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EFFECTIVELY TEACHING A SECOND LANGUAGE:
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

by

Alexander Daniel Gatica

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

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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2017

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ABSTRACT

Effectively Teaching a Second Language:
Principles and Practices

by

Alexander Daniel Gatica: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2017

Major Professor: Dr. Joshua J. Thoms

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is the amalgamation of the author's research and experience during his time in the Master of Second Language Teaching program. The first section contains the Teaching Philosophy, which centers on applying effective teaching methods, increasing learner motivation, and incorporating technology into the classroom. The next section consists of three artifacts in which the author further investigates specific aspects of language teaching. The language paper focuses on the effect that identity has on motivation to learn a language. The literacy paper discusses how to increase vocabulary acquisition via a mobile-assisted language learning application called Duolingo. The culture paper addresses how to gain pragmatic competence in the speech act of apologizing among various Spanish-speaking communities. The portfolio concludes with two annotated bibliographies investigating communicative language teaching and mobile-assisted language learning.

(96 pages)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
ALM = Audiolingual Method
CALL = Computer-Assisted Language Learning
CLT = Communicative Language Teaching
EFL = English as a Foreign Language
ESL = English as a Second Language
FL = Foreign Language
ICC = Intercultural Communicative Competence
IFID = Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
L1 = First Language / Native Language
L2 = Second Language
MALL = Mobile-Assisted Language Learning
MSCLQ = Mobile-Assisted Seamless Chinese Learning Questionnaire
MSLT = Master of Second Language Teaching
PC = Personal Computer
SATS = Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement
SMS = Short Message Service
SRS = Spaced Repetition System
TBA = Task-Based Activity
TPS = Teaching Philosophy Statement
WTC = Willingness to Communicate

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is the culmination of my work over the past two years in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University. It contains the principles and practices that I have learned to be a more effective language instructor. The centerpiece is the Teaching Philosophy Statement, which outlines the three core concepts on which I base my teaching.

It is through applying effective teaching methods, increasing learner motivation, and incorporating technology in the classroom that will help my students effectively learn a second language. In addition to my teaching philosophy, this portfolio consists of three artifacts and two annotated bibliographies that detail the research that I have done; to better understand and implement specific aspects of language pedagogy.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

Through the years, my job aspirations have spanned from wanting to become a Power Ranger to being a doctor. Becoming a language teacher was not one of my aspirations. My first experiences with foreign languages were not good ones. Having paternal grandparents that lived in Argentina and did not speak English, I decided I wanted to learn Spanish when I was in middle school. It did not go well. As hard as I tried to memorize the vocabulary and grammar, it did not work for me. After years of taking Spanish courses during middle and high school and feeling like I had gotten nowhere, I gave up on learning Spanish.

A few years later, I decided to give Spanish another chance and I signed up for a class with Señor Jensen during my first year at Snow College. The difference was incredible. Señor Jensen taught in a way that was dynamic, understandable, and engaging. It was evident that he enjoyed his job and cared about his students. The classroom environment was relaxed, it was easy to make friends, and the topics we learned were applicable to real-life situations. I found myself not only learning Spanish, but wanting to put it into practice and speak out loud. Señor Jensen noticed my enthusiasm and encouraged me to continue. His confidence in me made a huge impact on my motivation for language learning.

Soon after, I found myself living in rural Bolivia struggling to communicate with the people that I would be living with for 2 years. I set the goal that I wanted to communicate as effectively as possible in Spanish and I was lucky enough to have a friend that supported me in my goal. A fellow missionary from Argentina named Leandro Viscarra was willing to answer my incessant questions and encouraged me to ask more.

He would correct my grammar and teach me new expressions and idioms. It was amazing to see the progress. Thanks to his help and encouragement, I was communicating effectively in Spanish within months. His willingness to answer questions and practice with me helped ignite a passion for language.

Once I got back to the United States, I continued to study languages. I decided to take an advanced Spanish class and found that Señor Jensen would be my teacher again. It was great to be in his class again. Even though I was fluent in Spanish, he still found ways that I could improve. He inspired me with his attitude toward language and teaching, and I realized that I wanted to major in Spanish and teach as a profession. I wanted to be able to share with others the knowledge and excitement that I had experienced in Señor Jensen's class.

After a few years of college, I decided to take a break and find out if I was truly committed to becoming a language teacher. I got a job in Taiwan and taught English as a Second Language for six months. I wanted to teach effectively so that my future students would not meet the same frustration that discouraged me from studying languages while I was in high school. Seeing different methods of how people learn language without living in a foreign country was fascinating to me and gave me hope that my future students might be able to attain fluency when they were motivated to do so, without moving to another country.

That experience of teaching in Taiwan solidified my resolve to become a teacher and also prepared me to teach in a university setting. My time in Taiwan was an unforgettable and enriching experience. I learned how to become comfortable in the classroom, use new techniques and methods for teaching, and interact with students in a

professional setting. Once I returned from Taiwan, I was sure that becoming a teacher was the right thing for me and I started looking at graduate programs so that I could teach at the university level.

I found the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University, and I knew it was where I could best improve my teaching skills and gain teaching experience in a university setting. It has been a great experience and I am looking forward to continuing my education and having a career as a language teacher.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Upon completing the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University, there are a variety of possible paths my professional career can follow. Over the past several years, I have taught language in varying contexts. Formally, I have had the opportunity to teach Spanish and Portuguese courses at Utah State University and I have taught English in Taiwan and China. All of these experiences have contributed to my development as a language teacher. From my experiences at Utah State University, I believe that I connect well with adults. I hope to teach Spanish at the university level; therefore, this portfolio is written in the context of teaching Spanish at a North American university.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Learning a foreign language is a relatively common goal, but it is evident that many who choose to start their language learning journey never actually attain their goal. People often take foreign language classes while they are in middle or high school. Unfortunately, it is all too common to hear that they do not remember anything they learned in their language classes (Wong, 2012). A variety of factors contribute to these circumstances and specific factors can be influenced to better assist my college students in their language learning journey.

The language instructor is extremely influential in a student's language learning. An instructor's influence can inspire students to push themselves and reach new heights or an instructor can diminish students' enthusiasm for learning and hinder their language learning experience. I aspire to be the kind of teacher that inspires students to excel in their language learning. My teaching philosophy is based on three pillars that help me better meet the needs of my students: 1) applying effective teaching methods, 2) increasing learner motivation, and 3) incorporating technology in the classroom.

Applying effective teaching methods

The popular 1986 film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* gives a humorous portrayal of a stereotypical classroom. The instructor speaks in a dreary monotone, he incessantly spouts out information, the class participation is nil, and the students are bored out of their minds. While it is funny to watch, this portrayal is often all too accurate in today's educational system. Many can relate to this exact experience because it has happened to them. It is expected that instructors be dull and long-winded, constantly giving information while their students take notes. The focus of the classroom is at all times on

the instructor. This is a stereotype that should be broken, especially in the language classroom.

This stereotype has been propagated by certain methods employed by language teachers for years. One of these methods is called the Audiolingual Methodology (ALM). According to ALM, language learning “takes place through habit formation. Habits are formed through repetition, imitation, and reinforcement” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 13). There is a large emphasis on avoiding errors, because ALM claims that errors are the results of bad habits (Farahani & Salajegheh, 2015; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). ALM teaches that proper language habits are formed through practicing accurate sentence patterns and memorizing dialogues. While the formation of habits is a good thing, it is not the most efficient method of language instruction (Cook, 2013; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In response to years of the ineffectiveness of the ALM in second-language learning, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was developed (Candlin, 2016). Instead of habit formation and rote repetition, CLT focuses on providing students with opportunities to practice real-world communication. Kohn (2011) writes that “Knowledge is less likely to be retained if it has been acquired so that one will perform well on a test, as opposed to learning in the context of pursuing projects and solving problems that are personally meaningful” (p. 2). CLT provides personally meaningful contexts for language learners to study in an environment in which they can practice new acquired language skills (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

In this new approach, the role of the teacher changes drastically for the better, from that of a simple language model, to that of a language architect (Cook, 2013). The

teacher provides the needed materials and task-based activities (TBAs). TBAs are tasks that “involve communicative language use in which the participants' attention is focused on meaning rather than linguistic structure” (Griffiths, 2015, p. 49), and students create their own answers, express themselves, share opinions, and negotiate meaning (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). As an architect, I design activities in which it is the “responsibility of the students to participate fully” (Ballman, et al., 2001, p. 8), and they build upon what is given to them. Class time focuses on student interaction and communication in which they practice real world situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and apply what is taught. With the evolution of the role of the teacher, the role of the student also changed (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

For decades, the role of the student in the language learning classroom was to be a parrot. The instructor would say the phrases that the students needed to learn and the students would repeat until those phrases became a habit (Cook, 2013). The students would get to the point where they could repeat the words and phrases without error but in many cases, they did not even know the actual meaning of what they were saying or know how to use what they were saying in a real-life context (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). If I had been taught in this way, I would not be a language teacher today.

Thanks to the CLT method of language learning, students are no longer parrots but active participants (Griffiths, 2015). The students do the actual construction and build upon what the architect has designed. The student is no longer a note taker who often falls asleep in class but an active participant. Instead of the teacher talking for the majority of the class period, students speak to each other in pairs and groups (Ballman, et al., 2001). The method of getting students to talk is through task-based activities.

Shrum and Glisan (2010) state that “social interaction is the key to second language acquisition” (p. 25), and that is why I use task-based activities in the classroom. One of the best methods of making sure students are active participants in a language classroom is through task-based activities. They are characterized by three main principles: they consist of meaningful exchanges of information, are learner-centered, and are based on a series of steps that culminate in the completion of a communicative goal (Ballman, et al., 2001). The focus is on real-life communication and not grammar principles. Some examples of task-based activities based on real-life communication are situations in which students share their phone numbers, create vacation itineraries, or describe their family members.

Task-based activities take the center of attention away from the instructor and focus it on the students (Ballman, et al., 2001; Griffiths, 2015; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Most of the activities are done in pairs or groups so that every student’s time in the class is focused on speaking and other kinds of application activities. Grammar instruction and reviewing vocabulary lists are not the focus of the lessons. Instead, the students use grammar and vocabulary to attain their communication goals with each other as they negotiate meaning.

Increasing learner motivation

Second language teachers should be constantly searching for ways to help their students maintain their motivation for language learning. Dörnyei (2005) states that “all the other factors involved in second language acquisition (SLA) presuppose motivation to some extent” (p. 8). While investigating how motivation affects students acquiring a

second language, I have found certain strategies that help students maintain and increase motivation throughout their language learning journey.

The environment in a classroom has a tremendous effect on learner motivation. I agree with Kohn's (2011) claim that "what we do doesn't matter nearly as much as how kids experience what we do" (p. 67). Being empathetic is an essential trait to possess, not only as a teacher but also as a human being. Many problems could be prevented or solved if we all strived to be more empathetic, even when being empathetic is difficult. Most of my favorite teachers were the ones that could relate to their students. They made sure that they were not only teaching well but also that we understood what was taught. Empathy creates a better classroom environment in which students are more willing to share and communicate (Krashen, 1982).

