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The Successful Foreign Language Classroom: Affect, Empathy, and Engagement

Emily Mower
Utah State University

Recommended Citation

THE SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:

AFFECT, EMPATHY, AND ENGAGEMENT

by

Emily Mower

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

_____   _____
Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini   Dr. Kevin Krogh
Major Professor   Committee Member

_____   _____
Dr. Sylvia Read   Dr. Bradford J. Hall
Committee Member   Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2018

DEDICATION

I dedicate this portfolio to my Gramma Bonnie: to all the hot cakes we ate and all the papers you helped me write. I know you are watching over me from above. I ever remember you as a passionate scholar, a dedicated believer, and my shining example of perseverance.

ABSTRACT

The Successful Foreign Language Classroom:

Affect, Empathy, and Engagement

by

Emily Mower: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2018

Major Professor: Dr. Albirini
Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is the culmination of the author's work in the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University. Throughout this collection the author shares her personal views and experiences from teaching secondary and postsecondary beginning Spanish courses, supporting her claims with existing research. The portfolio consists of three sections: (1) teaching perspectives, (2) research perspectives, and (3) annotated bibliographies.

The objective of this work is to identify hindrances to the progress of foreign language teachers and learners, and best practices to stimulate their success. On the basis that language learning can promote cross-cultural understanding, these findings are valuable to educators and learners who seek to bridge cultural divides and unify their communities—one classroom at a time.

(126 pages)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

BICS = Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills

C1 = Class One

C2 = Class Two

CALP = Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

DCT = Discourse Completion Task

DLI = Dual Language Immersion

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

ELLs = English Language Learners

ESL = English as a Second Language

H = Hearer

IDK = I Don't Know

IFID = Illocutionary Force Indicating Device

L1 = First Language / Native Language

L2 = Second Language

MSLT = Master of Second Language Teaching

NEA = National Education Association

NNSs = Non-Native Speakers

NSs = Native Speakers

PD = Professional Development

POTUS = President of the United States

PTSD = Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

S = Speaker

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

TA = Teaching Assistant

TL = Target Language

USU = Utah State University

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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a representation of what I have studied and learned during my time in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. I wrote the first draft of my teaching philosophy statement in the fall of 2016, the semester I began the program at Utah State University (USU). Over the course of two years as I continuously revisited that paper, I was fascinated to see how my understanding evolved regarding the roles of teacher and student, task-based activities, and the affective filter. These themes are evident throughout the three sections of my portfolio: (1) teaching perspectives, which includes my teaching philosophy statement; (2) research perspectives, constituting three papers on the topics of pragmatics, technology, and language learning; and (3) annotated bibliographies, detailing the communicative language teaching (CLT) method, second language acquisition (SLA), and dual language immersion (DLI) programs.

My passion in teaching stems from the fulfillment I experience in creating an inviting, safe space in which students can effectively learn together and simultaneously express their individual identity. Woven throughout the following papers are ways in which I strive to cultivate such a space.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

I wish you could have known Bonnie. Almost all people within her sphere of influence revered her as a source of wisdom—albeit a fierce and blunt source of wisdom. She exacted the best from me, demanding growth even when I thought I had 'arrived'. From writing an essay to shopping within a budget, much of what I know and who I am can be traced back to Bonnie Morgan, English and Journalism teacher at Sam Barlow High School.

I also wish everybody had someone like Mrs. Corban. This angel entered my life when I was about to give up on piano lessons. She took my waning motivation and reignited the flame of dedication within me. Her tutelage went beyond the subject matter; she inspired me to analyze my life. Although her role was to be my piano teacher, she taught me far more than the mechanics of playing Chopin and Rachmaninoff.

My own education experience has proven that such extraordinary teachers like Bonnie and Mrs. Corban are few and far between—I have had my fair share of lackluster teachers—but from the combined influence of these two extraordinary women, I learned that teachers have the potential to make a profound, positive impact on students. That realization caused me to pursue teaching as a career. Because my own teaching experience has been and will probably be that of a Spanish teacher, I will examine my past Spanish teachers to illustrate what I have learned about good teaching, as well as about its antithesis.

