks to this book, I realized that I had never questioned the authoritative role of the teacher in the classroom before, so deeply ingrained in my mind was this idea of a commonly accepted way of teaching. Reading about the differences between CLT and audiolingualism (ALM), an approach to teaching foreign languages (FL) that promotes the role of the instructor as “the authority, the expert, the central figure in the classroom” (p. 6), was a revelation I am grateful happened to me. I came to an understanding that for the instructor, effective L2 teaching is not about being a star in the classroom, but about helping learners to shine brightly with their own ideas, experience, and growing knowledge. In other words, a good teacher always knows when it is time for learners to have the floor, and this time should be maximized in a way to bring full benefit to the learners.

Communicative language teaching is based on the recognition of communication as a primary goal of using a language and consequently as a solid foundation for L2 instruction. As Lee and VanPatten (2003) point out referring to the ineffective ALM practice, “Communicative language ability – the ability to express one’s self and to understand others – develops as learners engage in communication and not as a result of habit formation with grammatical items” (p. 51). Thus, providing instruction which abounds with opportunities to communicate becomes the primary task of a good teacher: “Learners must be given opportunities to construct communicative interactions in the classroom as they would outside the classroom – to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning” (p. 23). In this way, CLT approaches the real world where people engage in communication to achieve numerous goals under various circumstances.

Lee and VanPatten (2003) consider CLT from the perspective of second language acquisition (SLA) gives, consistently proving effectiveness of the communicative approach in addressing these gives as opposed to the traditional instruction with abundant drills and parrot-like language practice standing far away from meaningful communication. One of the primary roles in the SLA process is allotted to “what gets the “engine” of acquisition going” (p. 26), or input. Lee and VanPatten contribute much to my understanding of how to provide comprehensible and meaning-bearing input, particularly when teaching novice learners. In my instruction, I follow their advice of making L2 input similar to the “speech directed to children” (p. 28). Such speech is different from the talk that normally occurs between adults in “breadth of vocabulary, length of utterance, repetition, and clarity” (p. 28). In other words, simplification is the major principle for providing L2 input for the beginning learners, yet not the only one.

Lee and VanPatten also suggest using non-linguistic means, referencing “drawings, photos, diagrams, objects, gestures, and other visual aids” (p. 33). In my teaching, I use extensively such means as PowerPoint presentations, objects found in the classroom, or my own mimics to “anchor the input in the “here and now” (p. 33). I find visuals irreplaceable when teaching Russian for English native speakers since this combination of languages has a limited number of cognates, especially in the everyday vocabulary as opposed to, for example, the fields of science or politics.

Lee and VanPatten’s (2003) line of argument does not stop at input and proceeds further to include learning activities carried out in the communicative classroom after input has been provided. The authors identify only two types of such activities: information gap activities and discussion activities, which left my curiosity somewhat unsatisfied. In pursuit of better understanding of what teachers can offer learners to do with the target language (TL), I read *The Communicative Classroom* by **Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001)**. I found the classification of learning activities offered by these authors rather detailed and of great value for my own teaching.

Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) suggest three types of learning activities, all of which “prompt meaning-focused language use in the classroom” (p. 71). These activities include interviews, information-gap activities, and task-based activities (TBAs). The way the authors describe the ever-increasing communicative value of these activities deserves closer attention: interviews “create a meaningful context for language use” (p. 71); information-gap activities as compared to interviews “provide opportunities not only for message transmission and reception but also for negotiation (i.e., message clarification, requests for repetition, comprehension checks)” (pp. 73-74); task-based

instruction includes “interaction between learners, goal-oriented pedagogy, and both a means and an end, all of which provide the classroom with a purpose for language use” (p. 91). Incorporating the aforementioned learning activities into L2 instruction, teachers both guarantee TL use in a meaningful context and provide novelty essential for the involved and successful learning.

The Communicative Classroom also helped me get a good grasp of the role of grammar instruction in CLT. Particularly, L2 teachers embracing the communicative approach take a “middle-ground” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 34) position, according to which “the question of what grammar to teach is predicated on communicative goals; in other words, on what we want students to be able to do” (p. 35). This is the “grammar in support of communication” (p. 34) approach that warns instructors against teaching grammar rules out of touch with communicative goals of the instruction and particular context in which they are set. However, not only should teachers pay attention to the content of grammar input, but to its amount as well. “Essential grammar explanation helps the student carry out the communicative function, and “too much information” only burdens the student by distracting him or her from the communicative goal” (p. 39). Reflecting on my teaching experience, I now realize that temptation to provide learners with exhaustive information on a certain grammar point (or even a vocabulary item) may be well intended yet detrimental. It is easy to overload learners with linguistic details to the extent that they feel lost and incapable of producing the TL at all. Teachers should remind themselves of the importance of teaching a language to the best of their learners’ abilities, always bearing their interests at heart.

Despite a rather thorough representation of their views on the fundamentals of CLT, with a thread of argument similar to that of Lee and VanPatten (2003), Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) leave almost unattended assessment of the learners' performance, considering this issue only in the part of oral communication. Since assessment is an indispensable part of any teaching-learning process, I read 'Assessing Standards-Based Language Performance in Context' in *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction* (chap.11) by **Shrum and Glisan (2010)** for a more detailed overview of this issue.

The global picture presented in *Teacher's Handbook* reveals the nature of the "paradigm shift" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 395) in assessment caused by the growing influence of CLT on FL instruction:

From the perspective of the learner and the teacher, the historical purpose of testing was to evaluate learner achievement and assign grades. In recent years, however, assessment has been given more prominence as a vehicle for providing feedback to learners, improving learner performance, and assessing and informing instruction. (p. 395)

In other words, Shrum and Glisan (2010) consider assessment one of the essential tools for learning, rather than a traditional procedure for evaluating students' performance. This tool facilitates learning and informs instruction once the principle of multiple and both formative and summative types of assessment is implemented by the instructor. While summative assessment is evaluative and usually carried out at the end of the unit or course, formative assessment implies not a mere grade, but rich feedback provided by the instructor throughout the course, and contributes to learners' improvement before summative assessment is done. Considering advantages of formative assessment, the authors point out that "The sufficient amount of formative testing must be

done in the classroom in order to enable learners to revisit and review the material in a variety of ways, and formative feedback must enable the learner to improve without penalty” (p. 401). Inspired by the potential benefits of combining formative and summative assessments, I implemented this principle in my teaching and noticed the increase of enthusiasm in my students who now became more relaxed and focused on learning instead of being merely obsessed with grades.

Providing meaningful and comprehensible input is not enough unless teachers know how to design activities to help learners process this input and make it part of their developing interlanguage system. At the same time, effective learning activities will leave both teachers and learners in the dark unless proper assessment strategies are used to define the extent of learners’ success and the subsequent focus of instruction. Equally, a thoroughly developed lesson plan is important for an optimal L2 learning experience.

I found my keys to successful lesson design in *Communicative Language Teaching in Action: Putting Principles to Work* (Brandl, 2008). A three-step model to structure a lesson is presented in this book. The first step refers to the input phase essential for the “introduction of new vocabulary and grammar structures” (p. 179). The second step is presented by the assimilation phase, the goal of which is “to provide students with a variety of learning tasks that allow students to incrementally build skills with the teacher’s help” (p. 179). Finally, the third step belongs to the application and extension phase, in which students are engaged in learner-centered tasks with more creative and spontaneous language use. At this stage, “the assessment of learning is demonstrated through students’ achievement of communicative goals” (p. 181).

The majority of SLA researchers (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010) now share the view on the importance of both TL input and output for successful SLA. As Lee and VanPatten (2003) point out, “learners need not only input to build a developing system but also opportunities to create output in order to work on fluency and accuracy” (p. 170). In this respect, Brandl’s model is not an exception, for it mirrors processes involved in SLA presented by Lee and VanPatten (2003) as a threefold sequence of (a) input, (b) intake and developing system, and (c) output. Moreover, Brandl (2008) introduces practical tools to be used at every stage. He advocates the incremental approach to lesson, and globally, instruction sequencing, offering strategies that “aid in reducing a learner’s processing demands” (p. 199). For instance, instructors are recommended to “introduce one thing at a time” (p. 199) and “break down an activity into manageable subtasks” (p. 200). It is also desirable to organize instruction so that students can progress “from nonlinguistic to linguistic output” (p. 199) and “from words to sentences to connected discourse” (p. 200). The piece of advice which I, as a novice instructor, found particularly helpful for teaching Russian 1010 class was the following:

To keep meaning in focus, students’ comprehension should be consistently monitored. At beginning levels, comprehension checks can be limited to strategies such as yes/no, true/false, either/or questions, or nonlinguistic responses . . . With students’ increase in language proficiency, such instructional strategies involve complex language tasks such as open-ended comprehension questions or summaries. (p. 179)

Having learned about Brandl’s (2008) suggestions on lesson planning, I put them into practice and became better equipped for teaching my Russian class. Yet, I could not help but notice that the idea behind the three-phase lesson model commonly used in

communicative classrooms is not that original. Another example that crossed my mind was the PPP (presentation-practice-production) model often found among the tools of traditional instruction. My confusion was settled once I read the article “Task-based Language Teaching: Sorting out the Misunderstandings” written by **Ellis (2009)**.

Task-based activities have already been mentioned in this annotated bibliography in relation to *The Communicative Classroom* by Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001). Ellis (2009) addresses misinterpretations that frequently occur with respect to TBAs and task-based language teaching (TBLT), the latter being the approach to L2 instruction based on TBAs as the exclusive building blocks of the syllabus (Ellis, 2009).