Letting the students know that language learning is not a competition also helps to increase motivation. Shrum and Glisan (2010) write that "the process of language learning is a continuum on which learners progress at different rates" (p. 227). It would appear that the students and even language teachers themselves often forget that everyone learns at a different speed. Teachers should ensure that students not judge themselves too harshly if the language learning process is not as easy or quick for them as it is for others (Dörnyei, 2005). Teachers should help them understand that if they are diligent, they can reach the same level of proficiency as those who learn more quickly. Motivation is more important than speed in the process of language learning. In the context of communicative language teaching, the emphasis on error-free repetition takes a backseat, and students no longer need to stress themselves out unnecessarily about making mistakes (Candlin, 2016). Mistakes are inevitable and should be acceptable (Lee &

VanPatten, 2003). “It is essential to set realistic standards for accuracy, particularly grammatical accuracy. It may not be appropriate to expect error-free language or native-like performance from students at any level of instruction” (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010, p. 124). I remember the difference between my language teachers that set expectations that were too high and the ones that had realistic standards for accuracy. I remember doing much better in the classes with realistic expectations and I strive to have the same consideration for my students.

One of my strengths as a teacher is my ability to inspire confidence in students so that they feel comfortable expressing themselves regardless of their current proficiency level. Students do not need to worry about making errors while they are in my class, but that does not mean that I supply no corrective feedback (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Students receive feedback on how to better express themselves and avoid certain errors when communicating but in a way that avoids shaming or embarrassing them.

Teachers provide corrective feedback in appropriate ways to learners so that they note errors, and take steps to avoid them so they can communicate more efficiently. Not identifying and correcting an error can lead to its fossilization, and the learner commits the same error repeatedly simply because he or she is not aware of it (Rahal, 2016). Corrective feedback also provides L2 learners with opportunities to create an internal monitor in which they can self-correct, and by finding and preventing errors, they can become more proficient L2 speakers.

Effective language teaching “does not focus on performance errors but rather on creative language used by people as they employ speech to achieve their interactional goals” (LoCastro, 2012, p. 19). This is the best approach because focusing on errors

breeds criticism and a lack of creativity and emotion in communication with others. I strive to encourage my students to express themselves with their own voice and personality.

Along with corrective feedback, another method of improving L2 learner motivation is through Can Do Statements. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2015) has provided this excellent tool as a motivation for learning. Can Do Statements reflect tasks that language learners are able to perform as their language proficiency increases. They show students all the things that they will learn to do and allow them to check off those things as they do them. At the beginning of each semester, I show my students a list of Can Do Statements. They see everything they will be able to do by the end of the semester, and they prepare themselves accordingly.

Helping students identify how much they can do in a foreign language improves performance and motivation. The ACTFL Can Do Statements are available online so that students can see them at any time. If students desire, they can print out the list of Can Do Statements and cross each box off one by one as the semester progresses. Tatsuki and Houck (2010) state that “classroom assessment of learners’ competence is an indispensable component of instruction” (p. 89). Can Do Statements can be a great means of assessing each students’ progress (Moeller & Yu, 2015). I wish that when I was a Spanish student I could have had a list of Can Do Statements to cross off, so that I could have seen my rate of progress. I have seen that the use of Can Do Statements in my courses has helped my students stay motivated as they continue their language journey.

Another aspect of increasing motivation is through incorporating culture into the curriculum. LoCastro (2012) writes that “second language learners must be not only

competent in the target language, but also in the cultural practices of a community” (p. 46). In my classroom students have the opportunity to learn about culture through the development of pragmatic skills, learning about the histories, traditions, and music of various Spanish-speaking countries. My students have expressed that they enjoy the opportunities to visit celebrations, learn new songs, and bring food from various countries. "Learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its contextual use. Knowledge of linguistic structure alone does not carry with it any special insight into the political, social, religious, or economic system” (Seelye, 1976, p. 27). As a language instructor, it is my duty to prepare my students to not only be linguistically competent but culturally competent as well.

Incorporating technology

Along with effective teaching methods and motivating learners, it is essential to be aware of the latest methods and technologies in order to be effective as a teacher. “Whatever the future may hold, two things are certain: Technologies and technologists have much to offer language teachers, and language teachers are eager to find new ways to use technology to work in the service of instruction” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 473). Some may worry whether technology might become so advanced in the future that language instructors are rendered obsolete and would all be out of a job. I believe that technology will never be able to replace the quality of person-to-person interaction, but I am nevertheless very interested in the new technologies that develop and how I can use them to enhance my teaching and the experience of my students.

Studies have found the use of technology to be effective in many areas of second language acquisition, particularly in the field of vocabulary acquisition and retention

(Crompton, 2013; Lu, 2008; Stockwell, 2010). L2 learners need to overcome many obstacles when learning a new language, and “students often find that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is an obstacle to learning” (Azabdaftari & Mozaheb, 2012, p. 48). Vocabulary acquisition is important because “learners must develop fluency in vocabulary and must learn to access it easily and accurately during communicative interchanges.” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 179). Even before I started studying languages, I had a certain affinity for vocabulary. I enjoyed using and understanding words that weren’t commonly used by the groups of people with whom I interacted. That love for vocabulary carried over into my language study because I knew that I wanted to be able to express myself exactly as I wanted without having to find roundabout ways to express myself and was also able to speak languages in a way that was understandable but also personalized.

An area of technology that is rapidly expanding is that of smartphones. As of 2015, 86% of college students own and use a smartphone on a regular basis (Poll, 2015). The fact that so many students use smartphones can be used to a teacher’s advantage. These smartphones can download various language apps, which studies have shown can be an effective means of language acquisition. Some advantages of mobile learning include the ability to study vocabulary “anytime and anywhere”, being able to “receive instant feedback”, and “surf the Internet and find different examples while encountering problems and mistakes” (Azabdaftari & Mozaheb, 2012, p. 54). Furthermore, Thoms (2011) indicates that “As technologies continue to evolve and new tools are integrated in our academic, social, and personal lives, FL instructors who know little about these tools will need to learn how to use them or face the possibility of being replaced by others who

do” (p. 211). Instead of shying away from things like phones in the classroom, I look for ways that students can use these new technologies to help them learn, and I look forward to seeing what new technologies are developed in the future and to incorporating them into the language classroom.

Conclusion

With the help of the right tools, all of my students can overcome many difficulties that the study of a foreign language presents. It is my goal that my students will be guaranteed the opportunity to express themselves to the best of their ability. When I apply effective teaching methods, increase learner motivation, and incorporate technology, my students will experience language learning as it should be - dynamic and satisfying.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATION

Just as medical students learn how to become doctors from observing professionals, language teachers have opportunities to observe how others teach in order to improve their practice. Being able to observe how other language instructors teach and conduct their classrooms has been invaluable and plays a crucial role in my development as a teacher. Of the observations that I have done, I will focus on four. A beginning Spanish course, two beginning Chinese courses, and an intermediate Portuguese course.

During the first semester Spanish language course observation, the instructor had the students move the desks in the classroom to make the facilitation of group activities more convenient. This also enabled the instructor to walk among the students and see the progress they were making while filling out a mock job application. Moving desks around to see how it can affect activities was not something I had taken into account in my previous teaching experiences. However, since this observation, I have taken advantage of the opportunities that moving students' locations can offer.

The instructor also demonstrated proficiency in the use of technology. In addition to using the standard overhead projector, laser pointer and PowerPoint presentation, he utilized a job search website from a Spanish-speaking country. The goal of the class was to have students discuss professions and find an actual job listing from that country and discuss it in pairs with classmates. I felt it was an excellent real-world application of the subject material. It was also an effective means of exposing the students to Hispanic culture in which they could see what kind of jobs were available, what the job requirements are and seeing how much salaries were in that particular country. After seeing this utilization of the internet as a means of real-world application and exposure to

Hispanic cultures, I have followed suit and searched for opportunities in which I can effectuate similar activities with the classes that I teach.

In the first beginning Chinese language course that I visited, I was reminded of how much a specific language can affect a course. I found that the students were much quieter and when they were speaking, the interactions were much shorter. This could be attributed to the fact that it was early in the semester and the complexity of the Chinese language. I feel that the instructor adapted well to these challenges. She made sure not to progress too quickly and checked to see that students had understood the instructions before continuing. When I first began teaching, I would give instructions in the target language, sometimes too quickly and did not check for comprehension before attempting to start the activity. I was met with blank stares more times than I would care to admit. The observation of this Chinese course helped me to adapt my teaching to match the level of the students and not to rush through instructions and concepts too quickly.

The other beginning Chinese course that I visited was taught by a different instructor and there was a tangible difference in the classroom environment. It could have been the differences in personality or ages of the instructors, but this other instructor had created a more lighthearted dynamic in which the students appeared more willing to communicate in the target language, despite their lack of experience. If the students spoke with an error, it would be acknowledged but in a way that did not make the student feel inadequate or embarrassed. Being the oldest of my siblings, I got into the habit of trying to appear smart and correct my siblings at every opportunity and never worried about how obnoxious it may appear. I feel that this habit may have been carried on into the corrective feedback that I provide for the students. After observing this course, I made

a conscious effort to give corrective feedback in a way that neither makes the students uncomfortable or makes the student unwilling to share in the target language in future interactions.

The intermediate Portuguese language class was fun to visit because it was an accelerated course for Spanish-speakers and I was interested in seeing how much their proficiency in Spanish would carry over to their acquisition of Portuguese. Some of the students were able to communicate quite effectively and this enabled the instructor to carry out activities that many lower-division classes would have difficulty in achieving. The students were able to carry out conversations that lasted more than a few sentences and they were more willing to ask questions and share opinions.

What stood out to me during the observation was the class time that was devoted to learning specific grammar concepts. The Portuguese grammar concepts that the instructor was teaching were concepts that followed the same rules as Spanish grammar. Since all of the students were already fluent in Spanish, it could be assumed that the majority of the students had already mastered the concept. It would not be necessary to review the grammar in a way that assumes the students are not familiar with the linguistic forms. A few specific questions could be made to check to see that the students remember how to use that specific grammar rule. Once their familiarity with the concept is verified, a short activity could be done in which they demonstrate their ability to carry out the task in Portuguese. After they have shown proficiency in the task, a new grammar concept or set of vocabulary can be focused on.

By being familiar with the students' past experience with languages, class time can be utilized more efficiently. It would be unnecessary to spend the same amount of

time explaining a concept to L2 learners with similar experience to beginners with no previous experience with the grammar concept. Thus certain language concepts can be reviewed quickly and other concepts that do not exist or are unfamiliar in the target language can be focused on in more depth.

Overall, it has been a great opportunity to observe different instructors and their methods. There is always something to learn or be reminded of and these experiences help me become a better instructor. My hope is that when I am observed by other instructors, they are able to find ways to improve and also share what they believe I can further improve.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STATEMENT

Introduction and context

This Self-Assessment of Teaching Statement (SATS) examines a lesson that I taught at Utah State University during the Fall Semester of 2015. On October 12, 2015, I taught the SPAN 1010: Beginning Spanish class for a 50-minute class period. I was observed by fellow graduate student Aaron Salgado. I had my colleague observe me and film the class while I taught in order for me to be able to improve my teaching skills, and apply the theories and practices that I had learned thus far in my graduate courses. This SATS will include feedback that I received from my colleague and from my own observation of the class that was filmed. Before the observation, I sent Aaron Salgado my lesson plan for the day.

SPAN 1010: Beginning Spanish I is a 3 credit, 15-week class that meets three times a week for 50 minutes each period. I was the main instructor of the class. SPAN 1010 is a class taken in part to help students gain proficiency in Spanish to fulfill the language proficiency requirement for a Bachelor of Arts degree. During that semester, there were 18 students (15 females, 3 males) enrolled in the class. They were all native English speakers between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. Twenty-four of the students were from the United States and one was from Belize, and all of them pursued a variety of different majors. The majority of the students were at the novice-low level. A few students that had taken Spanish classes during high school were near the novice-mid level.