I had several of what I like to refer to as chameleon Spanish teachers in elementary and middle school. I call them chameleons because I do not remember a single Spanish teacher's name or face during those nine years—I normally have a decent

memory. I do remember watching videos with puppets talking to each other in Spanish. Somewhere in the melee, I learned the Spanish words for colors and numbers. Teachers *must* have been a part of the experience, but they somehow managed, like chameleons, to camouflage themselves within my memory of the classroom environment. I neither learned conversational skills nor had any sort of one-on-one instruction from those teachers that would help me remember them. Needless to say, this is the least effective teaching I have experienced. At the very least, good teaching requires being present; pressing play on a video is not enough.

My high school teachers were thankfully *not* chameleon teachers. I would classify them instead as well-intentioned teachers. Señora García (pseudonyms used for all teachers), my Spanish 1-2 teacher in 9th grade, had multiple sclerosis and used a motorized scooter, which prompted my teenage mind to reason, "Spanish must really be important to her if she's still coming to school." Unfortunately, she spent the majority of class discussing Spanish grammar in English. Yet I remember one specific time when she tried to teach demonstrative adjectives solely in Spanish. She had placed numerous bright sticky notes around the room and kept pointing to them saying, "Este papelito. Ese papelito. Aquel papelito." She followed this Spanish stint with, "So, what does *este* mean?" Silence. I remember feeling frustrated that she didn't just tell us the answer as she always had. The spirit of this activity was well intentioned because she was speaking in the target language; however, the input lacked scaffolding, context, and meaning. Good language teaching requires that input be comprehensible. Moreover, when presented communicatively, comprehensible input renders translation unnecessary.

In my sophomore and junior year classes, Señora Martinez focused mainly on grammar and pronunciation. I recall a handful of class periods when she banned English and deducted points from our grade if we used it. Those forty minutes were terrifying! As a language teacher, I now understand what she was trying to do, but her well-intentioned immersion activities were not very effective because they were sporadic. Only a handful of days out of the entire school year were designated at immersion in the target language. Good language teaching must be consistent in target language use.

I avoided taking Spanish 7-8 my senior year because I thought Señora Martinez didn't like me. That decision—more precisely the reasoning behind that decision—has helped shape my attitude as a teacher. Having a connection with students is vitally important to their success and progress. Bonnie and Mrs. Corban elicited from me a level of performance I did not know was possible; they pushed me—hard. But I knew they were pushing me because they saw and believed in my potential. When students see the teacher as a supportive advocate rather than a divisive critic, their performance level will increase.

The Spanish professors in my university undergraduate studies blended their love of culture, literature, and grammatical structures into their Spanish immersion classrooms, and I thrived. Reflecting on my wide range of classroom experiences, I better understand what good teaching is and what it is not—no matter what the age group. Rest assured that I will not encapsulate my teaching in pressing play, nor will anyone find me guilty of random spurts of Spanish-only moments. I envision my classroom based around the communicative approach, where students have meaningful interaction with each other in Spanish. I hope my legacy as a teacher will be like Bonnie and Mrs. Corban's, that

students will remember me because I strived to teach them more than my subject area. I want students to learn perseverance when things get hard and open-mindedness when people seem different.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Before entering the MSLT program, I taught Spanish for three years in public school: one year of high school and two years of middle school. My master's degree will allow me to teach at the college level; however, I am undecided about which level to pursue. I can see myself returning to secondary education because the influence and connection I had with my adolescent students was meaningful and fulfilling. Yet, I have also enjoyed teaching Spanish as a graduate instructor because student progress is abundantly evident and classroom disruptions are few. Regardless of the level, I envision myself teaching Spanish in a classroom after completing the program.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Introduction

In the United States, as well as across the globe, foreign language teachers are "far from universally successful" (Dixon et al., 2012, p. 6). As a public school teacher, I have ample personal experience to support this claim. All too often department meetings digressed into gripe sessions about the workload, the students, and the administrators. In fact, I decided to pursue a graduate degree as a reprieve from teaching because I was experiencing what researchers refer to as "teacher burnout" (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013; Luk, Chan, Cheong, & Ko, 2010; Santoro, 2011). For some, burnout is a result of unmanaged emotional stress induced by classroom demands. While this was a factor in my own experience, I attribute much of my emotional exhaustion to my misconstrued understanding of my role as a teacher. Therefore, in this teaching philosophy statement I will present my new perspective on the roles of teacher and learner, classroom tasks, and students' affective filter. Understanding and applying these concepts has not only boosted my students' proficiency but has increased my mental and emotional wellbeing in the classroom.