Drawing a distinction between task and any other learning activity that might appear to be a task, Ellis (2009) mentions a situational grammar exercise, which is a final part of the PPP model. Providing criteria for a precise definition of task, the author claims that a situational grammar exercise fails to meet two requirements. The first unsatisfied requirement is the focus on meaning since doing a situational grammar exercise, “the learners know that the main purpose of the activity is to practice correct language rather than to process messages for meaning” (p. 223). The second violated criterion is creating an outcome as opposed to a mere TL production. In a situational grammar exercise, “the outcome is simply the use of correct language” (p. 223).

Following Ellis’s argument, I arrived at the conclusion that the PPP model, though formally resembling Brandl’s (2008) approach to lesson design, starts out from grammar instruction rather than meaningful communication, and thereby is not applicable in the communicative classroom.

Being a passionate advocate of TBLT, Ellis (2009) at the same time admits that “there is no single way of doing TBLT” (p. 224) and that it is worth viewing it as “variable” (p. 225) rather than “monolithic” (p. 225). Ellis’s flexible position regarding TBLT helped me understand better my own view of the place of TBAs in the communicative approach to teaching languages. As a FL instructor, I am inclined to take the position of Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) and include other communicative activities, such as interviews and information-gap activities, in my instruction. Also, some language games (e.g., Scrabble or board racing), which are built around using a language for its own sake rather than for the sake of communication, can be used as entertaining activities that bring joy and excitement to class.

The world of L2 pedagogy is not black and white, where one can easily find a flawless approach to teach a language. From this perspective, TBAs have not made a lucky exception being severely criticized for various drawbacks. These drawbacks prompted Ellis (2009) to write his article, as well as TBAs’ opponents to scrutinize all aspects involved in learners’ L2 production and the way TBAs affect it. One of such aspects is the accuracy of learners’ TL speech, with TBLT often accused of insufficient focus on grammar. Ellis addresses this claim offering teachers to use focused tasks, which Ellis defines as “tasks designed to provide opportunities for communicating using some specific linguistic feature (typically a grammatical structure)” (p. 223). The next article “Accuracy and Fluency Revisited” by **Richards (2002)** answers the question of how to work with focused tasks effectively to develop learners’ linguistic accuracy.

Richards (2002) claims that focus on form does not contradict with task-based instruction, provided it is made in three steps: “prior to the task, during the task, and after

the task” (p. 45). The author suggests ideas on how to create favorable conditions, under which students are more likely to pay attention to grammatical forms. For instance, after a task is completed, it may be beneficial for students to engage in public performance. “Aspects of their [students’] performance that were not initially in focus during in-group performance can become conscious, as there is an increased capacity for self-monitoring during a public performance of a task” (p. 48). In my opinion, such a strategy helps keep learners accountable for the ultimate result of the task and, in case of the successful performance, can also boost their confidence. At the same time, some learners’ stage fright is likely to produce the opposite effect on their linguistic accuracy. Regardless of the final outcome, public performance is likely to be worth the effort since it makes learners practice the presentational mode of communication which is as important in real-life situations as the interpretive and interpersonal modes are.

Richards (2002) also offers other valuable ways of incorporating grammar instruction in TBAs, such as providing ample input rich in target structures or modeling target utterances. However, I wondered what teachers can do with the content of the tasks, not conditions under which tasks are performed, to better focus learners’ attention on the form. The matter is that all of the measures mentioned above presume reliance on the probability that learners will actually pay attention to the desired forms, and teachers always want to increase this chance. I found the answer on how to do this in “Structure-Based Interactive Tasks for the EFL Grammar Learner” (**Fotos, 2002**).

Fotos (2002) gives insight into communicative tasks with both implicit and explicit focus on grammar. This distinction is drawn from the learners’ view point, for whom a particular TL (in Fotos’ research, it is English) can be either second or foreign.

Implicit grammar instruction is admitted as a possible instructor's choice for teaching ESL (English as a Second Language), while explicit grammar instruction is suggested for the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. One of the main reasons for this differentiation is that for the EFL learners, "access to communicative TL, both inside and outside the classroom, is extremely limited. Therefore, EFL learners cannot receive enough communicative input to allow them to acquire uninstructed target language forms" (p. 139). I find this observation particularly helpful for teaching Russian language classes at USU since for the majority of my students, exposure to the TL is limited by the fifty-minute class meetings, three or four times a week.

The solution Fotos (2002) offers for FL teachers is explicit grammar instruction combined with a communicative task in such a way that "task content involves developing rules for use of a grammar form" (p. 145). In other words, students discover and explore the target grammatical structures through discussion of their role in meaning making for the presented TL messages, and then articulate grammatical rules in question. Such an activity should be followed by the formal grammar instruction and teacher's feedback, as well as by the abundant opportunities for learners to attend to and produce these grammar forms in upcoming learning activities.

The necessity of grammar instruction is not questioned in CLT nowadays (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001), but teachers, especially those who instruct novice learners, face another question, which is in what language – target or native – should they provide grammar instruction? In fact, whether a teacher can use a students' native language (L1) in the communicative classroom remains a controversial issue, and opinions on what particular amount of L1, if any, would be the best for SLA differ

drastically. For instance, Ballman et al. (2001) advocate the exclusive use of the TL, arguing that otherwise teachers decrease the TL input vital for SLA and unintentionally communicate the idea of the importance of L1 over L2. For me, the first argument is convincing, while the second one seems rather far-fetched. The article “The Amount, Purpose, and Reasons for Using L1 in L2 Classrooms” written by **Campa and Nassaji (2009)** provided me with a better understanding of this matter.

Campa and Nassaji (2009) claim that using L1 vs. L2 in a language classroom is not a univocal issue, supporting their position with the results of the research conducted in two university level German-as-a-Foreign-Language classes. The study revealed 14 functional categories of using L1 by the instructors, with the most frequent categories being translation, activity instruction, and personal comment. It is important to stress that two instructors, an experienced one and a novice one, taught the German classes in question and the distribution of their use of L1 according to the functional categories was different:

...the novice instructor used L1 most often for translating words from L2 to L1 because she felt that this was an effective strategy. However, the experienced instructor used L1 more often for creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere by making personal comments and jokes in L1 because he believed that this method encouraged the students to participate more effectively in the learning process. (p. 755)

As was found out in the subsequent recall sessions, the noticeable difference in using L1 for translation purposes by the novice and experienced instructors was caused by their manner of delivering L2 messages, in that “The novice instructor often spoke rapidly and used complicated L2 sentences ... The experienced instructor, on the other hand, spoke more slowly, used shorter sentences, and also paraphrased sentences more

frequently than the novice teacher” (Campa & Nassaji, 2009, p. 756). In other words, this explanation emphasizes the importance of comprehensible TL input that helps reduce L1 use for translation purposes.

I particularly enjoy the way Campa and Nassaji (2009) attribute the identified functional categories of using L1 to either social or pedagogical tools. Such distinction helps me understand deeper the motives of my own L1 utterances I make during the classroom time and, consequently, control them better. For instance, using L1 to break the ice and build rapport with students falls in the group of social tools, and I use this tool occasionally to find common ground with my students. Using L1 for giving directions regarding learning activities refers to the pedagogical tools. In Campa and Nassaji’s study, “Both instructors believed that providing activity instructions in L1 allows students to quickly engage with and practice using L2, and that giving activity instructions in L1 is also an important time saver” (p. 756). In my view, this reason for using L1 can be justified in the beginners’ classroom, where provided misunderstanding of the task occurs, students feel lost and tend to instantly switch to their native language attempting to clarify the task. Yet, it is probably better for teachers to use this strategy when explaining complex activities and try to incorporate TL in teacher talk when giving easier ones.

Although the research findings indicate advantages of CLT over traditional instruction (Lee & VanPatten, 2003), this approach to language teaching has not yet received a unanimous approval. Resentment, which I observed both as a FL student and instructor, stems from the particular expectations the parties involved have regarding L2 teaching and learning. From the global perspective, these expectations are due to the

long-established culture of teaching and learning in academia that does not change rapidly. Thus, the instructors should be ready to work in both favorable and less welcoming towards CLT settings. Partly, I have learned how to brace myself for the adverse scenario from the article “Cultural Mismatch in Pedagogy Workshops: Training Non-native Teachers in Communicative Language Teaching” by **Spicer-Escalante and deJonge-Kannan (2014)**.

In their article, Spicer-Escalante and deJonge-Kannan (2014) describe the “challenges that emerge when trying to export CLT to non-Western contexts” (p. 2437). Despite the fact, that the authors studied Chinese and Iraqi EFL instructors’ attitudes towards CLT, the results, in my opinion, with some caveats can be applicable to teaching EFL in Russia, my native country, which along with China belongs to the Expanding-Circle countries, where “English is commonly studied and fulfills various and specific purposes” (p. 2439). Particularly, Spicer-Escalante and deJonge-Kannan found out that one of the frequent reasons for non-native teachers of English to avoid introducing communicative activities in their classrooms was the necessity to teach for the tests. Not long ago the same situation occurred in Russia, where teaching and learning English through the junior, middle, and high school years has become subject to the only goal of passing a unified state examination severely criticized for its inability to give an accurate picture of students’ knowledge.

Describing their workshop experience, Spicer-Escalante and deJonge-Kannan (2014) point out:

Rather than imposing a belief system, the trainers attempted to introduce the tenets of CLT and demonstrate its techniques. The emphasis of the workshops

was not on “this is how you should teach” but rather on “this is how EFL could be taught if the goal was English proficiency. (p. 2442)

This approach can be implemented when teaching EFL at a university level in Russia, where professors seem to possess more freedom and generally are not bound by the standardized test requirements in contrast to their less lucky colleagues at schools. In summary, these are the books and articles that influenced the most my understanding of CLT and the ways I can make it a foundation of my own teaching. Of course, the list presented in this annotated bibliography is not comprehensive and I expect to enjoy a lot of readings in the future.

MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Working with students who attend language classes as a kind of punishment is a nightmare any teacher would like to avoid. An effective way to improve the situation is to study thoroughly the phenomenon of motivation or, as Pawlak (2012) defines it, students' "interest and enthusiasm for the learning task, persistence, and levels of concentration and enjoyment" (p. 254). In the present annotated bibliography, I review research on L2 motivation which drastically expanded my understanding of this concept, as well as provided me with working knowledge I now use in my teaching practice.

I started my exploration of motivation by reading **Dörnyei's (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition***. As follows from the title, the prominent researcher considers motivation in the framework of L2 learners' individual differences (IDs). Along with such traditionally recognized IDs as personality, language aptitude, learning styles, and learning strategies, motivation defines learners' progress in SLA. It is important to stress that motivation has been shown to be a tremendously powerful variable; as Dörnyei claims, "high motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitude and learning conditions" (p. 65). From the perspective of L2 instruction, this statement sounds particularly promising, since it implies the possibility of equipping both teacher and learners with motivational tools to succeed even when learning conditions and other IDs seem not so favorable.

I particularly enjoyed the way Dörnyei (2005) summarizes results of the major L2 motivation research, distinguishing between the macro and micro perspective, from which psychologists and linguists would study this concept. I believe it is highly

beneficial for every L2 instructor to become acquainted with the theories proposed since none of them contradicts with the others, but adds to the overall picture of the complex motivation construct. For instance, when viewing motivation from a macro perspective, L2 teachers should take into account both instrumental and integrative motivation.

Instrumental motivation is based on the learners' desire to attain some practical goal, such as using an L2 for career purposes, while integrative motivation originates from the learners' "interest in foreign languages, and attitudes towards the L2 community" (p. 68).

In studies of motivation from a micro perspective, the focus is shifted towards the immediate "classroom learning situation" (p. 74). The results of these studies are of even greater interest for me as a language instructor, since classroom settings are orchestrated by the teacher who, as an "architect" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 71), finds the balance between teacher- and learner-centered activities and designs tasks to maximize students' participation in the learning process.

From a micro perspective, the concept that intrigued me the most was that of flow. In L2 motivation studies, Flow Theory is considered in the context of learners' performance on tasks. As Dörnyei (2005) puts it, "flow can be seen as a heightened level of motivated task engagement, leading to improved performance on a task" (p. 82). My interest in this concept and its implications for L2 instruction led me to the article "A Study of Flow Theory in the Foreign Language Classroom" written by **Egbert (2003)**.

In her work, Egbert (2003) considers four dimensions of flow crucial for the learners' successful task experience. These dimensions are: (a) the optimal balance between challenge offered by the task and skills required to meet the challenge, (b)

undivided learners' attention to the task, (c) learners' great interest in task content, and (d) learners' sense of control.

The first dimension implies that teachers should tailor the difficulty of the tasks to the learners' language proficiency level, while still leaving some room for novelty and challenge. This statement is in concert with Krashen's (1985) *i+1* Input Hypothesis, according to which we learn the L2 "by understanding input that contains structures at our next 'stage' – structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence" (p. 2). A balance between challenge and skills leads to successful learning experiences, while "high challenge and low skills result in anxiety and low challenge and high skills endanger boredom" (Whalen, 1997, as cited in Egbert, 2003, p. 555). The implications of the other three dimensions of flow for SLA can be summarized as follows: teachers should design tasks enjoyable for the learners; allow for learners' participation in decision making regarding task content; and provide feedback in a manner that does not disturb "the intense concentration that characterizes flow" (p. 559).

My acquaintance with Flow Theory helped me overcome my fear when providing TL input with elements not yet familiar to my students. Undoubtedly, such elements present a challenge, which in Flow Theory is seen as a means for developing learners' higher critical thinking skills to motivate them for further progress. I picture flow as an ideal culminating learning state that students can achieve doing a task. Consequently, one may assume that within a particular activity or lesson there can be periods when students are not yet in the state of flow or have already passed it.

Striving to learn more about changes in learners' motivation and how to approach them, I read the study "Motivational Dynamics in Language Learning: Change, Stability,

and Context” conducted by **Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot (2014)**. Emphasizing dynamic nature of motivation, this group of researchers claims that initial motivation with which students start a particular learning session is of great importance. Waninge et al. recommend L2 teachers “to invest at the beginning of classroom session, either using a warm-up activity, or simply making a point of having everyone’s attention” (p. 719). This piece of advice can imply jokes, informal talk, and other ice-breakers teachers can use to connect with their students and communicate the idea of enjoyable learning.

Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot (2014) also claim that motivation as a dynamic system is characterized by the development of relatively stable attractor states that provide language instructors with the opportunities to model students’ behavior.

Particularly, the authors suggest that teachers should:

become aware of the forces in their classrooms that can function as a push and pull strong enough to create an attractor state in the students’ motivation, either negative (such as a long grammar explanation) or positive (such as the introduction of a vocabulary game). (p. 719)

In other words, L2 instructors who are familiar with their students’ preferences in learning can skillfully design classroom activities that trigger and support motivation. For instance, teaching an entry-level Russian course at Utah State University (USU), I noticed that students did not enjoy activities that required focusing their attention on a particular mode of communication for a comparatively long period of time. For that matter, a task involving 20 minutes of reading would produce a somnolent effect in my class, while a shorter reading would allow for more dynamic learning.

Another observation in Waninge, Dörnyei, and De Bot’s (2014) study which I find particularly valuable for my teaching practice is the following:

... motivation may fluctuate at different time scales that range from minutes to hours, days, months, or years. These time scales interact: What happens on the minutes scale has an impact on what happens on higher time scales and the other way around. (p. 707)

These words warn teachers against the temptation to take occasional breaks in diligent preparation for every classroom session. Every learning activity, be it well-structured or poorly designed, produces a cumulative effect on students' developing TL competence and the amount of credit students give teachers for their instruction. Of course, being obsessed with perfectionism is not a healthy way of working in any profession. However, teachers whose professional outcomes to a greater extent depend on other people (i.e., learners) have very little room for slacking off.

As mentioned above in relation to Dörnyei's (2005) work, motivation is only one of the traditionally considered IDs that influence learning. Moreover, one may assume that IDs do not stand in isolation in their effect on SLA, but to a certain degree are interrelated. Such connection can be found between motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC), a relatively recently identified ID (Dörnyei, 2005), gaining popularity in SLA studies. Considering motivation through its relation to WTC allowed me to see a bigger picture that L2 instructors face in their classrooms. I started my exploration of this issue from the article "Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation" by **MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998)**.

In their article, MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) define WTC as a "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (p. 547). Thus, the authors narrow down the scope of analysis to a particular

communicative situation that may occur either in a classroom or in real-life settings.

MacIntyre et al. offer a pyramid-shaped model of various IDs, all of which influence an individual learner's WTC and ultimately allow (or do not allow) for communication to happen. Motivational propensities presented by interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, and self-confidence are placed in the middle of the pyramid, connecting the layer of antecedents relevant to the immediate communicative situation (e.g., desire to communicate with a specific person) with that of the variables of the affective-cognitive nature (e.g., communicative competence).

The authors of the model consider each component of the motivational layer as following. Interpersonal motivation is a variable "highly specific to the individual" (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 551) and driven by his or her motives of control over and affiliation with particular interlocutors. Intergroup motivation depends on the "intergroup climate and intergroup attitudes" (p. 550), with control and affiliation motives relevant to this type of motivation as well. In this relation, MacIntyre et al. draw a parallel between the intergroup affiliation motive and the concept of integrative motivation: "the desire to affiliate with people who use another language, and to participate in another culture, has a powerful influence on language learning and communication behaviour" (p. 551). Finally, the variable of self-confidence corresponds to the individuals' "overall belief in being able to communicate in the L2 in an adaptive and efficient manner" (p. 551). This belief is formed by the speakers' "self-evaluation of L2 skills" (p. 551) and the level of language anxiety they experience when communicating in the L2.

“One learns to communicate by practicing communication” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 50); that is why the concept of WTC developed by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) is of great importance for L2 instruction. The researchers go further by suggesting that WTC be “the primary goal of language instruction” (p. 545). While this statement may sound controversial since learners reserve the right to communicate at a given moment and WTC, in my opinion, is a means to achieve a desired L2 proficiency level rather than a goal in itself, low interpersonal and intergroup motivation, as well as language anxiety and lack of self-confidence should not become the obstacles for successful SLA.

The article by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) provided me with theoretical knowledge about WTC and the ways learners’ motivation can affect it. However, I still needed to equip myself with practical tools to help my students overcome the aforementioned obstacles in language learning once they arise. With this goal in mind, I read the article “The Effects of Affective Factors in SLA and Pedagogical Implications” written by **Hui (2012)**.

In her research, Hui (2012) studied the influence of affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety on SLA through the prism of Krashen’s (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis. According to Krashen,

The ‘affective filter’ is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition. When it is ‘up’, the acquirer may understand what he hears and reads, but the input will not reach the LAD [Language Acquisition Device]. This occurs when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence, or anxious. (p. 3)

Hui’s study (2012) shows that teacher feedback has a profound impact on the learners’ affective filters. Particularly, such ways of providing corrective feedback as

interrupting and giving an explicit correction, “ignoring and correcting later” (p. 1512), or “asking another student to answer instead” (p. 1512) were least favored by the learners. On the contrary, “providing a clue and expecting self-repair” (p. 1512) and eliciting accurate TL utterances promoted students’ positive feelings about learning and made their affective filters go down.

Hui’s study (2012) reminded me of the importance of teacher feedback for effective instruction. On the one hand, providing feedback, L2 teachers can directly pursue certain pedagogical goals, for instance, accurate pronunciation or verb conjugation. On the other hand, every teacher’s interaction with students impacts their affective filters. Impatient explicit corrections are likely to demotivate students and promote their negative self-image, while kind attention and readiness to work together to achieve better TL production boost students’ confidence in the way that they recognize their ultimate ability of independent and accurate TL use.