Guide and protocol

To optimize the information received from the observation, I had the lesson filmed and I then watched the recorded portion and wrote my thoughts and impressions, while also receiving feedback from my colleague. This was my first semester teaching Spanish at the university level and I still had much to learn. I presented the lesson with a PowerPoint presentation and short interactive group activities in order to apply what I had been learning and to help keep the student's attention.

Objectives of the lesson

By the end of the lesson, students would be able to

1. create an itinerary for their vacation
2. identify which clothes to bring on vacation
3. find things to do and places to visit in that country
4. share their vacation plans with other students

The class began with a five-minute warm up activity. The students watched a short video with some of the famous landmarks and popular places to visit in Latin American countries and Spain. Then, in pairs, the students decided where they wanted to travel to.

For the next activity, students needed to decide which clothes they wanted to put in their hypothetical suitcase. As a class, we reviewed clothing vocabulary and what clothes would be appropriate for the location they will visit. The students then picked at least five different articles of clothing that they needed to bring. Students then got into pairs and shared with their partner what they will be taking and discussed whether they will need to bring any other articles of clothing.

After that, in their respective groups, the students looked up activities to do in that country and discussed with each other what they would like to do or see. The students picked at least five things they want to do. Next, still in pairs, the students decided on what days and at what time they wanted to do their activities.

When finished with their itineraries, the students got into groups of four and asked each other questions related to their vacation. They asked where they were going, what kind of clothes they will bring, and what their itinerary would be. Next, the second pair of students answered questions and vice-versa. After they had shared, the students discussed why they chose what they did and if they would consider trading vacation destinations.

For the closing activity, the students volunteered to share which of the vacation plans they were looking forward to the most. Then as a class, the students voted on which vacation they would like to go on the most. At the end of class, the students turned in their vacation itinerary that they created.

Suggestions from the observer

Aaron was a great source of suggestions and feedback. He gave me a list of things he liked and things that he would do differently. Among the things that he liked, he said that it was good that the students were spending so much time creating output. The students were speaking and communicating with each other for the majority of the class period. The material was relevant, fun, and an opportunity to learn more about Latin culture. The TA was an asset to the class in which he could provide additional instruction and information. The stress level in the class appeared to be low and the instructor appeared to have good rapport with the students. The instructions for the activities were short and concise, and appeared to be easily understood.

Among the feedback and additional comments for me, he noted that some of the students were having side conversations in English when the teacher was on the other side of the room or helping other students. The teacher did not ask for volunteers when asking for answers, he would pick students without them raising their hand. The TA would occasionally give additional information after the teacher was done giving instructions, which may appear as a blow to credibility. It might be better to not have the students vote on which vacation they liked the most since it did not involve much verbal communication.

Suggestions for myself

Like many people, it can be excruciating watching a video of yourself but there are valuable things that can be learned from watching one's own performance. I noticed that I should make sure to enunciate clearly and not speak too fast. I want to start asking and waiting for my students to volunteer to give answers instead of me just calling on them without volunteering. I will also make sure that all the activities can involve some aspect of meaningful communication and the creation of original dialogue. Creating more situations in which they can discuss and have real conversations is something I also want to improve.

Reflection and conclusion

Since it was my first time being observed, I was not quite sure what to expect but having a fellow classmate be there made it a lot less nerve-racking. At the time, I was satisfied with how the class turned out. The students were able to use a good amount of different vocabulary and talk about a variety of different things. Having the opportunity to be observed is one of the best ways in which I can receive feedback from fellow

students and instructors, which not only identifies what I am doing well, but also reveals what can be improved.

I was glad that my students felt comfortable asking questions and for clarification but I noticed that some of my students would ask in English without really trying to ask in Spanish. I believe they did this because they automatically assumed that their question would be too difficult to phrase in Spanish. An improvement that I wanted to see in my classroom was to have the students at least attempt to phrase their questions in Spanish or use the words they already know in the target language and only use English words when they do not know how to say something in Spanish.

Overall, it was a valuable experience to be able to observe myself and to be observed. I was able to become aware of aspects that I may not have otherwise noticed and my teaching has improved as a result. Reflecting back on this experience has also been advantageous in which I have been able to see how much my teaching has progressed since that first semester of teaching at the university level and my goal is to continue progressing as a teacher.

LANGUAGE PAPER

Motivation and Identity in the L2 Classroom

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This paper was originally written with my colleagues Hyrum Hansen and Coral Ventura as the final paper for LING 6500 *Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Practice* taught by Dr. Thoms during the fall semester of 2016. This paper was written to explore how identity can affect motivation in the language classroom. Motivation is one of the greatest factors in the success of acquiring the language so I wanted to investigate how to increase motivation among my students. I found the aspect of how identity affects motivation to be particularly intriguing because I wanted to better understand how my identity has influenced me to continue studying languages and how I could share this motivation with students. This paper covers the factors that affect motivation, the influence of the teacher, the effects of motivational strategies, and a hypothetical study.

Motivation and Identity in the L2 Classroom

Many students in North American schools take language courses but only attain low levels of fluency in the target language (Ganschow, Sparks, & Javorsky, 1998). It is common to hear students say that they do not remember anything they learned in their language class and have given up on learning that language. As a language teacher, I am interested in investigating the factors that contribute to the phenomenon of language learners losing the motivation to study language. Dornyei (2005) stated that “all the other factors involved in second language acquisition (SLA) presuppose motivation to some extent” (p. 8) and of all the elements related to L2 learning, motivation is regarded as one of the most important factors (Lanvers, 2016). By investigating how motivation affects students acquiring a second language, I as an instructor hope to better understand how to maintain and increase motivation in my students throughout their language learning endeavors.

Theoretical Framework

From the many studies that focus on motivation issues in L2 learning, many are written from a sociocultural perspective, in which “humans develop the ability to acquire meaningful speech in their interaction with others” (Eun & Lim, 2009, p. 16). As a language teacher, I strive to provide meaningful interaction among students and teachers in the L2 classroom because “meaningful interaction among individuals is the greatest motivating force in human development and learning” (Eun & Lim, 2009, p. 13). Furthermore, “sociocultural theory illuminates the key motivation concepts of identity” (Ushioda, 2006, p. 155). This piqued my interest in how motivation is affected by identity and how identity is affected by the social setting of an L2 classroom. Takac (2014) writes

that “language learning is socially rooted, and in order to master an L2, individuals need to develop an L2 identity” (p. 80). Eun and Lim (2009) wrote that by applying sociocultural theoretical principles into practice within the L2 classroom, an individual’s L2 learning process could be heightened and quickened. In light of these facts, this paper seeks to better understand to what extent the teacher’s interaction with students influences their identity and affects their motivation to produce oral output in the L2 classroom.

Factors that affect motivation

Concerning identity-based motivation, Oyserman and Destin (2010) discuss the complexities of a multifaceted identity and their influence on a learner’s motivation. In their study, they state that learners “prefer identity-congruent actions over identity-incongruent ones” (p. 1001) and that they will interpret difficulties and challenges they face in the classroom based on this premise. If they encounter challenges that feel identity-incongruent, the student is more likely to give up and say “these behaviors are pointless and not for people like me” (p. 1001). In other words, their motivation will be lacking and they will be more prone to give up on a task or action.

Mutluoglu (2016) seeks to “find out whether an individual’s motivational units, namely the ideal L2 self, academic self-concept and ICC, predict one’s L2 WTC” (p. 28). The ideal self is the belief an individual holds about who they would like to become and how they would like to be seen by others. The second motivational aspect is the academic self. Academic self is defined as an “individual’s knowledge and perceptions about themselves in achievement situations” (p. 30) in relation to their studies. The third motivational aspect is the learner’s intercultural communicative competence. Liddicoat

(2002) stated that communicative competence “shapes what we say, when we say it, and how we say it from the simplest language we use to the most complex” (p. 9). Mutluoglu (2016) then extended this principle’s validity to be true across cultures. He defined intercultural competence as “the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other’s cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment” (p. 9).

Mutluoglu (2016) found that at a statistically significant level, there was indeed a correlation between these aspects of motivation and their influence on the learner. The strongest correlation was found in the relationship between the ideal self and the concept of academic self. The second half of the study explored the predicting effect that these aspects of motivation had on the learner’s willingness to communicate and produce oral speech. The study consisted of 173 learners of English at the university level, who were enrolled in an intensive English course. The participants’ ideal L2 self concepts were measured by means of an Ideal L2 Self measure and academic self-concept, and ICC levels were elicited through questionnaires. Willingness to communicate (WTC) was measured through means of a WTC scale. The study found that the strongest predictor of WTC was the ideal self, with the academic self coming in second. The study also found that a teacher’s awareness of the learner’s ideal self enables the teacher to anticipate better the learner’s WTC and make any necessary adjustments which can increase the learner’s motivation to speak. If proficiency in the target language is part of one’s ideal self, this will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language because of our psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and possible future

self. Dörnyei (2005) claims that “a major source of any absence of L2 motivation is likely to be the lack of a developed ideal self” (p. 121).

Öz (2015) sought to discover whether or not there was a relationship between the ideal self and ICC, which could also be used as a predictor and indicator of a learner’s motivation to interact and communicate within the L2 classroom. He argues that while ICC is not necessarily an aspect of identity, it influences the learner’s identity because of the learner’s ability or inability to integrate into the target language culture. The study states that ICC does in fact enhance L2 learning because the L2 learner not only benefits from becoming more competent in speaking and listening in the L2 but also serves as a “cultural diplomat” and a “mediator between different cultures” (p. 42). The study consisted of 216 undergraduate English majors at the University of Ankara in Turkey. Data was collected through an anonymous survey in regards to the ideal L2 self and the ICC. The conclusions of the study were that undergraduates displaying high levels of ICC and ideal L2 self were aware of the importance of ICC in establishing intercultural communication.

This was found to be an intrinsic motivator for learning an L2 and that there was a positive correlation between ICC and L2 ideal self and that these entities, again acting off each other, motivate learners to learn an L2 in the classroom and to strive to interact in that setting. Because of the close relationship of these two parts of identity, I agree that ICC is indeed an indicator of the willingness to communicate in the classroom. There is considerable evidence to suggest that identity has a major effect on motivation in the L2 classroom. Furthermore, the preceding research suggests that there is a relationship

between all the different aspects of identity, and I therefore argue that these aspects can predict whether or not a learner will be motivated to interact within the L2 classroom.

It is important as well to analyze what influence each aspect has on motivation. A study done by Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013) suggested that there was a relationship between ICC and motivation. Their initial premise was that in the interconnected world of today, “citizens’ differential levels of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) can play an important role in the amount of enthusiasm, time, and efforts they invest in second or foreign language (L2) communication and learning” (p. 28). Their ability to integrate into the target culture or global culture influences their identity in a larger group context. They further mention that ICC is related to intellectual tolerance and human understanding. Responses like tolerance and understanding are part of what affects the learner’s self-efficacy (i.e., what a learner believes they are capable of doing) in group settings within the classroom environment and leads to affecting motivation.

The study was conducted using 180 participants working on their B.A. in English Literature/Translation at several Iranian universities. The study found a positive link between a learner’s ICC and motivation. The results of the study found that learners who have a tendency “to reach out to other cultures and people are more inclined to learn foreign or second languages” (Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013, p. 302). The study also sought to see if gender made a difference in ICC levels and found no positive correlation.

Erten and Burden (2012) aimed to find the existing relationship between students’ test performance, attributions, and academic self-concept or identity. For this purpose, the researchers sought to investigate to what students attribute their performance in a school

based achievement test. The interaction between the students' level of achievement, academic self-concept, and students' attribution.

There were 276 participants from primary school children from five Turkish cities with the same socioeconomic background. The students had been studying English for three years at the time of the study and were an average of 12.5 years of age. The same syllabus was followed by all teachers across the country. Students provided their last English exam score and these scores were used to represent achievement tests of the common syllabus that was followed in the Turkish state schools.

Academic self-concept in this study was measured using Myself-As-a-Learner Scale (MALS), which is a questionnaire used to measure learners' perception of themselves. Students were asked to describe themselves, what they were good at, their likes and dislikes and how they perceived learning. The total scores possible using the MALS were a minimum of 20 points and 100 points maximum. Students were also asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of nine questions, with possible answers from "Totally Agree" to "Totally Disagree" based on a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was based on an internal/external vs. controllable/uncontrollable framework. Both questionnaires were given to schools that had previously agreed to participate and the scores averaged 65.3 %, which was considered satisfactory.

The study found that there were four causal attributions that students used more often to explain their scores on their most recent English exams, which were: the teacher; interest; ability; and long-term effort. Higher-achieving students referenced internal factors more than poor-scoring students placing the burden of responsibility within themselves. This supported the concept that higher-achieving participants exhibited

greater internal and personal control attributions. However, the study also found that students who performed well gave credit to their teacher, ability and interest, more than their personal efforts. The conclusion was that both academic self-concept and learner attributions do have a relationship and have an effect on language learning outcomes in the L2 classroom. The study further revealed that academic self-concept and attribution in combination helped predict a student's success.

Influence of Teacher's Personality on Students

In her article on the role and influence of student-teacher relationships, Davis (2003) discusses the conceptualization of this relationship and its influence on social and cognitive development for students. Early conceptions of the teacher-student relationship saw the teacher as determining the relationship with the way that they used physical space, the expectations they had of their students' academic performance, the way they shared their attention, and their efforts to create a supportive classroom. While classrooms are less teacher-centered now and there is a consideration of the student's role in the classroom environment as well, the teacher still has considerable influence on the environment of the classroom and on the student's social development. Davis wrote (2003):

“Teachers operating as socializing agents... can influence the quality of students' social and intellectual experiences via their abilities to instill values in children such as the motivation to learn; by providing classroom contexts that stimulate children's motivation and learning; by addressing children's need to belong; by developing a social identity; and by serving a regulatory function for the development of emotional, behavioral, and academic skills” (p. 208).

From her research, Davis (2003) found that several themes concerning the student-teacher relationship emerged and it is these themes from which I base much of the evidence that the teacher does in fact have or at least can have a significant impact on the identity and motivation of the student in the L2 classroom. There were several conclusions that resulted from her research. First, there was strong evidence proposing that the teacher-child relationships had an influence on “social and cognitive outcomes as early as preschool” (p. 208) and continuing on into childhood and adolescence. Second, the study found that student-teacher relationships was affected “by the students’ beliefs about adults, about teachers, about themselves, and about the nature of adult-child interaction” (p. 208-209). The students’ beliefs on these subjects influenced their social motivational beliefs, their beliefs about their academic and social competence, their values, and their pursuit of academic and social goals in the classroom.

In dealing with students, Davis (2003) found that students’ motivation was influenced by the quality of relationships between students and teachers which were, in turn, influenced by the teachers’ motivations, interpersonal skills, instructional practices, and attempts to socialize. The fourth finding suggests that the quality of students’ relationships with teachers is a result of and mirrors the interpersonal culture of the classroom, as well as the opportunities given to students to invest in other relationships and the abilities of students to connect with the teacher as much as with the material and content.

Contemporary investigation into motivation in second language acquisition has been focused on factors affecting learner motivation. It has been concluded that teachers are “one of the most determinant factors of L2 learner’s motivation” (Al Kaboody, 2013,

p. 48). Some of these studies are focused on the positive influence teachers have on learners' motivation and have proposed that teachers are actually the most influential aspect of learners' L2 development. Teachers are the main reason for whether or not the majority of second language students engage in the process and persist on learning in the long run. The teacher in an L2 classroom plays the role of initiator, facilitator, and motivator. A good teacher becomes an ideal model for how the student wishes to speak in the target language. Learners reach their targets in L2 learning when teachers actively and positively attempt to enhance their motivation. The impact of the teaching strategies on motivation, however, should rely on students' perceptions of said strategies.

One study conducted by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), in which Hungarian teachers of EFL learners used a set of fifty-one motivational strategies in their classrooms, culminated with the proposal of ten motivational commandments for L2 classrooms. These commandments are: personal behavioral examples set by the instructor; relaxed and pleasant atmosphere; proper presentation of tasks to learners; good student-teacher relation or interaction; work towards better learners' self-confidence; work towards keeping learners interested; promote learners' autonomy; personalize the learning process; increase learners' goals; and make sure that learners are familiar with the target language culture. These commandments help teachers pay attention to their learners' self-identity as well as what motivates them as a group. As a result, students are more willing to participate and complete their learning process.

Other relevant factors that may impact motivation in L2 learners are their interaction with their teachers, a positive or negative learning experience, feedback and rewards as well as praise or punishment received. It is suggested that teachers should

figure out their learners' true reasons for learning the L2, help their students build challenging goals that are achievable and realistic, show students the different benefits of learning the L2, create a safe and welcoming environment for the students, and motivate students in their development of high, but realistic, intrinsic motivation. According to Al Kaboody (2013), teacher-related factors in learners' motivation can be categorized into three main components: material and methodology; teacher personality; and teachers' interaction with the learners.

The Effects of Motivational Strategies on Student Motivation

Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) studied the motivational aspects of L2 teachers' classroom conduct. The study consisted of two parts; the minute-by-minute collection of how the teachers conducted the lesson and a post-lesson appraisal of the teachers' qualities. The questionnaires addressed the students' attitudes towards their L2 classroom environment, their linguistic self-confidence, and L2 classroom anxiety. To increase the reliability of the study's appraisal of the role of teachers as motivators, a short rating scale was developed. This scale consisted of nine 6-point differential items that was to be completed at the end of each lesson, and the scale was specific to the teachers' behavior during the lesson.

The purpose of the study was to examine how the teacher behavior and motivational teaching affected the students' reaction, motivation, and their overall conduct in the classroom. Significant positive behavior was found to be particularly strong in L2 classrooms within the context of motivational research. Even in a culture where teaching practices tend to be more rigid and there is little space for motivational

practice, the inclusion of small motivational strategies resulted in significant differences in students' motivation (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 72).

Research questions

Of the many facets of identity that affect motivation, I seek to better understand the influence of ideal L2 self on students and how language instructors can affect the attainment of a student's ideal L2 self. In the following proposed study, I focus on the following research questions:

- 1) Can a teacher influence a student's ideal L2 self?
- 2) And if so, does the influence of the teacher on the students' ideal L2 self-motivate the students to communicate orally in the L2 classroom?

Setting and participants

The study will be conducted at Utah State University in Logan, Utah in the fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. There will be about 30 students, who will be enrolled in Intensive English Language Institute 1000: Conversational English, and will likely have similar competence levels in English due to results from a placement exam. The participants will vary in terms of their gender (female, male, and/or other). The 30 students will be divided into two classes of about 15 students each, with the same instructor teaching each course. With the control group, the instructor will teach the class with the same methods that they have employed in their previous semesters of teaching, most likely based on communicative language teaching (CLT). With the experimental group, the instructor will employ methods that help the students attain their ideal L2 self by reducing the discrepancy between their current and possible future self.

Some of the methods employed by the instructor with the experimental group will be modeling what behaviors are appropriate for the classroom, devoting more time in and outside of class to work with students one-on-one, developing closer teacher-student relationships, using language, gestures, and feedback in a way that positively affects the students' self-confidence, promoting learners' autonomy by encouraging self-directed learning, and ensuring that learners are familiar with the target language culture. With the control group, the instructor will teach the class from their traditional standpoint, with little to no emphasis on assisting students to attain their ideal L2 self.

Data Collection

Following Mutluoglu's (2016) lead, I would use an Ideal L2 Self Measure. The first part of the set of measurements will gather demographic information from participants. The participants will identify their gender, their level of English, and their ages. The second part will have a survey with ten, 5-point items ranging from 1 to 5 (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree) with statements like "I can imagine myself writing English fluently on social media" and "I can imagine myself having a discussion in English with an L1 English speaker." The survey will be given at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester to see if students mark higher scores on the statements, showing a higher attainment of ideal L2 self.

Both classes will be observed and recorded once a week. This will allow me to study the dynamics of each individual class, how the students interact with each other and with the teacher, and what differences are present when the methods for motivation are implemented and when they are absent. Target behaviors such as the frequency in which students participate will be recorded. The teacher's attitude and behavior, and how the

students respond, will be noted and accounted. Observation of the classes should be one of the most effective sources of qualitative data for the students' responses to the teacher techniques.

Conclusion

Through this study, I believe that as a language instructor, I will be able to increase student motivation by helping them attain their ideal L2 self. Over time, more research will be conducted on this specific subject and that methods and techniques employed by teachers will become more effective. From what I have learned about motivation, it has motivated me to continue studying its effect on L2 learners, will make me a more effective instructor, and motivate students to continue their language journey until they attain their ideal L2 self.

LITERACY PAPER

Enhancing L2 Vocabulary Acquisition via Duolingo

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This paper was originally turned in as the final paper for LING 6010 *Research in Second Language Learning* taught by Dr. Albirini during the spring semester of 2016.

This paper was written to explore the effectiveness of using Duolingo, a language learning application, in vocabulary acquisition. I chose Duolingo because it was an application that I had started using in 2013 and had spent numerous hours studying various languages on it. I wanted to know if Duolingo is truly an effective method of acquiring vocabulary or just a way to pass the time, masquerading as language study.

As a language teacher, I am interested in how technology can be incorporated into the curriculum to make learning more effective for my students. Incorporating language applications is a viable option and worth investigating. This paper covers the importance of vocabulary acquisition, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and its effects on vocabulary acquisition, the effectiveness of Duolingo, and a hypothetical study that could be carried out.

Enhancing L2 Vocabulary Acquisition via Duolingo

When learning a new language, many have experienced not being able to express oneself due to a lack of vocabulary in a target language. Not being able to communicate effectively is one of the aspects of learning a new language that many L2 learners find challenging. Azabdaftari and Mozaheb (2012) said that “students often find that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is an obstacle to learning” (p. 48). One of my goals as a teacher is to help my students overcome the obstacle of a lack of vocabulary knowledge, so my interest was piqued concerning effective methods of vocabulary acquisition.

In my search for effective vocabulary acquisition strategies, I did not have to look any further than my own pocket. In the past few years, mobile phones have nearly become ubiquitous. As of 2015, 86% of college students own and use a smartphone on a regular basis (Poll, 2015). Had I been surveyed, I would have been included in this large percentage of regular smartphone users. Since 2013, I have used my phone as a means of language acquisition through various language applications. All of these mobile applications pertain to the field of mobile assisted language learning (MALL). According to Crompton (2013), MALL is “learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions, using personal electronic devices” (p. 4). With this definition, MALL is not limited to only mobile phones, but can also extend to tablets and laptops.