An English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner myself, who is lucky to have had an amazingly positive study-abroad experience, I cannot help but include **Hernández’s (2010)** article “The Relationship Among Motivation, Interaction, and the Development of Second Language Oral Proficiency in a Study-Abroad Context” in the present annotated bibliography.

In his research, Hernández (2010) confirmed a positive relation between students’ integrative motivation, the amount of their interaction with L2 (namely, Spanish) culture when studying abroad, and their significantly improved oral proficiency (up to 2 proficiency levels on the ACTFL scale) as detected by pretest and posttest simulated oral proficiency interview. The researcher points out that “study-abroad students with higher

integrative motivation had more contact with the Spanish language outside of class – through participation in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities – than did the students with lower integrative motivation” (p. 608). Particularly, more motivated students used the TL to interact with their host families and new Spanish friends, to do shopping, watch TV, use the Internet, or when travelling. Following positive results of the research, Hernández recommends “incorporat[ing] activities into the at-home curriculum that foster students’ integrative motivation” (p. 609). Among such activities, the author suggests conducting interviews with fluent TL speakers, interacting with exchange students, and using authentic materials available through the Internet, radio, or Skype.

In his article, Hernández (2010) emphasizes the importance of integrative motivation for successful study-abroad experience. In other words, students are expected to be motivated *at the time* when they participate in such programs. However, my own study-abroad experience had positive implications for my sustainable motivation to learn English even *after* I came back to my home country. Finishing my study-abroad program at USU, I finally overcame the barrier that would normally prevent me from enjoying American and British movies. My vocabulary expanded to the extent that listening to authentic speech brought joy and satisfaction instead of habitual irritation and frustration. Such promising outcomes boosted my spirit and supported my desire to work on my English harder than ever before. In my opinion, it is essential that L2 instructors make their students aware of both the positive impact study-abroad programs may have on their language proficiency development and the positive post-effect such programs are likely to produce on their motivation to master a language.

To conclude this annotated bibliography, I would like to discuss briefly the issue of L1 use in the L2 classroom and its implications for learners' motivation. As of today, more and more teachers exclusively use the TL in their instruction and expect the same on the part of the learners. However, when I teach myself or observe classroom sessions of my colleagues, I could not help notice students' ambivalent attitude towards this policy and their struggle to meet this requirement. In his article "(Re)Considering L1 Use in Adult ESL Classrooms: Effects on Learner Motivation", **Collins (2001)** takes a closer look at the outcomes produced by the blind prohibition of L1 in the L2 classrooms:

... learners, especially those at lower levels, are left unable to express themselves, to collaborate with their peers, and to use their other adult skills in the L2 learning task and as a result experience a decrease of motivation or, at times, anger and hostility toward the school and the teacher. (p. 62)

In his study, Collins (2001) observed the same class of beginning ESL learners taught at different times by three instructors. The first two instructors did not allow students to use their native Spanish language during the class time, while the third instructor did allow for such use. Collins observed the following positive results after the use of L1 was not prohibited any more: "the amount of side discussion in Spanish decreased" (p. 68); "content was taught more clearly" (p. 68); "the amount of L2 use by the participants increased" (p. 68); and finally, "class participation increased and learners with irregular attendance came to class more often" (p. 69). Collins stresses that the primary goal of L1 use by the students was to benefit from various learning strategies, including taking notes, clarifying the input, supporting each other psychologically, or sharing language-learning tips. Based on this observation, the researcher gives the following recommendation:

It is crucial to find out learners' motivation, to discuss their learning difficulties, and to talk about their feelings and emotions about learning another language. Moreover, teachers need to let students use adult learning strategies, which are often available to them only in the L1. (p. 73)

I believe that as long as students' L2 proficiency level is not high enough for them to use the above-mentioned learning strategies in the TL, teachers should not object to their students using L1. However, every effort should be made by the teachers to show students how much the latter have already achieved. For instance, one of my students in Russian 1010 class could not reply in the TL, when I asked her to prove that she is a serious student. My student chose to switch codes (i.e., use English) to say that she did not know how to do that. I then asked her in Russian whether she loved to study, whether she studied a lot, and whether she studied well – all questions my student could easily answer in the TL. In other words, one of the teacher's tasks is to promote students' positive self-image by showing them creative and smart ways to use knowledge they have already gained. Apart from that, in his recommendation, Collins highlights the role of the teacher as a stress manager, whose skillful handling of uneasy situations that may arise in class helps learners manage their stress and language anxiety and stay motivated in the short and long run.

Ultimately, learners' motivation, standing at the crossroads of such fields as personality psychology, education science, and applied linguistics, is one of the most difficult aspects of L2 teaching for me. The books and articles I discussed in the present annotated bibliography provide me with valuable recommendations on how to boost students' motivation to learn new languages, and I expect to gain more knowledge as I

apply these recommendations to my teaching practice and keep reading professional literature on the topic.

TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Teaching first-year Russian language courses at Utah State University (USU), I enjoyed a lot of freedom in planning course syllabi, choosing learning materials, and designing classroom activities and assessment tasks. Yet, as a novice teacher, I sometimes questioned my pedagogical choices and always wanted to see the bigger picture of foreign language (FL) instructional goals and outcomes. The article by **Evtyugina et al. (2016)** was written with that big picture in mind to address issues in Russian as a second language (L2) curriculum development. Although the authors focused on teaching the language to international students attending Russian universities, I find their ideas thought-provoking and relevant to the Russian as a foreign language (RFL) context as well.

For L2 Russian learners, Evtyugina et al. (2016) defined the role of the Russian language as “a means of communication, means of acquaintance with Russian reality, Russian culture and language of their future profession” (p. 8300). To succeed in communication, social and cultural adaptation, and professional development, international students need to have a good grasp of the language; consequently, these purposes for language use must be directly translated into instructional goals.

Since I believe that in formal educational settings, students should have voice in defining objectives and content of a FL course, the pedagogical goals presented by Evtyugina et al. (2016) made me think of my USU students’ motives to sign up for a Russian language class. Broadly, I could identify three groups of students based on their motivation to learn the language. The first group includes learners driven by extrinsic stimuli such as fulfillment of their degree requirements. The second group consists of

students who come to class out of curiosity about language and culture. Finally, students who need Russian for educational and career purposes make up the third group. There are no rigid borders between these groups and, over the course of instruction, students can develop other than their initial motivation to learn the language.

According to Evtugina et al. (2016), students' needs to take a FL course should be reflected in the instructional goals and materials. For the entry-level Russian language courses that I taught at USU, such goals can be the development of learners' communicative skills coupled with acquiring cultural knowledge about target language (TL) communities. While emerging communicative competence equips students with tools to express themselves and interact with Russian language speakers at a basic level, studying Russian culture can enhance learners' motivation and increase their chances for successful intercultural communication. These goals address the needs of the three groups of language learners that I identified above. I also believe that the students from the first (supposedly less-motivated) group can gain more interest in the subject once they attend to the culturally rich learning materials and experience a sense of achievement when practicing the language.

On the whole, Evtugina et al. (2016) devoted much attention to culture instruction. The authors argue that "the content of foreign language education is a foreign language culture" (p. 8298). To support this view, they suggest various extracurricular activities to help L2 Russian learners "produce their own statements based on real life experiences in particular communicative situation" (p. 8299). In the RFL context, such extracurricular work can include participation in Russian language clubs with

organization of themed evenings, movie nights, and national cuisine evenings, among other activities.

In their article, Evtyugina et al. (2016) promote communicative language teaching (CLT) as the most effective approach to teach university-level L2 Russian programs. As an RFL instructor at USU, I was mainly driven by the CLT approach too and paid a lot of attention to developing students' speaking skills. Reading the case study by **Rifkin (2002)** that targeted the acquisition of oral narration by non-native speakers (NNS) of Russian, I learned about in-class activities that were reported to have a positive impact on Russian language learners' oral proficiency.

The participants in Rifkin's (2002) study were fourth-year Russian language learners from U.S. universities. At the beginning of the study, despite being enrolled in advanced language courses, the students demonstrated intermediate-mid or intermediate-high levels of language proficiency based on the ACTFL scale of oral proficiency. When compared against native speakers (NS) of Russian, they were reported to produce "syntactically weak" (p. 468) narrations characterized by fewer and less complex sentences. The researcher defined a complex sentence as the one containing a subordinate clause. Analyzing NS's narrations, he also found that one of the typical features of Russian oral discourse was relativization or "a complex sentence featuring a relative clause introduced by the relative pronoun *который*" (p. 467). In the NNS' narrations, relativization was a rare exception rather than a fully internalized grammatical structure typical of Russian authentic speech. In this way, Rifkin states that acquisition of relativization "would be indicative of students' progress" (p. 468) towards advanced oral proficiency in Russian.

To help the research participants with the acquisition of the relative clauses, Rifkin (2002) provides output-oriented instruction with consciousness-raising activities. As can be seen from this treatment, the researcher drew on Swain's (1985) comprehensible output hypothesis which states that output "is a necessary mechanism of acquisition" (p. 252) that, among other tasks, "move[s] the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to syntactic analysis of it" (p. 252). Rifkin also advocates consciousness-raising tasks such as "students' reflections on their own speech" (p. 470) that aim to promote noticing of relative clauses and push students to produce more eloquent and syntactically sophisticated narrations. The treatment was reported to be successful, for "learners in the experimental group demonstrated frequencies of relativization approaching the range of native speakers in most cases" (p. 475).