Throughout the years, I have become interested in understanding how effective MALL is as a tool for vocabulary acquisition or if there are more effective means available. If MALL is indeed an effective means of L2 vocabulary acquisition, I want to know how it can be incorporated into the language learning classroom. As a result, I

decided to further investigate enhancing L2 vocabulary and have written this literature review.

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL)

MALL provides students with the opportunity to access the language through an app at any time allowing for more flexibility and access to the L2. In one definition, Crompton (2013) stated that mobile learning is “learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions, using personal electronic devices (p. 4).

According to this definition, MALL can be achieved on devices other than smartphones, such as tablets and laptops. Duolingo is available on all such devices.

MALL and vocabulary acquisition

Various studies have been carried out comparing the effectiveness of MALL as a tool for vocabulary acquisition to other methods of vocabulary acquisition. MALL has been compared to printed materials (Lu, 2008), flashcards (Ad, 2015) and PCs (Stockwell, 2010). In all of the studies, MALL has proven to be effective in terms of accessibility, availability, vocabulary retention, and a source of motivation for students.

Azabdaftari and Mozaheb (2012) researched the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition via mobile learning compared to the use of flashcards among EFL learners and what the advantages and disadvantages are of each learning strategy. The study was conducted at an undisclosed university in Tehran, Iran. There were 80 participants, all of whom were undergraduate university students studying English literature and translation. The average age of the participants was 20 years old. All of the participants' English proficiency was upper-intermediate according to the TOEFL and Konkoor tests that they

had taken. Their gender was unspecified. The study took place over a span of seven weeks. The students studied about 1,200 new words during this time period.

Of the 80 students, 40 were selected to be part of the experimental group in which they would use their mobile phones as a means of vocabulary acquisition. The other 40 were part of the control group using traditional paper flashcards. For those with mobile phones, “the SRS (Spaced Repetition System) vocabulary acquisition program was selected to be used as the software for this study” (Azabdaftari & Mozaheb, 2012, p. 51). At the end of the seven weeks, all of the participants took a multiple-choice test to assess the vocabulary acquired. The results showed that the mobile phone experimental group scored an average substantially higher than the flashcard control group. Ten participants from each group were also interviewed about the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy. The experimental group participants indicated that the advantages of m-learning included the ability to study “anytime and anywhere,” being able to “receive instant feedback,” and they could “surf the Internet and find different examples while encountering problems and mistakes” (Azabdaftari & Mozaheb, 2012, p. 54). Azabdaftari and Mozaheb (2012) conclude that while flashcards are an effective means of vocabulary acquisition, “m-learning is a better strategy which should be utilized by EFL teachers in this age of technology” (p. 54). I was glad to learn that MALL was indeed an effective means of vocabulary acquisition, possibly due to my slight aversion to using traditional flashcards. Now that I had learned that MALL had fared well against flashcards, I wanted to know how it compared to other means of vocabulary acquisition.

Stockwell’s (2010) study focused on the effectiveness of mobile phone applications versus the effectiveness of using a PC for vocabulary acquisition. The study

was conducted at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. It took place over a span of three years, consisting of three different groups, for a total of 175 participants. All of them were between 18 and 21 years old. Each group was enrolled in a 15-week English course that focused on improving vocabulary. The participants were considered to be pre-intermediate level L2 English speakers. The vocabulary program was called *VocabTutor* and the activities were based on that course's textbook and were made available in both a mobile and PC format. The activities could also be completed interchangeably and the progress would be saved. All 175 participants indicated that they had phones which were compatible with the mobile application. The participants were told that they could complete the vocabulary activities via the mobile application, the PC version, or via a combination of both throughout the semester.

The participants' information was tracked through their accounts on *VocabTutor*. The program recorded which platform the students used, for how long, activities completed, activity scores, and divided the data in the same categories. Comparisons of data between the three groups was also analyzed. The results showed that a large number (60%) of students did not use their mobile phone at all and completed all the tasks on the PC. Only three students (1.7%) used their mobile phone for all of the activities. When the scores on the vocabulary activities were analyzed, "the scores achieved on both platforms were generally very similar" (Stockwell, 2010, p. 101), with scores being higher and lower in certain activities depending on the platform. In terms of completion time, students took significantly longer to finish the activities on their mobile phone compared to the PC. Stockwell (2010) noted that "it appeared that learners decided to swap from the mobile phone to the PC as a result of the amount of time taken to complete the activities"

(p. 104). Stockwell (2010) concluded that mobile phones and PCs appear to be equally effective in terms of vocabulary acquisition, but L2 learners solely using mobile devices will experience an increase in time required to achieve the same amount of work that is done on a PC. This does not mean that mobile applications should be abandoned, but that appropriate activities and methods should be discovered to optimize the use of mobile phones in vocabulary acquisition. When reflecting upon my own use of language applications, I realized that if an application required a lot of writing, I also preferred to use the app on a PC instead of the phone. The most notable app that I used in this way was Duolingo. Being reminded of Duolingo, I decided to investigate how effective it was as a means of vocabulary acquisition.

Duolingo

Duolingo is a free language app that was created in 2011. As of 2016, there are 110 million registered users and it has become the most downloaded app in the educational categories for iTunes and Google Play Store (Velayanikal, 2016). For English speakers, there are currently 13 languages available to study. The number of languages to study for speakers of other languages varies depending on the language. Duolingo is available in two formats, the desktop version and the mobile application. Focus here will be given to the mobile application. In the mobile application, Duolingo consists of specific areas for language learning known as skills.

When learning the skills provided by Duolingo, the language learner focuses on vocabulary and grammar that is put into specific categories like food, animals, and greetings. When a learner selects a skill to learn, there are various lessons that consist of the vocabulary that will be acquired to become knowledgeable in that specific subject.

These skills are taught in a way to resemble a game, in which learners can earn rewards and points for correctly answering the questions. Learners can even connect with their friends and compete with each other to earn the most points in a given period of time. Finally, Duolingo can also be used in conjunction with a class curriculum and textbook. Instructors can create classes on the app in which their students join the group through a link and the instructor can keep track of the students' progress.

Vocabulary acquisition and Duolingo

Munday (2015) conducted a study that focused on the benefits of incorporating Duolingo into two university Spanish courses and how it can complement the standard course. In the study, the researcher states that Duolingo's main goal is "to teach vocabulary and grammar" (p. 84). There were 62 participants in the study. Forty-six of them were from a first-year Spanish class and 16 were from a more advanced Spanish class. The study lasted one, 16-week semester from August to December. The students used the app outside of class, both in the mobile version and desktop version, as a complement to their homework. For the first-year Spanish students, they needed to complete 5 Duolingo lessons per week. The more advanced class had different tasks. The "goal was to have students review basic vocabulary and grammar that they should know at that level" (Munday, 2015, p. 96). They were required to finish the entire Duolingo program in Spanish by the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, all of the participants took surveys in which they shared their perceptions and opinions of the app. Munday (2015) found that the students enjoyed the app due to its mobile accessibility, gamification aspects and the variety of different language tasks that were available on the app.

Munday (2015) concluded that Duolingo would be a valuable tool to incorporate into college language courses and is an effective method of enhancing L2 vocabulary acquisition. One of the ways that Duolingo achieves this goal of enhancing vocabulary acquisition is through spaced repetition algorithms that detect when L2 learners need to review vocabulary. Spaced repetition is the reviewing of words that may have been forgotten after time so as to better facilitate the memorization of vocabulary. Munday (2015) stated that “spaced repetition has proven to be very effective for acquiring vocabulary in particular, since repetition is essential” (Munday, 2015, p. 85). Upon learning that there had been positive results from studies concerning Duolingo, I decided to investigate Duolingo a little further to make sure that these positive results were not a one-time occurrence.

A thesis dissertation thesis (**Jaskova, 2014**) was dedicated to Duolingo and its contribution to e-learning. The researcher conducted a study in which she inquired about the general public’s opinions and views on the effectiveness of Duolingo and how it can be improved. Jaskova (2014) sent questionnaires to 300 people living in the Czech Republic that had experience using Duolingo. Of the 300 questionnaires sent out, 118 responded to the surveys. These 118 participants consisted of “men and women, teenagers and adults, students and working people” (Jaskova, 2014, p. 50). Jaskova (2014) stated that her rationale behind such a wide variety of participants was “because Duolingo is accessible to all people and it is designed for the general public” (p. 50). The language that the participants had studied on Duolingo was not specified. The questionnaire consisted of questions asking about their satisfaction with the application and whether it is an effective tool for vocabulary acquisition. The majority of the

participants stated that they were satisfied with Duolingo, noting that they “prefer e-learning to the classic way” (Jaskova, 2014, p. 59), in which they could use Duolingo on their mobile devices. The participants also indicated that due to its “incredibly well-elaborated methodical and didactic system” (Jaskova, 2014, p. 60), Duolingo was indeed an effective means of vocabulary acquisition.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this proposed study is to focus on how L2 vocabulary acquisition can improve through the use of Duolingo for beginning students and how advantageous it can be to use Duolingo in the classroom due to its availability and ease of access. The research questions that I investigate in the proposed study are as follows:

1. How effective is Duolingo as a means of vocabulary acquisition?
2. Is Duolingo more effective than traditional methods of vocabulary acquisition?
3. If it is effective, is Duolingo worth incorporating into the classroom?

The participants

The participants will consist of students from Utah State University who will be invited to participate due to the convenience to the researcher in terms of accessibility and distance. It is anticipated that the majority of the participants will be L1 English speakers from the United States, ages 18 to 25 years old. There will be a minimum of 40 participants to create a valid sample size. Ideally, there will be an equal amount of male and female participants. The participants will come from two different sections of Spanish 1010. It is anticipated that the majority of the participants will have little to no experience with the Spanish language.

The study will take place during a standard 16-week semester and data will be collected during that time. One class will go through the semester without Duolingo and the other will incorporate Duolingo into their studies and homework. The test class will do an hour of Duolingo study per week on subjects and topics related to their textbook chapters. The instructor of the class using Duolingo will have previous experience working with the application to maximize the utility of the program and minimize complications.

The assignments that the students would normally be required to do for vocabulary acquisition will be replaced by Duolingo lessons done outside of class and would count as their homework. The completion of the homework on Duolingo would be worth 10% of their grade. After each textbook chapter, each class will receive a vocabulary test, with a total of seven vocabulary tests throughout the semester.

Data collection

For the experimental group, the instructor will set up a class on Duolingo for the students to join. Through this online class, the instructor will be able to monitor student progress, time spent on the app, and which subjects of vocabulary have been acquired. At the end of the semester, the averages of the final grades between the two classes will be compared to see if there is any difference in the class that incorporated Duolingo. Also, scores of the seven vocabulary tests taken throughout the semester will be compared. At the end of the semester, the students who participated in the class with Duolingo, will be sent a questionnaire asking about their experience with the application and if they thought it aided or hindered their vocabulary acquisition.

Implications and results

I hypothesize that the majority of the Spanish 1010 students will find Duolingo advantageous for vocabulary acquisition as has been indicated in past studies involving Duolingo (Munday, 2015). Previous studies have also indicated how mobile applications have been effective means of increasing vocabulary acquisition (Lu, 2008). It is anticipated that the test class will have attained a higher rate of vocabulary acquisition than the non-Duolingo class and possibly higher grades due to the app. If the surveys receive positive results considering the use of Duolingo in the classroom, it is hypothesized that more instructors will incorporate Duolingo into their class curriculum to increase vocabulary acquisition.