Although Rifkin (2002) focuses on narration as one of the most complex forms of oral discourse (which becomes particularly true in the context of FL learning), I find output-oriented and consciousness-raising activities suggested in his study applicable for developing speaking skills of less experienced learners as well. In my teaching practice, I value comprehensible output as much as comprehensible input and try to provide students with as many opportunities to speak in class as possible. Also, I like the pedagogical idea behind the consciousness-raising activities that put "the burden of the learning and preparation process squarely on the shoulders of the learner", as Rifkin (2000, p. 67) claimed in an earlier piece. As part of FL speaking practice, such activities can imply learner self-recordings and reflections on the achieved progress, as was done in Rifkin's study, as well as peer and teacher feedback to promote noticing and correct mistakes.

Foreign language learners' speaking proficiency is significant, yet, one's use of a language is by no means limited to the oral discourse. Reading and writing are equally salient skills that take on particular importance when learners advance in their mastery of a FL. The experimental study by **Comer (2012)** adds considerably to my knowledge of Russian grammar and the difficulties that language learners experience when reading authentic texts in Russian.

In his study, Comer (2012) sought to understand how grammatical knowledge affects L2 Russian readers' comprehension of informational texts. The researcher used think-aloud protocols to record reading processing verbalized by the participants. The findings revealed two grammatical features typical of the Russian authentic texts that were responsible for the largest number of the readers' failures in establishing correct form-meaning connections. The first grammatical feature was reported to be nominalization presented by the "adnominal genitive phrases" (p. 239) equivalent to the English 'of phrases'. In Russian, adnominal genitives "can include up to three nouns" (p. 239). When this was the case in the texts offered in Comer's study, L2 Russian learners demonstrated "less awareness of the genitive case elements" (p. 240), which resulted in misunderstanding of such phrases. The second grammatical feature was reported to be passive voice constructions, numbering four in Russian. Attempting to comprehend sentences with passive constructions, participants often used unsuccessful strategies such as First Noun Principle (VanPatten, 2002) or word-by-word translation.

To help learners overcome the aforementioned difficulties, Comer (2012) suggested several types of activities such as "parsing activities ... noticing activities ... spot translation activities ... matching activities ... dictionary activities" (p. 249).

Learning about these tools, I gained a better understanding of how an L2 reading task can be designed so that students could better link grammatical forms with their meaning.

Importantly, Comer warned against providing only focus-on-form tasks as part of reading activities, arguing that such tasks “must proceed in tandem with tasks that require readers to write and talk about the content information that they have learned” (pp. 249-250).

Reading and writing in a FL are both important literacy skills that often develop slower than one’s oral proficiency. This observation becomes especially pertinent when learners achieve a so-called plateau in mastering a FL, usually at the intermediate/advanced threshold of their language proficiency. To learn more about instructional techniques that would allow Russian language learners to progress faster in developing their writing skills, I read the article by **Brown, Bown, and Eggert (2009)**.

In their case study, Brown et al. (2009) investigated whether fast gains in writing proficiency were possible for the third-semester university-level students enrolled in a Russian writing course, provided the latter was centered around “argumentation and debate and content-based instruction” (p. 424). The theoretical framework of the study lay mainly within the aforementioned output hypothesis that, according to the researchers, was not limited to speaking practice and had “application ... within the context of written production” (p. 425). The participants in Brown et al.’s (2009) study were ‘pushed’ to write convincing and eloquent texts that would contain “sequencing, structure, and stance not characteristic of spoken language” (p. 426). Secondly, the researchers relied on content-based instruction as having clearly articulated topics that would thus provide L2 Russian learners with “a message or voice, an audience, a position or identity, and a purpose or motivation to communicate” (p. 427).

Brown et al.'s (2009) experiment proved to be a success, for within only one semester the participants demonstrated “a general upward push” (p. 433) from the intermediate-mid and intermediate-high proficiency levels to the advanced-low, advanced-mid, and even advanced-high levels according to the ACFTL scale. Of particular interest can be the design of the instruction that included four assessments of students' writings: a) self-assessment; b) peer assessment; c) Russian NS assessment of the rough draft; and d) Russian NS assessment of the final draft. The researchers viewed each of those assessments as salient in performing the scaffolding function. I especially appreciated the way Brown et al. spoke of the importance of the self and peer assessment:

Training students to assess their own work and that of others ... contributed to a sense of intellectual self-reliance in that they began to view their own work and that of others through a critical lens rather than rely on others to point out their strengths and weaknesses. (p. 429)

Teaching beginning-level Russian courses at USU, I regularly assigned writing tasks to my students. I called those tasks ‘mini-essays’, in part, not to scare students away from the task of writing, but partly due to the small size and low complexity of those essays. I normally offered a peer review activity before students submitted their essays so that they could correct mistakes or make other changes. However, I usually did not provide specific instructions on how to conduct such assessments. In this sense, Brown et al. (2009) made me think of the importance of rubrics to guide students through self or peer assessments to make these activities more clear and effective in terms of their learning goals and outcomes.

Regardless of the language skill (i.e., speaking, writing, reading, or listening), FL learners need good command of the TL grammar to achieve high levels of proficiency.

For L1 speakers of English, Russian grammar often presents nearly unsurmountable obstacles due to the differences in morpho-syntactic structures of those languages. Teaching Russian grammar to USU students in the traditional way, in other words, providing explicit explanation of the grammatical forms followed by exercises to practice those forms, often would not produce the desired effect. Students would ignore the surface forms and communicate the intended meaning while relying solely on lexis. In search of alternatives to traditional, production-oriented, grammar teaching, I became interested in processing instruction (PI), whose main principles were articulated by VanPatten (2002, 2004, 2015). Following my interest in PI as a grammar teaching technique that helps FL learners make accurate form-meaning connections, I wrote a research proposal presented in this Teaching Portfolio as a literacy paper. In the research proposal, I suggested exploring the applicability of PI for teaching past tense verbs in Russian and expressed intention to learn more about grammatical structures in Russian that could be taught through PI intervention. In this sense, the article by **Comer and deBenedette (2010)** satisfied my pedagogical curiosity.

Initially, I cited Comer and deBenedette (2010) in the aforementioned literacy paper in relation to PI for teaching locational and directional expressions in Russian since that was the focus of the study. However, the researchers also elaborated on another structure, the use of the verb ‘нравиться’ (Eng. *to please*) and OVS word order, as grammar material suitable for the PI technique. This structure is not unique to Russian and can be found in other languages, for instance, in Spanish where it is presented by the verb ‘gustar’ and inverted subject-object order. Yet, L1 English speakers are likely to

experience difficulties in internalizing this grammatical structure since no positive transfer is possible on their part.

The usage of the Russian verb ‘нравиться’ “often involves first or second person dative pronouns (the ‘liker’) with nominative inanimate noun subjects (the ‘liked’)” (Comer & deBenedette, 2010, pp. 123-124). The roles of the ‘liker’ and the ‘liked’ can also be performed by animate nouns, with interpretation of such sentences boiling down to the question ‘Who likes whom?’. To answer this question correctly, Russian language learners must process dative case endings of the nouns since these are the only forms that contain such information. Yet, learners run the risk of following the First Noun Principle, according to which they are likely to interpret the first noun in the sentence as the agent of the action. This is a deceptive strategy that “may lead to the mismatching of forms to meanings in the input, which results in learners receiving faulty intake for their developing language system” (p. 121).

To help Russian language learners establish correct form-meaning connections for the grammatical structure in question, Comer and deBenedette (2010) suggested four types of referential activities in which learners, without producing the targeted grammatical form (i.e., nouns in the dative case), were asked to choose correct interpretations of the visual and text messages describing ‘Who likes whom?’ situation. These activities can be used as instructional materials for teaching noun inflectional morphology (i.e., dative case endings) and interpreting sentences with the verb ‘нравиться’. However, unlike Comer and deBenedette, I would not use Russian male and female first names as grammatical subjects and objects in the learning activities since

such proper nouns can be troublesome for students to decline. Instead, I would substitute them with common animate nouns, such as ‘boy’, ‘girl’, ‘mother’, or ‘father’.

Currently, FL teachers admit that providing instruction solely focused on the TL grammar and vocabulary is not enough for educating competent language users. The very concept of competence in a FL is viewed as complex and consisting of several elements, including what in different competence models is identified as sociocultural competence (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). To become socioculturally competent, FL learners need to acquire knowledge of the norms of behavior accepted in the TL community, as well as to develop skills in applying this knowledge appropriately in various communicative situations.

In the Russian language, one of the paramount sociocultural variables is the forms of address presented by the personal pronouns ‘ты’ (informal) and ‘вы’ (formal), both of which stand for ‘you’ in English. English-speaking learners of Russian tend to experience difficulties in understanding and use of these pronouns since such a contrast is absent in their L1. The research article *Learner Perception of Formal and Informal Pronouns in Russian* by **Dykstra (2012)** gave me fresh insights into the mechanisms that govern acquisition of these address forms by learners of Russian.

In her experimental study, Dykstra (2012) focused on the pragmatic awareness of the ты/вы distinction as demonstrated by the beginning and advanced learners of Russian in two U.S. universities. The researcher studied the given phenomenon following such individual learner differences as gender, proficiency level, and learning environment presented by each educational institution and time abroad variables.

Overall, the study revealed that regardless of the proficiency level, the majority of the participants “did not appear to perceive the sociocultural weight of the pronouns” (p. 410). This finding made me think of the explicit instruction on the use of the pronoun address forms in Russian to facilitate noticing of these forms on the part of the learners. Such instruction should also go beyond a simplified formal/informal formula to encompass communicative situations in which relationships between interlocutors are more complex. In this sense, authentic video clips from the Soviet and Russian movies used in Dykstra’s (2012) study can become learning materials suitable for this instructional goal.

In Dykstra’s (2012) research, for those participants who demonstrated better performance, statistically significant variables appeared to be institutional and gender factors. Students from the university that provided an immersion-like environment to learn Russian outperformed students from the university with a traditional FL curriculum. Also, female students displayed better awareness of the *ТЫ/ВЫ* distinction than male students. Yet, for me, as a teacher of Russian as a FL, the most important observation from Dykstra’s study was the following: “the majority of learners have not been abroad, their understanding of the feature stems from their classroom instruction. This fact implies that classroom instruction can lead to an understanding of pragmatic features” (p. 414). Thus, the researcher argues in favor of teachability of sociopragmatic aspects of a language in FL classroom settings and encourages teachers to consider them an indispensable part of a well-developed FL curriculum.

Formal research on sociocultural competence is often conducted from the perspective of speech act theory (LoCastro, 2012) and targets specific speech acts, such

as apologies, invitations, refusals, among others. In this sense, one of the most frequently studied speech acts is a request. Practices of producing requests vary across cultures and present a particular challenge for FL learners who tend to excessively rely on the requestive strategies borrowed from their L1 cultures. Striving to expand my knowledge of the formal features of requests in Russian, I read the article *Judgements of Politeness in Russian: How Non-Native Requests Are Perceived by Native Speakers* by **Krulatz (2015)**.

This article reports the results of an experimental study in which Krulatz (2015) compared email requests produced by native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) of Russian. All requests were evaluated by the experts, NS of Russian, based on the following three criteria: clarity, politeness, and appropriateness. The data showed that “NNS messages were rated as less clear, less appropriate, and less polite ... and the differences between the groups were statistically significant” (p. 111). Interestingly, the NNS group consisted of the Russian language learners whose proficiency level was evaluated as advanced. All of them were either Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints missionaries who lived in Russia and Russian speaking countries for 1.5 – 2 years, or had a similarly long-term study abroad experience. Yet, when asked to write an email with the request following one of the suggested scenarios, NNS demonstrated sociocultural competence not sufficient for them to be perceived as overall polite communicators.

I appreciate that in her study, Krulatz (2015) identified key characteristics of NS and NNS requests in Russian. The former provided me with a specific road map that I can follow teaching this speech act to my students, while the latter displayed the most

common mistakes that can be made by learners. The major differences between the requests produced by NS and NNS of Russian were reported to be “forms of address, closings, justifications of the requests, the employment of negation and conditionals, and the capitalization of the formal third person singular pronoun *vy* (you)” (p. 116). While in my instruction, before reading this article, I did pay attention to the last two features, focusing on negative interrogative sentences and necessity to capitalize personal pronoun *Вы* (Eng. you), proper forms of address and closings, as well as justifications of the requests that in Russian are expected to be more thorough and detailed than is acceptable in English used to slip my attention.

Thanks to the comparative analysis of NS and NNS requests conducted by Krulatz (2015), I also noticed a mistake that I used to make when writing online announcements for my Russian classes. To address my students, I would write ‘Дорогие студенты’ (Eng. Dear students), while in this formal situation, a more appropriate form of address in Russian could be ‘Уважаемые студенты’ (Eng. Respected students). In this way, I spotted (and fixed) the negative transfer that I made from my L2 (English) into my L1 (Russian), which may happen to people living in the L2 community for a prolonged period of time.

Studying speech acts such as requests, learners work with language at the utterance level. Yet, one can hardly attain sociocultural competence in Russian without mastering such a morphopragmatic phenomenon as diminutivization, or the expressive suffixation presented by diminutive suffixes. Teaching first-year Russian courses at USU, I noticed that in the two textbooks that I had occasion to use in my classes, the topic of diminutivization, as well as lexical items containing such suffixes, were simply absent.

This finding was frustrating since Russian is inconceivable without diminutives.

Following my desire to learn more about teaching diminutivization for L1 speakers of English, I read the article *Diminutives in Spontaneous Narration by American Learners of Russian* by **Hasko (2010)**.

Hasko (2010) starts with a detailed explanation of the role of diminutivization in Russian, stating that learning about this phenomenon “provides a unique window into an understanding ... of Russian cultural norms, pragmatic rules, folk philosophy, and literary devices” (p. 37). Pragmatic functions of diminutives are diverse and numerous, ranging from communicating the ideas of “smallness or endearment” (p. 36), “pity and sympathy” (p. 36), “tenderness, warmth, and playfulness” (p. 35) to expressing “anti-sentimentality and irony” (p. 35), “familiarity or snobbism” (p. 36). The author then reports results of the study conducted to shed light on the ways in which advanced Russian language learners used diminutives in personal and child-directed storytelling.

The study showed that in both types of narration, NNS of Russian were significantly behind NS in frequency and variety of the produced diminutivized forms. Hasko (2010) concluded that Russian language learners, despite being highly proficient, failed to demonstrate acquisition of the “pragmatic and semantic aspects” (p. 42) of diminutive suffixation, and thus, had “difficulties with authentic emotional expression” (p. 45). Following this observation, the researcher advocated inclusion of the topic of expressive derivation into Russian as a FL curriculum. I particularly appreciate her recommendations on teaching diminutives, such as ample use of authentic materials, form-focused tasks, and production-oriented activities that would encourage learners to participate in personal discourse.

Although Hasko (2010) considers diminutivization in the context of advanced Russian language courses, I believe it is beneficial for learners to make first steps in noticing and appreciating this means of emotional expression as early as in the entry-level classes, once authentic or adapted materials provide this opportunity. Having read Hasko's article, I carefully scanned the textbook that I used in my first-year Russian class at that time and found an adapted text of the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, the very title of which in Russian contained a diminutivized noun. Introducing diminutive suffixation with this text seems particularly promising due to the context of a well-known fairy tale. In such context, the concepts of smallness, empathy, and child-directed speech can be presented to and discussed with the learners.

Reflecting on Hasko's (2010) study, I involuntarily touched upon the problem of insufficient pragmatic information presented in FL textbooks. As research shows (e.g., Vellenga, 2004), FL textbooks are often deprived of such materials, which shifts the responsibility to design pragmatically salient activities entirely on instructors' shoulders. Seeking to understand what authentic materials could be used for teaching Russian language pragmatics and where to find them, I read the article by **Furniss (2016)**.

Furniss (2016) explored effectiveness of using a corpus-based instructional website in teaching nine Russian routine formulas; a task that placed his study at the intersection of corpus linguistics, interlanguage pragmatics, and computer-assisted language learning (CALL). The researcher focused on the routine formulas as "any recurring word or phrase with a pragmatic function (e.g., expressing surprise or uncertainty) in interaction" (p. 39). Learning to use appropriately routine formulas is an

important task for FL speakers, for the routine formulas allow learners to express the intended meaning and support a fluent, authentic-like conversation.

In his study, Furniss (2016) addressed the Russian National Corpus as the main source of the authentic texts demonstrating the usage of the routine formulas selected for the research intervention. Furniss emphasized the major advantage of using corpora data in FL teaching, that is the opportunity to “determine the frequency and typical contexts of use for words, phrases, and grammatical constructions ... resulting in materials that more accurately reflect usage” (p. 41). Online availability of the Russian National Corpus (ruscorpora.ru) allowed me to explore this source of Russian authentic texts. From the website, I learned that corpus data could be customized according to the various search parameters ranging from subcorpora (e.g., poetry or spoken Russian) to lexical and grammatical features specific to the particular words or phrases. Interestingly, I came across the parallel subcorpus that provides translation of the search items into fifteen languages, including English. This subcorpus can be of particular interest for Russian language instructors teaching L1 English learners. Overall, the Russian National Corpus can be viewed as a reliable source of authentic texts that could be used in teaching conversational Russian, newspaper discourse, poetry, Russian dialects, and other areas of the language use.

As a result of attending to the corpus-referred information and completing activities on the instructional website, the participants in Furniss’s (2016) study “displayed improved awareness of the routine formulas” (p. 52) in Russian. Although the participants indicated some drawbacks in the content and design of the website, their attitudes towards learning about routine formulas using that online resource were mainly

positive. Thus, Furniss summarized that “CALL applications have potential for teaching L2 pragmatics” (p. 52). I found that conclusion inspiring and deserving of further exploration, following one of my pedagogical inclinations to use Web 2.0 tools in my teaching practice to make it more appealing to the Net generation (Tapscott, 1998) of Russian language learners. With this idea in mind, I read the article by **Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013)** in which the researchers discussed the use of the Russian social network ‘VKontakte’ (literal English translation is ‘In contact’) as an online venue to help L2 Russian language learners establish and develop their L2 identities.

In Klimanova and Dembovskaya’s (2013) experimental study, U.S. college students of Russian engaged in online interactions with Russian NS in the social space of ‘VKontakte’, “a Russia-based counterpart to Facebook” (p. 73). The researchers analyzed the patterns in the NS-NNS discourse with the purpose to identify social roles that L2 Russian language learners might take on during such interactions. The findings revealed at least two roles – the language learner role and the language user role. The participants performed the language learner role when they sought advice on how to use language forms appropriately or doing a task offered by the instructor. The role as a language user prevailed when the participants had to “accomplish social tasks beyond the scope of the classroom assignment (e.g., establishing friendship or declaring the relations of sameness or otherness)” (p. 82). Interestingly, the role as a language learner, though it led to “unequal power relations” (p. 82), was not perceived negatively. As the study revealed, this power imbalance was anticipated and “mutually and discursively co-constructed” (p. 83) by NS and NNS so that the learning activities could be done well.

The use of the social networking site ‘VKontakte’ allowed American students to practice the TL and learn from their Russian peers. Besides, ‘VKontakte’ made it possible for the participants to “access the artifacts of Russian language and culture” (p. 83). American students could observe the way NS of Russian used the language for online communication, as well as their avatars, photos, music, and other cultural elements that drew the picture of the NS’ identities in that virtual social space. Importantly, Russian language learners could express their emerging L2 identities even when their knowledge of the TL seemed not to be enough. That became possible thanks to the “multiple affordances” (p. 83) of ‘VKontakte’ that helped American students take advantage of their “digital wisdom” (p. 83) and engage in authentic interaction with NS of Russian. I have been interested in using social networking sites in FL instruction for a while, yet I did not know what to expect from such an activity. The article by Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) informed me about social roles that FL learners might perform in an online social space, as well as about positive outcomes of such interactions that go beyond mere TL practice.