CULTURE PAPER

Lo Siento Mucho:

The Speech Act of Apologizing in Spanish

INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION

This paper was originally submitted as the final paper for LING 6900 *Culture Teaching and Learning: Theory and Practice* taught by Dr. de Jonge-Kannan during the fall semester of 2015. This paper was written to explore the culture of Spanish-speaking communities through their use of apologies. While living in South America, I noticed that there were differences in the apologies that Spanish-speakers use depending on which region that they were from. I was teaching a beginning Spanish class at the time and by learning about this specific aspect of Spanish-speaking culture, I would be able to incorporate more Hispanic culture into the classroom and help my students become more pragmatically proficient. This literature review covers the different strategies that Spanish-speakers use when apologizing, and some of the conclusions that researchers have found while conducting cross-lingual and ethnographic research.

Introduction

Speaking a new language is an exhilarating experience as one learns to communicate in a way that was previously foreign, through incorporating new words and grammar. When surrounded by a culture, people, and customs that are different from what the L2 learner is accustomed to, saying something that is considered offensive by L1 users of the target language is almost unavoidable. All too often, an L2 Spanish-speaker will be interacting with an L1 Spanish-speaker and think that they are communicating effectively, only to find out that the L1 Spanish-speaker no longer wants to talk to them. What has just happened was a *misfire*. In the field of pragmatics, this term is defined as when something was said with good intentions but has been misunderstood. If this misunderstanding is not rectified, the L2 learner may be viewed as aloof or rude (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010).

LoCastro (2012) writes that “second language learners must not only be competent in the target language, but also in the cultural practices of a community to avoid negative stereotyping, despite what might be sincere efforts to behave politely” (p. 46). To repair situations like these, it is necessary for the L2 learner to become proficient in the speech act of apologizing. Wolfson (1988) states that “by observing what people apologize for, we learn what cultural expectations are with respect to what people owe one another” (p. 56). My students have the opportunity to learn about Hispanic culture through the development of pragmatic skills.

As a Spanish instructor, it is my duty to prepare my students for these inevitable misunderstandings and teach them how to apologize appropriately in Spanish. This paper is a literature review of the speech act of apologizing in Spanish. This paper is organized

into three main sections: what is known about the speech act of apologizing in Spanish, the studies that have been done on Spanish apologies, and conclusions that can be drawn from what has been published.

Apologizing in Spanish

Apologies have been found to be a universal occurrence in all languages.

LoCastro (2012) defines an apology as:

a speech act which involves some violation of social norms that occurred and about which the speaker and hearer believe an expression of regret is necessary.

The precondition leads the speaker to make amends, which is the goal or purpose of the apology (p. 114).

According to LoCastro's (2012) definition, an apology could be summarized as the act of committing an offense and trying to rectify the act. There are countless situations that will require the use of an apology and the circumstances will affect what kind of apology is employed. Factors that determine which kind of apology will be used, include how the apologizer perceives their own actions, the ages of the persons involved, their familiarity with each other, and the cultural context in which the apologizer and hearer are located.

In a perfect world, the standards for giving a proper apology in Spanish would be clear-cut and uniform, but that is not the case. There are over 20 countries in which Spanish is the main language and there is quite a bit of variation in how people from Spanish-speaking cultures perform apologies. Wagner and Roebuck (2010) state that we cannot assume that all native speakers of Spanish "have and will use a closed set of linguistic strategies in the same way when they apologize" (p.32). It is fascinating to

compare the different results from the various studies that focus on the variations in politeness and the ways in which L1 Spanish-speakers apologize in their countries.

Though there are several variations in the frequency and wording in which different people from Spanish-speaking countries apologize, all apologies in Spanish consist of five main strategies that are employed when expressing an apology (Rojo, 2005). I have included original examples of each strategy in the list:

1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)

An IFID is defined as a direct, explicit expression of an apology. Some common examples of IFIDs in Spanish include *lo siento* (sorry), *perdón* (pardon), and *disculpe* (excuse me).

2. Acknowledgment of responsibility

When the apologizer acknowledges responsibility, it is done in order to appease the hearer of the offense which created the need to apologize. There are various ways to express acknowledgment of responsibility in Spanish such as *Fue mi culpa* (It was my fault) or *cometí un error* (I made a mistake). Using a verb + agency is also effective, e.g., *Rompí el plato* (I broke the plate).

3. Explanation for the behavior

As the name suggests, this strategy involves giving the reason why the offense happened, e.g. *Llegué tarde porque el autobús se descompuso* (I arrived late because the bus broke down.).

4. Offer of repair

This strategy includes an offer to make restitution for the offense, e.g. *Puedo arreglarlo* (I can fix it) or *puedo comprar uno nuevo* (I can buy a new one).

5. Promise of forbearance

In this final strategy, the apologizer's sense of guilt leads to a promise to never commit the error again, e.g., *No volveré a hacerlo nunca jamás* (I will never do it again). *No volverá a ocurrir* (It won't happen again).

An apology in Spanish will include at least one of the aforementioned strategies (Rojo, 2005). Multiple strategies can be used in one apology, depending on the severity of the action/offense that elicited the apology. The use and variation of these five apology strategies are usually the foci in studies about Spanish apologies and these five strategies will be referred to throughout the rest of this paper.

Main findings on apologies in Spanish

Chang (2010) states that “the number of studies on pragmatic development has been increasing” but “the development of certain speech behaviors such as the speech act of request in a second language seems to receive more attention than the others” (p. 410) and the studies of apologizing in Spanish are no exception. Published studies have yielded various results and various research methods are employed to collect data about Spanish apologies. The studies are divided into those that focused on cross-language research and cross-cultural research.

Cross-language research

A large body of research on Spanish apologies compares the differences in apologies between L1 Spanish speakers from various Spanish-speaking countries to the apologies of L1 English speakers from their respective countries. Studies have been done comparing the apologies made by L2 English-speakers from Venezuela to the apologies of L1 English speakers using open-ended role-plays (Garcia, 1989), apology strategies

used by Chileans and Australians (Cordella, 1990), apologies of native Spanish speakers from Spain apologizing using both their L1 (Spanish) and their L2 (English), compared to the apologies used by native English speakers from the United States (Mir, 1992), and apologies made by speech communities living in Montevideo, Uruguay and London, England (Marquez-Reiter, 2000).

The studies found that the majority of speakers, regardless of L1, would use an IFID as the most common apology strategy, with variation in frequency and word choice depending on the L1 and culture of the population. In Cordella's (1990) research, the IFID expression Australians used the most was 'sorry'. They preferred not to intensify the apologies by saying 'I'm *very/so* sorry'. The most preferred IFID used by the Chileans was the expression *disculpa* (sorry).

In addition to IFID's, the apology strategies used by the different language populations varies quite a bit. Garcia (1989), had the participants do a roleplay, in which the participants had to apologize to the host for not having attended a party they were invited to. García found that the Venezuelans provided explanations for being absent, avoided disagreeing with the host, and repeated the host's words and in-group identity markers, while the apologies given by the native English speakers used different strategies such as paying deference to the host, using self-effacing behavior and devices to maintain social distance.

Márquez Reiter (2000) also used role-plays like García to carry out the study. The roleplay situations all included an offense that was designed to necessitate an apology. The data showed that the British used more explanations for the behavior than did the

Uruguayans. Only in cases where physical harm had occurred did the British and Uruguayans reply with an offer of repair.

Mir (1992) found that U.S. L1 English speakers used more apology strategies than the L1 Spanish speakers from Spain regardless of which language the Spaniards used. However, the study did show that when the Spaniards in her study used their L2 (English), they would use more apology strategies than when they apologized in their L1 (Spanish). Other results showed that the native U.S. English speakers used the offer of repair strategy more than the Spaniards in both Spanish and English, while the native Spanish speakers used more explanations for the behavior, tried to minimize the severity of the offenses and would even employ denials when presented with a situation that necessitated an apology.

Cross-cultural research

Studies have also been conducted focusing on how apology strategies differ between L1 Spanish-speaking communities. Among these studies include the comparison of apology strategies used by speech communities in Panama City, Panama and Cuernavaca, Mexico (Wagner & Roebuck, 2010), and apology strategies used by speech communities in Cuba compared to Mexico and Panama (Ruzickova, 1998).

Ruzickova (1998) found that Cubans preferred to employ IFIDs five times more than they preferred to use any of the other apology strategies. She also found that L1 Spanish speakers in Cuba employ more positive-politeness devices than negative politeness devices when apologizing. Ruzickova's data demonstrated that Cuban Spanish speakers showed more concern toward the offended's self-image compared to the other speech communities that were observed.

In a previous study conducted by Wagner (2004), she specifically focused on the apologies of speech communities in Cuernavaca, Mexico. She found that the Spanish speakers from Cuernavaca preferred to use the IFID strategy when apologizing more than any of the other strategies. In the cases when they did not use an IFID, the Cuernavacan speakers would use explanations for the behavior but avoided the acknowledgment of responsibility strategy. In regards to positive- and negative-politeness strategies, the Cuernavaca speech community used negative-politeness strategies much more often than positive-politeness strategies. Wagner concluded that the Cuernavacan speech communities were a bit of an anomaly in that a large number of studies on the apologies of other Spanish speaking communities in Latin America concluded that speakers in Cuba (Ruzickova, 1998), Chile (Cordella, 1990), and Uruguay (Marquez-Reiter, 2000) preferred to use positive-politeness strategies as opposed to Cuernavaca's (Wagner, 2004) negative-politeness strategies.

Conclusion

Over the course of preparing this paper, I have become more familiar and informed about the intricacies of the speech act of apologizing in Spanish. While there is a body of research on this specific subject, there is still much to discover. Gonzalez-Cruz (2010) shared the same sentiment when she stated, "In regards to the Hispanic world, we can find a relatively short number of works dealing with how Spanish speakers apologize when using their own language or when trying to communicate in a foreign language" (p. 563). Considering the geographical diversity of all the different Spanish-speaking communities, there is still a large amount of research that can be done concerning the speech of act of apologizing in Spanish.

From the research that has been published thus far, it can be concluded that when using apologies in Spanish, a great amount of adaptability is necessary. Different apology strategies will need to be employed depending on which speech communities the speakers are from. As Gonzalez-Cruz (2010) wrote, “apologies do not refer to the same social act across all cultures and societies” (p. 546). When studying and teaching the speech act of apologizing, it is important to take all of these factors into consideration. Throughout the course of this paper, my interest has been piqued concerning teaching the pragmatics of Spanish apologies. I plan on continuing my research to better meet the needs of my students and teach them how to rectify those inevitable *misfires* as much as possible.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TASK-BASED ACTIVITIES

Learning a language can be an exhilarating and eye-opening experience, or it can be frustrating and tedious. Throughout my life, I have taken many language classes with many different teachers. I have seen the influence and effect that an instructor has on how students learn a language. My favorite instructors motivated me to become the best instructor that I could be and find methods that would help me when I became a language teacher. At the time, I did not know what it was called, but the language teachers that had the greatest impact on me and influenced me to continue my language learning were the ones that incorporated communicative language teaching (CLT).