In this annotated bibliography, I addressed some issues related to teaching Russian as a FL ranging from grammar instruction to pragmatics, from language skills development to using CALL. I learned a lot about the formal features of the Russian language, and picked up some valuable ideas about learning activities suitable for students of various language proficiency levels. I intend to further develop my expertise in teaching Russian by reading professional literature and applying interesting pedagogical ideas to practice.

LOOKING FORWARD

During my studies in the MSLT program, I acquired a better understanding of how foreign languages are taught and learned. My experience as a graduate instructor of Russian allowed me to combine theoretical knowledge with practice in a real classroom and helped me fine-tune my personal vision of effective FL instruction. In my teaching philosophy, I focused on such aspects as communication, target language culture, and learner motivation. However, my professional curiosity goes beyond these topics to encompass bilingual education, CALL, and FL classroom discourse, among others. I am particularly interested in developing my pedagogical skills for working in a flipped FL classroom context where the focus on learner incentive and active participation becomes especially emphasized. I am also eager to expand my teaching experience to working with intermediate and advanced FL learners. Ideally, I picture myself teaching Russian and English to speakers of other languages. I also do not eliminate the possibility of pursuing a doctorate degree in applied linguistics, SLA, or teacher education to further deepen my knowledge about FL education and ultimately be able to share it with future FL teachers.

REFERENCES

- Abeysekera, L., & Dawson, P. (2015). Motivation and cognitive load in the flipped classroom: definition, rationale and a call for research. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(1), 1-14. doi: 10.1080/07294360.2014.934336
- ACTFL. (2006). *Standards for foreign language learning: Preparing for the 21st century*. Retrieved from:
http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/public/StandardsforFLLexecsumm_rev.pdf
- ACTFL. (2015). *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements*. Retrieved from:
http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Can-Do_Statements_2015.pdf
- Adair-Hauck, B., & Donato, R. (2010). Using a story-based approach to teach grammar. In J.D. Shrum & E.W. Glisan *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction* (4th ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Allen, H., & Paesani, K. (2010). Exploring the feasibility of a pedagogy of multiliteracies in introductory foreign language courses. *L2 Journal*, 2, 119-142. Retrieved from:
<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9rd471cs>
- Baleghizadeh, S., & Masoun, A. (2013). The effect of self-assessment on EFL learners' self-efficacy. *TESL Canada Journal*, 31(1), 42-58. Retrieved from:
<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=461400e6-f07b-4674-8432-f247ceb7909d%40sessionmgr4002&vid=1&hid=4103>
- Ballman, L., Liskin-Gasparro, E., & Mandell, B. (2001). *The communicative classroom* (Vol. III). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

- Barrot, J. (2014). A macro perspective on key issues in English as second language (ESL) pedagogy in the postmethod era: Confronting challenges through sociocognitive-transformative approach. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 23(3), 435-449. doi: 10.1007/s40299-013-0119-4
- Barsade, S. (2014). Faster than a speeding text: “Emotional contagion” at work. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-work/201410/faster-speeding-text-emotional-contagion-work>
- Brandl, K. (2008). *Communicative language teaching in action: Putting principles to work*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Brown, N., Bown, J., & Eggert, D. (2009). Making rapid gains in second language writing: A case study of a third-year Russian language course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(3), 424-452. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01038.x
- Brown, N., Dewey, D., & Cox, T. (2014). Assessing the validity of Can-Do Statements in retrospective (then-now) self-assessment. *Foreign Language Annals*, 47(2), 261-285. doi: 10.1111/flan.12082
- Butler, Y., & Lee, J. (2010). The effects of self-assessment among young learners of English. *Language Testing*, 27(1), 5-31. doi: 10.1177/0265532209346370
- Campa J., & Nassaji, H. (2009). The amount, purpose, and reasons for using L1 in L2 classrooms. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(4), 742-759. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01052.x
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47. Retrieved from: <http://ibatefl.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CLT-Canale-Swain.pdf>

- Castillo Losada, C., Insuasty, E., & Jaime Osorio, M. (2017). The impact of authentic materials and tasks on students' communicative competence at a Colombian language school. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 19(1), 89-104. doi: 10.15446/profile.v19n1.56763
- Chen, Y. (2015). Developing Chinese EFL learners' email literacy through requests to faculty. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 75, 131-149. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2014.05.009
- Collins, T.G. (2001). (Re)Considering L1 use in adult ESL classrooms: Effects on learner motivation. In G. Bräuer (Ed.) *Pedagogy of language learning in higher education: An introduction*. Westport: Ablex Publishing.
- Comer, W. (2012). The role of grammatical knowledge in reading for meaning in Russian. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 56(2), 232-255. Retrieved from: <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ebe9b0eb-f6d8-420c-be3b-73be25448d2f%40sessionmgr120&vid=7&hid=123>
- Comer, W., & deBenedette, L. (2010). Processing instruction and Russian: Issues, materials, and preliminary experimental results. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 54(1), 118-146. Retrieved from: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=739927a0-b843-4c57-af59-8aaf6ab04138%40sessionmgr120&vid=1&hid=121>
- Comer, W., & deBenedette, L. (2011). Processing instruction and Russian: Further evidence is IN. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(4), 646-673. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2011.01155.x

- Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of References: Learning, teaching, assessment. Retrieved from:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf
- Cushing-Leubner, J., & Bigelow, M. (2014). Principled eclecticism and the holistic approach to language teaching and learning. In S. Çelik (Ed.) *Approaches and principles in English as a foreign language (EFL) education*. Ankara: Egiten.
- Davidheiser, J. (2007). Fairy tales and foreign languages: Ever the twain shall meet. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(2), 215-225. Retrieved from:
<http://search.proquest.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/llba/docview/85665950/E789449FE5B84813PQ/1?accountid=14761>
- Deardorff, D. (2011). Assessing intercultural competence. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (149), 65-77. doi: 10.1002/ir.381
- DeKeyser, R., & Prieto Botana, G. (2015). The effectiveness of processing instruction in L2 grammar acquisition: A narrative review. *Applied Linguistics*, 36(3), 290-305. doi:10.1093/applin/amu071
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Dykstra, L. (2012). Learner perception of formal and informal pronouns in Russian. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96(3), 400-418. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2012.01355.x

- Egbert, J. (2004). A study of flow theory in the foreign language classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 60(5), 549-585.
- Eisenclas, S. (2011). On-line interactions as a resource to raise pragmatic awareness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(1), 51-61. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2010.08.013
- Elia, A. (2007). Fables and ICT: Intercultural communication and E-language learning. *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 14. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr14/elia.htm>
- Ellis, N. (2008). The dynamics of second language emergence: Cycles of language use, language change, and language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2), 232-249. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00716.x
- Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), 221-246. doi:10.1111/j.1473-4192.2009.00231.x
- Ellis, R. (2012). *Language teaching research and language pedagogy*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ellis, R. (2014). Grammar teaching for language learning. *Babylonia* 02, 10-15. Retrieved from: http://babylonia.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/2014-2/Ellis.pdf
- Evtyugina, A., Hasanova, I., Kotova, S., Sokolova, A., & Svetkina I. (2016). Communicative, educational, pedagogical objectives and planning in Russian language teaching. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 11(15), 8293-8302. Retrieved from: <http://www.ijese.net/makale/1081>

- Fabusuyi, A. (2014). Integrating folktales in the teaching of German – a practical approach. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 11(1), 246-251. Retrieved from: <http://www.ijhssnet.com/journal/index/2794>
- Faez, F., Majhanovich, S., Taylor, S., Smith, M., & Crowley, K. (2011). The power of “Can Do” statements: Teachers’ perceptions of CEFR-informed instruction in French as a second language classrooms in Ontario. *The Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Special Issue*, 14(2), 1-19. Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ967319.pdf>
- Fernández, C. (2008). Reexamining the role of explicit information in processing instruction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 30(3), 277-305. doi: 10.1017/S0272263108080467
- Ford, H. Retrieved April 23, 2016 from: https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/203714.Henry_Ford
- Fotos, S. (2002). Structure-based interactive tasks for the EFL grammar learner. In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos (Eds.) *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Furniss, E. (2016). Teaching the pragmatics of Russian conversation using a corpus-referred website. *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(2), 38-60. Retrieved from <http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/docview/1828173518?accountid=14761>

- Geeslin, K. (2003). Student self-assessment in the foreign language classroom: The place of authentic assessment instruments in the Spanish language classroom. *Hispania*, 86(3), 857-868. Retrieved from:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/20062958?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Gholami, H. (2016). Self-assessment and learner autonomy. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(1), 46-51. doi:10.17507/tpls.0601.06
- Graus, J., & Coppen, P-A. (2016). Student teacher beliefs on grammar instruction. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(5), 571-599. doi: 10.1177/1362168815603237
- Hall, G. (2005). *Literature in language education*. GB: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Han, Z., & Finneran, R. (2014). Re-engaging the interface debate: strong, weak, none, or all? *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 24(3), 371-389. doi: 10.1111/ijal.12034
- Hasko, V. (2010). Diminutives in spontaneous narration by American learners of Russian. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 54(1), 32-53. Retrieved from:
<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=470e781c-933c-4d33-b146-a896b1ab99b6%40sessionmgr4006&vid=1&hid=4210>
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J., & Rapson, R. L. (1994). *Emotional contagion*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hayik, R. (2016). What does this story say about females? Challenging gender-biased texts in the English-language classroom. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(4), 409-419. doi:10.1002/jaal.468
- Hernández, T. (2010). The relationship among motivation, interaction, and the development of second language oral proficiency in a study-abroad context. *The*

Modern Language Journal, 94(4), 600-617. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01053.x

Hiep, P. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT Journal*, 61(3), 193-201. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccm026

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Honeycutt, B. (2017, March). *Let's FLIP It: Engage Students, Improve Learning, and Enhance Faculty Success*. Lecture presented at Empowering Teaching Excellence workshop in Utah State University, Logan, UT.

Hooks, B. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: Practical wisdom*. New York: Routledge.

Hui, N. (2012). The effects of affective factors in SLA and pedagogical implications. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(7), 1508-1513. doi: 10.4304/tpls.2.7.1508-1513

Jandt, F. (2013). *An introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a global community*. (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Klimanova, L., & Dembovskaya, S. (2013). L2 identity, discourse, and social networking in Russian. *Language Learning & Technology*, 17(1), 69-88. Retrieved from: <http://llt.msu.edu/issues/february2013/klimanovadembovskaya.pdf>

Kottler, J., Zehm, S., & Kottler, E. (2005). *On being a teacher: The human dimension*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. NY: Longman.

- Krulatz, A. (2015). Judgements of politeness in Russian: How non-native requests are perceived by native speakers. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 24(1), 103-122. Retrieved from: <http://web.uri.edu/iaics/files/07.Anna-Krulatz.pdf>
- Kudyma, A., Miller, F., & Kagan, O. (2010). *Beginner's Russian*. NY: Hippocrene Books, Inc.
- Kumaravadivelu, M. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1), 27-48. Retrieved from:
<http://www.bkumaravadivelu.com/articles%20in%20pdfs/1994%20Kumaravadivelu%20Postmethod%20Condition.pdf>
- Lappin-Fortin, K., & Rye, B. (2014). The use of pre-/posttest and self-assessment tools in a French pronunciation course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 47(2), 300-320. doi: 10.1111/flan.12083
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2010). Not so fast: A discussion of L2 morpheme processing and acquisition. *Language Learning*, 60(1), 221-230. Retrieved from:
<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8d4c2b19-a22d-47b8-a1b5-21375a3d7946%40sessionmgr4006&vid=8&hid=4104>
- Leaver, B., Rifkin, B., & Shekhtman, B. (2004). Apples and oranges are both fruits, but they don't taste the same: A response to Wynne Wong and Bill VanPatten. *Foreign Language Annals*, 37(1), 125-132. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2004.tb02179.x

- Lee, J. (2015). The milestones in twenty years of Processing Instruction research. *IRAL: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 53(2), 111-126. doi:10.1515/iral-2015-0005
- Lee, J., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen* (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Liu, S. (2012). Rethinking intercultural competence: Global and local nexus. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 7(3), 269-275. doi:10.1080/17447143.2012.693085
- LoCastro, V. (2012). *Pragmatics for language educators: A sociolinguistic perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W.C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413–468). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- MacIntyre, P., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545-562. Retrieved from: <http://www.zoltandornyei.co.uk/uploads/1998-mac-intyre-et-al-mlj.pdf>
- Marzban, A., & Davaji, S. (2015). The effect of authentic texts on motivation and reading comprehension of EFL students at intermediate level of proficiency. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(1), 85-91. doi:10.17507/tpls.0501.11
- McCranie, S. (n.d.). Retrieved December 16, 2015 from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1252243-the-master-has-failed-more-times-than-the-beginner-has>

- Moeller, A., & Nugent, K. (2014). Building intercultural competence in the language classroom. In S. Dhonau (Ed.) *Unlock the Gateway to Communication*. Central States Conference Report. Eau Clair, WI: Crown Prints. Retrieved from:
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1160&context=teachlearnfacpub>
- Moran, P. (2001). Defining culture. In *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice* (chap. 3). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Nugent, K., & Catalano, T. (2015). Critical cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom. *NECTFL Review*, 75, 15-30. Retrieved from:
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1193&context=teachlearnfacpub>
- Orawiwatnakul, W., & Wichadee, S. (2017). An investigation of undergraduate students' beliefs about autonomous language learning. *International Journal of Instruction*, 10(1), 117-132. Retrieved from: http://www.e-iji.net/dosyalar/iji_2017_1_8.pdf
- Paesani, K., Allen, H., & Dupuy, B. (2016). *A multiliteracies framework for collegiate foreign language teaching*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Pawlak, M. (2012). The dynamic nature of motivation in language learning: A classroom perspective. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2(2), 249-278. Retrieved from:
<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=905df345-054b-4427-8ce1-37910daf502a%40sessionmgr4009&vid=1&hid=4210>

- Porto, M. (2013). Language and intercultural education: An interview with Michael Byram. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, (2), 143-162. doi: 10.1080/1554480x.2013.769196
- Richards, J. (2002). Accuracy and fluency revisited. In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos (Eds.) *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rifkin, B. (2000). Video in the proficiency-based advanced conversation class: An example from the Russian-language curriculum. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(1), 63-70. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2000.tb00891.x
- Rifkin, B. (2002). A case study of the acquisition of narration in Russian: At the intersection of foreign language education, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 46(3), 465-481. doi: 10.2307/3220197
- Ruiz-Cecilia, R. (2012). Narrowing cultural boundaries in the EFL classroom: Fairy tales from India. *RESLA*, (25), 225-243. Retrieved from: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=92180068-c5bc-4527-a279-8fd70183935d%40sessionmgr114&vid=1&hid=113>
- Ruse, C., & Hopton, M. (1992). *The Cassell dictionary of literary and language terms*. London: Cassell Publishers Limited.
- Shrum, J., & Glisan, E. (2010). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction* (4th ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Spicer-Escalante, M. L. (2015, August). *Self-Observations of Teaching as an Alternative to Peer Evaluations and as a Tool to Promote Personal and Institutional Growth*.

Paper presented at the meeting of the Empowering Teaching Excellence Conference, Logan, UT.

Spicer-Escalante, M., & de Jonge-Kannan, K. (2014). Cultural mismatch in pedagogy workshops: Training non-native teachers in communicative language teaching. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(12), 2437-2444.

doi:10.4304/tpls.4.12.2437-2444

Suzuki, M. (2009). The compatibility of L2 learners' assessment of self- and peer revisions of writing with teachers' assessment. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(1), 137-148.

Retrieved from:

<http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/85702642?accountid=14761>

Suzuki, Y. (2015). Self-assessment of Japanese as a second language: The role of experiences in the naturalistic acquisition. *Language Testing*, 32(1), 63-81. doi: 10.1177/0265532214541885

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Swan, O. (2014). Just how important is explanation?: A response. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 58(2), 307-321. Retrieved from:

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8d4c2b19-a22d-47b8-a1b5-21375a3d7946%40sessionmgr4006&vid=15&hid=4104>

Tannen, D. (2006). Language and culture. In R.W. Fasold & J. Connor-Linton (Eds.) *An introduction to language and linguistics*. New-York: Cambridge University Press.

- Tatsuki, D., & Houck, N. (2010). *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- The National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages* (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from: <https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>
- Tucker, G., & Lambert, W. (1973). Sociocultural aspects of language study. In J. W. Oller & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Focus on the learner: Pragmatic perspectives for the language teacher*. Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.
- Uribe, D., Leloup, J., & Haverluk, T. (2014). Assessing intercultural competence growth using direct and indirect measures. *NECTFL Review*, (73), 15-33. Retrieved from: <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=d3c6814b-586b-46fc-8042-c4e1ada4dbdc%40sessionmgr4001&vid=1&hid=4210>
- VanPatten, B. (2002). Processing Instruction: An update. *Language Learning*, 52(4), 755-803. Retrieved from: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=44bb3494-62f6-4bc7-bf40-cdb53a7ae6c5%40sessionmgr104&vid=1&hid=121>
- VanPatten, B. (2004). Input processing in second language acquisition. In B. VanPatten (Ed.), *Processing instruction: Theory, research, and commentary* (pp. 5–31). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- VanPatten, B. (2015). Foundations of processing instruction. *IRAL: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 53(2), 91-109. doi:10.1515/iral-2015-0005

- VanPatten, B., & Borst, S. (2012). The roles of explicit information and grammatical sensitivity in Processing Instruction: Nominative-Accusative case marking and word order in German L2. *Foreign Language Annals*, 45(1), 92-109. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2012.01169.x
- VanPatten, B., Collopy, E., & Qualin, A. (2012). Explicit information and processing instruction with nominative and accusative case in Russian as a second language: Just how important is explanation? *Slavic and East European Journal*, 56(2), 256-276. Retrieved from: <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8d4c2b19-a22d-47b8-a1b5-21375a3d7946%40sessionmgr4006&vid=19&hid=4104>
- VanPatten, B., & Hopkins, W. (2015). Can-Do Statements for a basic language program. *CLEAR News*, 19(2), 1-5. Retrieved from: http://clear.msu.edu/clear/files/5714/4467/5941/CLEAR_Fall_15_Final.pdf
- VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (2007). Introduction: The nature of theories. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories of second language acquisition* (pp. 1–16). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vellenga, H. (2004). Learning pragmatics from ESL & EFL textbooks: How likely? *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 8(2). Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1068091.pdf>
- Waninge, F., Dörnyei, Z., & De Bot, K. (2014). Motivational dynamics in language learning: Change, stability, and context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 98(3), 704-723. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2014.12118.x

- Wong, W., & VanPatten, B. (2003). The evidence is IN: Drills are OUT. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(3), 403-423. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2003.tb02123.x
- Wong, W., & VanPatten, B. (2004). Beyond experience and belief (or, Waiting for the evidence): A reply to Leaver et al.'s "Apples and oranges". *Foreign Language Annals*, 37(1), 133-142. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2004.tb02180.x