My first exposure to CLT was when I read the book *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*. I read and learned about how CLT influences every aspect of the students' language learning experience. **Lee and VanPatten (2003)** write that CLT takes the focus off the teacher and makes every student in the class a participant. Teachers create task-based activities in which the students can truly communicate. The instructor "provides opportunities for students to express real information, and construct communicative interactions in the classroom as they would outside the classroom" (p. 16). While I read *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*, I became aware of many factors that affect the effectiveness of CLT, such as re-conceptualizing the roles of the teacher and student, critiquing previous language teaching methods, considering the role of input and output, developing effective classroom activities, and fostering negotiation of meaning. These specific topics piqued my interest and I knew that I wanted to learn more.

I then read *The Communicative Classroom* by **Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001)**. In the book, the importance and effectiveness of CLT was further expounded upon. The authors state that “the goal of the language class is to learn how to carry out specific communicative tasks rather than to produce specific grammatical forms” (p. 13). The chapter devoted to the role of grammar in the communicative classroom was particularly insightful for me. I learned that grammar should not be studied for grammar’s sake but should be used as a support for communication. While I personally enjoy studying grammar, I agree with their statements. Grammar should be a supplement to the communication, but not the sole focus. The roles of comprehensible input and task-based activities in the classroom were also discussed in the book and I decided to further investigate those topics.

In the *Teacher’s Handbook*, **Shrum and Glisan (2010)** explore the role of input and output in conjunction with communicative language teaching. They wrote that “when input is simplified and tailored to the level of the learner, learners are able to make connections between form and meaning” (p. 238). For CLT to be effective, the input needs to be comprehensible and adapted to the learner’s level. When effective input is provided, the students retain the language they are exposed to and are better able to give output in the target language. One of the best results of effective teaching is when students create output in a new language in a communicative manner.

After hearing about Krashen repeated times, I decided to see how he had contributed to the field of second language acquisition. In *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*, **Krashen (1982)** proposes a set of hypotheses in relation to second language acquisition. One hypothesis that caught my attention was the Input

Hypothesis, in which he stated that the most effective means of learning a language is through comprehensible input. This does not mean that the students need to understand every single word. In fact, Krashen created a formula: $i+1$, which means that the comprehensible input (i.e., $+1$) should be slightly beyond the current level of the learner (i.e., i), yet is understandable through background knowledge, context, and other cues such as body language and gestures. This stuck out to me because in the CLT classroom, students should be in an environment where they are immersed in the language and can also comprehend the meaning of what is spoken.

Another hypothesis by Krashen (1982) that can be applied to make the CLT classroom more effective is the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Krashen writes that various factors affect how language is acquired, such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. These factors constitute a learner's affective filter which changes depending on a learner's attitude, stress, anxiety, and so forth. Krashen (1982) states that "classrooms that encourage low filters are those that promote low anxiety among students" (p. 147) and keep students off the defensive. I have seen this in action in language classes and strive to create a classroom environment in which the students' affective filters are low.

After reading about the role of input in conjunction with CLT, I was still curious to read more about how task-based activities can be incorporated into the CLT classroom. **Nunan (1989)** wrote a whole book on this subject called *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. In it, the researcher describes the components of what makes an effective task, such as goals, input, activities, and a conclusion. While the students perform these tasks, it is important for them to know what the roles of the learner and instructor are, so that they may be completed more effectively and meet the goal of the

tasks. A variety of task-based activities can be integrated into the classroom, such as information-gap tasks, content-based units, and interactive problem solving.

I also read a study by **Toth (2011)**, who investigated the factors that can make task-based L2 grammar instruction more effective. He researched whether small-group, learner-led discourse (LLD) or whole-class, teacher-led discourse (TLD) was more effective when the students participated in task-based activities. Toth (2011) found that LLD is more effective because it provides more real-world communication (Nunan, 1987), opportunities for negotiation, especially during information-gap tasks, greater linguistic autonomy and self-regulation, and the learners assist each other during task performance.

While he found that LLD was more effective, he also pointed out some weaknesses to LLD, such as learners often produce minimal utterances, they can be poor L2 models for each other, and they often prefer to focus on lexical rather than morphosyntactic L2 issues when negotiating. To improve these difficulties, he suggests that instructors make the target forms useful or essential to task performance, precede tasks with a pre-task warm-up to orient learners to the necessary linguistic forms, and follow tasks with a post-task activity to lend accountability to learner performance. Being aware of the strengths and weaknesses of LLD allows me to make the most effective use of task-based activities and know what to avoid when incorporating learner-led discourse.

Learning about the specifics of input and task-based activities in relation to CLT was insightful, but I knew there was still more to learn about CLT and I wanted to get a view of the big picture. **Jacobs and Farrell (2003)** studied the paradigm shift in teaching methods towards CLT. Jacobs and Farrell (2003) examined the changes in teaching

methods that have happened in the recent history of language teaching. They point out that it is much easier to state the theories than to put the methods into actual practice. This can create a backwash effect, which is when instructors take in a new methodology but then go back to their own methods after a short time. This backwash effect pulls teaching back to traditional paradigms even when many instructors are striving to go toward a new paradigm. They recommend that language instructors take a “big-picture approach” (p. 24) to properly incorporate new methodologies and that is exactly what I try to do. When I struggle to incorporate a new method, I take a step back to look at the big picture and see that effective teaching takes priority over the desire to fall back into comfortable teaching practices.

While many language teachers advocate for the use of CLT in the classroom, others are opposed and claim that CLT is not the best method because it does not apply to all contexts. **Hiep (2007)** decided to investigate these claims, study the key tenets of CLT, and see how effective it is for teachers outside of the United States. She concludes that CLT “should not be treated as a package of formulaic, prescriptive classroom techniques” (Hiep, 2007, p. 200) but it is still effective as a language teaching tool. She states that teachers should strive to develop classroom techniques that are appropriate to each individual context but still within the parameters of CLT. Having taught in other countries, I like knowing that with some modification, I would be able to employ CLT methods if I find myself teaching outside of the United States in the future.

Various studies advocate the use of CLT in the language classroom and a few studies that examine how teacher’s beliefs about CLT affects the assessment of their students. **Kim (2014)** shows that instructors value CLT methods and often implement

many facets but when it comes to student assessments such as midterms and finals, CLT was not fully implemented. The instructors believed in the importance of testing oral communication skills, but these assessments did not include speaking sections. Kim (2014) states that “institutional pressures can cause teachers to resort to practices that differ from what they know” (p. 11). As a language instructor, I have encountered this conundrum myself. It can be quite difficult to find a balance between what I believe are the most effective teaching methods and what the institution expects.

Wong (2012) further explored the relationship between college-level L2 instructors’ perceptions of CLT and their application of it in the classroom. He found that many of the instructors did not understand exactly what CLT meant. The instructors however did agree that a communicative approach would better facilitate students’ acquisition of a language. Wong (2012) also found that some language instructors advocate for CLT because they believe it is the best way to acquire a second language and communicative competence. Those that did not believe in its importance were less likely to implement certain methods of CLT. Thanks to my studying of CLT in depth, I understand its meaning and the implications it has in the classroom. My perception of CLT allows me to incorporate it and use it effectively in the classroom.

It is evident that the implementation of CLT in the classroom is an effective tool to help students gain communicative competence and proficiency in the target language. As an instructor, I have the resources to provide students with opportunities for real world application. As students participate in a CLT-centered classroom, they will see progress in their language skills, be more prepared to carry out tasks in the L2, and become proficient in the target language.

MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING

In the past few years, the use of smartphones has soared. As of 2015, 86% of college students own and use a smartphone on a regular basis (Poll, 2015). Since 2013, I have used my phone as a means of language acquisition through various language applications that are available. All of these mobile applications pertain to the field of mobile assisted language learning (MALL). According to Crompton (2013), mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is “learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions, using personal electronic devices” (p. 4). With this definition, MALL is not limited to only mobile phones, but can also extend to tablets and laptops. Throughout the years, my interest has grown on how effective MALL is as a tool for language acquisition. If MALL is indeed an effective means of L2 vocabulary acquisition, I want to know how it can be incorporated into the language learning classroom. As a result, I decided to further investigate the research literature on MALL and present my findings via this annotated bibliography.

Azabdaftari and Mozaheb (2012) investigated how mobile devices can be used to study vocabulary, how effective this method is compared to flashcards, and the advantages and disadvantages of each method. The study was done at a university in Iran. There was a total of 80 participants, all of whom were undergraduate university students studying English as a foreign language. The participants’ English proficiency was deemed upper-intermediate by the TOEFL tests that they had taken. The study took place over a span of seven weeks. The students studied vocabulary pertaining to sports, studying abroad, hobbies, and entertainment. Approximately 1,200 vocabulary words were studied during this period.

The participants were divided into two groups. Forty students were in the experimental group in which they would use mobile phones for vocabulary acquisition. The other forty were part of the control group which used traditional paper flashcards. The experimental group used a software program called the SRS (Spaced Repetition System). Throughout the study, the “students had to use the vocabulary program both inside and outside the classroom, and they had to answer the SMS sent to them by the teachers” (p. 52).

After seven weeks, the participants were given a multiple-choice test to assess their vocabulary retention. It was found that the experimental phone group received higher scores than the control flashcard group. Azabdaftari and Mozaheb (2012) conclude that while flashcards are an effective means of vocabulary acquisition, the advantages of MALL are “firstly, students can learn anytime and anywhere. Secondly, students can receive instant feedback as they submit the right answer. Thirdly, they can surf the Internet and find different examples while encountering problems and mistakes” (p. 54). After learning that MALL was effective compared to flashcards, I wanted to know how it fared to other means of vocabulary acquisition.

Stockwell (2010) investigated the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition via mobile phones compared to using a PC. The researcher specifically wanted to know if there were differences in the homework scores of the students that used a mobile device instead of a PC, what the time differences were to complete the activities, and if learners improve their scores and speed of completion after using a specific platform over time. The study was done at a university in Japan. The study spanned over three years, with a different group of participants each year, with 175 students overall. Each of the three

groups participated in a 15-week English course, with a specific emphasis on expanding vocabulary. The vocabulary program that the researcher used was called *VocabTutor*. The activities were based on that course's textbook and were made available in both mobile and PC format. The participants were told that they could complete the vocabulary activities via their mobile device, PC, or a combination of both during the study.

The students' progress was tracked through their accounts on *VocabTutor*. The program recorded which platform was used, the amount of time spent on activities, and activity scores. The data was compared between the three groups. The results showed that a large percentage (60%) of students did not use their mobile phone at all and completed the tasks on their PC. Only three students used their mobile device for all the activities. When the activity scores were analyzed, "the scores achieved on both platforms were generally very similar" (Stockwell, 2010, p. 101). In terms of completion time, students took significantly longer to finish the activities on their mobile device compared to the PC. Stockwell (2010) concluded that mobile phones and PCs appear to be equally effective in terms of vocabulary acquisition. L2 learners solely using mobile devices will have to spend more time to achieve the same amount of work done on a PC. The researcher also concluded that mobile devices "have the potential to provide a rich learning environment for our learners, but there are still issues that must be considered before they can reach their full potential" (p. 101). Next, I decided to investigate the effectiveness of a specific mobile application called Memrise.

Wu (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of Memrise with L2 Chinese-learning college students. Wu (2015) defines Memrise as "an online learning tool with

courses created by its community” (p. 49). Users can create their own mnemonic units and share them with other users. The study spanned over two academic years, with two intermediate-level college Chinese classes. There were five lessons for one semester and the learners needed to complete the posttest after each lesson. The ten students in the first class were used for the baseline as a comparison of character recognition scores. In the second (experimental) class, the eight students were assigned to learn and review the vocabulary for at least 15 minutes a day.

The students received regular reminders to study and review words to make sure that their words to make sure if their flowers were watered and kept growing through their smartphones or iPads. The experimental group liked the technology features including the Mems, the crowdsourcing feature, the mini quizzes, the spaced repetition study reminders, and the pronunciation. Furthermore, through the scores and interview, Wu (2015) found that the top two achievers in the experimental class were much more involved in creating content on Memrise. This suggests that the more a student wants to figure out the meaning of the word and retain it, the more a student will remember it.

The next article about using Memrise was **Walker’s (2016)** discussion about the long-term retention of Latin vocabulary. Since the use of Latin is more common in reading ancient texts than speaking, the students have fewer opportunities to produce Latin. The accessibility and portability of Memrise increases learners’ exposure to Latin vocabulary. The researcher conducted a four-week experiment of using Memrise on eight 11th grade students studying for a test in Latin. The purpose of the study is to ascertain the Latin students’ perceptions of learning vocabulary, their perceptions of learning vocabulary through Memrise, and if Memrise is more effective in improving Latin

vocabulary test performance. The students were asked to complete a ten-question questionnaire on their perceptions of self-study habits. They held two group interviews with 11th grade students: one was the discussion on their questionnaire responses before using Memrise, and the other one was a follow-up interview on their experience of using Memrise after the four-week exposure. The results not only showed a positive attitude on learning vocabulary through Memrise, but also the notion of competition on the Memrise leader-board, piquing the students' interests. One of the student claimed, "I'm at the bottom, and my score's not even low" (p. 18). The Memrise program provided a collaborative learning environment through creating and sharing Mems, and a positive competition in the learning community.

In addition to smartphone language applications, there were various studies that investigated how Short Message Service (SMS), also known as texting, can be used to learn a language. **Kennedy and Levi (2008)** investigated how SMS messages can be used to enhance language learning, specifically in regards to vocabulary acquisition. The participants consisted of 91 Australian university students studying beginning-level Italian. The study lasted seven weeks, with the participants receiving a pretrial questionnaire at the beginning of the seven weeks, and a post-trial survey at the end. Throughout the seven-week period, the students received texts about once a day from their instructor. The texts focused on four aspects: information on Italian life and culture; announcements for the class; suggestions about Italian TV shows and movies; and invitations for out of class activities, such as club meetings, social events, and community celebrations. Many of the texts were completely in Italian, while others had selected words or sentences translated into English. The messages were designed to introduce new

vocabulary and reinforce previously learned words. The post-trial results showed that the vast majority of the students found the experience to be positive. The majority of students stated that the text messages had helped consolidate and improve their vocabulary, increased their interest in Italian vocabulary, and even improved their knowledge of Italian grammar.

Cavus and Ibrahim (2009) also investigated how MALL can be used to teach vocabulary, specifically to “find out the potential of using mobile phones in teaching new technical English language words to 1st-year undergraduate students to support their normal English language lectures” (p. 81). This study was carried out at Near East University in Turkey. The study lasted the span of a semester with 45 first year undergraduate students. A pretest was given at the beginning of the semester and a posttest was given at the end of the semester to test the students’ proficiency with English vocabulary. Throughout the semester, students would receive texts from the instructor with a specific vocabulary word in English and the meaning of the word in Turkish. At the end of the semester, the students also received a questionnaire about their perceptions toward using MALL. The results showed that students enjoyed and learned new words with the help of their mobile phones. The researchers concluded that using MALL as an educational tool would contribute to increased student success.

Lu (2008) noticed that if students only have the opportunity to practice their target language during class, then their opportunities to become proficient are severely hindered. Due to the constraint of class time, Lu (2008) explored the effectiveness of short message service (SMS) vocabulary lessons through mobile phones. The participants consisted of thirty high school students divided into two groups: one group learned

English vocabulary via SMS messages and the other group via printed materials, such as textbooks, dictionaries, printed homework, etc. The students had pretest and post-test on two sets of English words (28 target words in total) during the two-week study. The researcher used the quantitative method to collect the questionnaires and the qualitative method to interview the participants who had issues which arose during data analysis. Overall, the students had positive attitudes to the SMS lessons because of the “bite-sized” lessons and “pushing messages” two times a day and twice a week. In addition, the mobile phone groups performed better on the vocabulary gains of post-test and delayed post-test than the printed material groups. Lu (2008) states that MALL with a reward-based scheme motivated students’ interests and maximized their exposure to the target language. The students also claimed that the pushing messages offered cumulative lessons than the printed materials. Lu (2008) concludes that there are three optimal conditions for vocabulary learning through mobile phone: a rewarded based scheme, a tracking mechanism, and an interaction function. The next article was inspired by Lu’s (2008) study, where Wu (2015) discusses the limitations of SMS and designed a new app for vocabulary learning specifically for ESL learners in China.

Wu (2015) developed a smart-phone app called *Word-learning-CET6* to test the effectiveness of this tool for enhancing the English vocabulary of Chinese college students. The purpose of the study was to look for a new way to help EFL learners memorize the English vocabulary in a more convenient and user-friendly way, and provide a solution for educators who have difficulties teaching vocabulary with limited knowledge of computer science. Wu (2015) designed the app in a clear touch-screen version and the 35 students from the test group could look up the words anytime and

anywhere. The students could create three separate folders from the glossary for repetitive study based on the individual learning process, and make a sample test from their own words' selection. The positive results show that the test group memorized 88.67 more words than the control group, who acquired the vocabulary through their own vocabulary materials. *Word Learning-CET6* provided an accessible tool for ESL learners but it also needed to be upgraded for correcting errors or supplying new content for further improvements.

Gutiérrez-Colon, Gallardo and Grova (2012) researched the potential of using MALL as a support tool for teaching English as a foreign language. They specifically wanted to know if MALL is an effective tool to keep students motivated and engaged and to know if the students who incorporate MALL into their learning perform better than students without MALL. The study took place over two academic school years at the University Rovira i Virgili in Spain. There were 13 participants, all of whom were working on a degree in English. Throughout the two years, the participants received messages with exercises related to the class that they were taking. They were “not expected to check dictionaries, grammar books or any reference source because all the information they needed to complete the exercises was included in the SMS” (p. 36). After the posttests and questionnaires, Gutiérrez-Colon, Gallardo and Grova (2012) found that most of the participants found MALL to be engaging. Some of the participants remarked that they enjoyed “being able to answer from anywhere they happened to be” and enjoyed that “some of the exercises were based on real facts, and this increased their interest and curiosity about the next message” (p. 37). This matches what Ushioda (2013) said, in that “autonomy, flexibility, freedom and choice are intrinsic features of mobile

learning and by exploiting these features teachers and materials designers may well be able to promote internalized motivation for independent learning" (p. 2).

Baleghizadeh and Oladrostam (2010) investigated how mobile phones can be used to improve grammatical knowledge for EFL students. There were forty participants, all of whom were female students from Iran. They were divided into an experimental group and a control group in which they had to review and use six specific grammatical forms: present perfect versus simple past, direct versus indirect questions, and comparatives versus superlatives. Both groups participated in activities that required them to use these specific grammatical forms. In the experimental group, the participants recorded their voice on their phones, analyzed their mistakes outside of class, and commented on how to correct them. Each student also had the opportunity to play their recording in front of the other students so that they could identify any errors that may have gone unnoticed. The control group did not get to use their phones for these activities. These activities continued for the space of a semester throughout six sessions. At the end of these sessions, both groups were given a multiple-choice grammar posttest. The results showed that the participants that were allowed to use their mobile phones in and outside of class scored significantly better on the grammar test than the participants in the control group. This shows that MALL does not have to be limited to vocabulary acquisition, but can also be used to improve students' grammar proficiency and that "mobile phones enable knowledge building" (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2010, p. 83).

Chai, Wong, and King (2016) investigated the perceptions of their students towards a mobile application called MyCLOUD that they used to teach Chinese. There were 259 participants, all of whom were elementary students ranging from 9 to 10 years

old. The study took place in Singapore, from February to November 2013. The majority of the students' L1 was English. The students had experience using computers but “had no prior experience of using smartphones for learning purposes” (p. 170). For the study, the students were provided with a smartphone and data connection plan. The MyCLOUD program allowed the students to use their smartphones to select unfamiliar vocabulary, find the definition, and see the vocabulary used in various examples from the internet. It also allowed the students to take pictures of sentences they had written with the vocabulary, post it online, and have the other students see the examples and provide comments and corrections, to facilitate collaborative learning. To gauge the perceptions of the students toward mobile learning, the researchers used a questionnaire called the Mobile-Assisted Seamless Chinese Learning Questionnaire (MSCLQ), to record the data. The findings indicated that the majority of the students found learning through a mobile device enjoyable, that it had increased their motivation to learn Chinese, it increased their sense of autonomy, and was convenient to use.

Most studies focus on the effectiveness of MALL in a classroom context. However, with the advent of technology, distance education is becoming increasingly common. It is important to learn about how effective MALL can be outside of the classroom context. **Demouy, Jones, Kan, Kukulska-Hulme, and Eardley (2016)** investigated the use of MALL by distance education students. The researchers specifically investigated what the learners' motivations are for using mobile devices and what the emerging practices of mobile language learners are.

The researchers used an online survey questionnaire which focused on mobile device use and behavior. Questions in the survey inquired as to what kind of device was

used, frequency of use, which method was preferred and how mobile learning had impacted their learning. 269 students from undisclosed universities responded to the survey from March to July 2013. Many of the students indicated that they used mobile devices for language learning because they receive a higher exposure to the target language, the activities available on the devices introduce variety into language study and make it more enjoyable, due to gamification aspects. Learners also “feel more in control of their own learning” (p. 23), they have the opportunity “to listen and to access authentic resources and to have fun - and through that, at times, to rekindle their motivation” (p. 23). The researchers conclude that due to the positive perception of mobile learning, it is likely that mobile learning among language students will become increasingly common as time goes on.

Conclusion

Seeing how many different strategies of using MALL for language acquisition are available could be seen as a testament to its effectiveness compared to other language learning strategies. Lai and Gu (2011) write that "successful language learners often attribute their achievements in language learning to active engagement with the target language beyond the classroom" (p. 318) and MALL provides the opportunity for students to engage with the target language beyond the classroom. Now that I am more aware of how effective MALL can be, I want to know which method is the most effective. I am also interested to learn more about how to incorporate MALL into a university language course. While MALL does appear to be more effective than certain language learning methods, if knowledge of a more effective method comes to light, then

I would be interested in learning about it and how to incorporate it. I am looking forward to what the future of language education has in store.

LOOKING FORWARD

There are a variety of possible paths my professional career can take me. Over the past several years, I have taught language in varying contexts. I have had the opportunity to teach Spanish and Portuguese courses at Utah State University and I have taught English in Taiwan and China. These experiences have contributed to my development as a language teacher. From my experiences at Utah State University, I connect well with adult learners and it would be ideal to continue teaching at the university level, be it Spanish, Portuguese, or ESL.

My goal as a future teacher is to open my students' eyes to the doors that are opened in their lives when they learn new languages and cultures and become more informed and involved persons in the global community. Wherever I end up teaching, I know that the principles that I learned in the MSLT program have prepared me to help my students achieve communicative competence and proficiency in their language of choice.

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