Roles of teacher and learner

My first year teaching, despite my undergraduate training in educational theories, I reverted to the approach that many traditional educators embrace: audiolingualism (Lado, 1964; Wardhaugh, 1970). This method dictates that the instructor be a knowledge-spouting expert who shoulders all responsibility in the classroom, while the students are meek, receptive vessels (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Such an attitude makes education "an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the

depositor" (Freire, 1970, p. 72) and dismisses students' responsibility to be actively engaged in their own learning. Unfortunately, many of my language teachers subscribed to this methodology, meaning that—even though I intellectually knew of the deficiencies—audiolingualism felt comfortable to me. Considering that "it is safer to follow what has been done before" (Ellis, 2006, p. 89), my first year teaching often reflected audiolingual tendencies. I spent a majority of class time as a Spanish teacher talking at my students in English about Spanish because I was afraid of breaking the *status quo*. For example, we spent two weeks discussing the rules of imperfect versus preterit tense with few opportunities for practical application, often filling in the blanks of numerous worksheets. Needless to say, those students did not progress in their Spanish fluency, because target-language input is one of the essential components in second language acquisition (SLA) (Krashen, 1982). Students could often correctly conjugate a verb without understanding its meaning within a context. This decontextualized grammar practice failed to build the metaphoric muscles necessary to develop communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; see also Canale, 1983; Ellis, 2006; Helt, 1982; Savignon, 1985).

No language learning is possible without input, whether spoken or written; yet, not all input is created equal. In a second language classroom, input must be comprehensible and meaning bearing in order to effectively nurture language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Paulston, 1974; Swain, 1985). In other words, the language to which the teacher exposes students must be understandable and purposeful. An important aspect of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in contrast to Audiolingualism, focuses on providing such input (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Savignon, 1991). The policy of language

immersion prescribed by the language department at Utah State University reflects the understanding of input importance. As a graduate instructor, I was initially skeptical and nervous about the mandate that all Spanish language courses—including beginning classes—be conducted in the target language. I thought, "How will students understand me? How will I explain new concepts? What if students are completely lost?" I learned from implementing this model that input can be simplified in order to make it comprehensible, even to beginners.

Simplified input, exemplified in the typical way adults interact with children, benefits novice language learners and is characterized by slower rate of speech, basic vocabulary, simple syntax, concrete discourse, and familiar speech setting (Hatch, 1983). A local speaking to a foreigner, for example, may speak more slowly, limit vocabulary, and use repetition (Ferguson, 1981); similarly, parents intuitively modify input for small children. This is not to say that teachers should treat novice adults as children—input may be simplified without being infantile. Simplifying speech requires planning and awareness. For example, to prepare for teaching my first class of Spanish 1010, I carefully considered what I wanted to say and how I could convey meaning through cognates, modeling, pictures, and gestures.

In addition to simplified input, non-linguistic means that bolster comprehension have been invaluable to me (Allen, 2000; Belhiah, 2013). For example, when teaching family vocabulary, I showed pictures of my own family and described each person's relation to me, thus creating context and visual support for the vocabulary. The lesson also capitalized on students' background knowledge: family is a subject familiar to everyone. Centering instruction on topics familiar to students eliminates their struggle

with the topic itself (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Contrastingly, a Spanish lesson on car engines would be more difficult to teach because many students have no mechanical background (neither do I). In beginning courses teachers should select topics and themes that connect with students' background knowledge (Lupo, Strong, Lewis, Walpole, & McKenna, 2018l; Toth & Davin, 2016).

While teachers have a responsibility to provide comprehensible input, they should not be the sole participants in class. CLT defines a teacher's role as that of a resource person and architect; whereas traditional architects develop blueprints for buildings, foreign language teacher-architects create the circumstances under which students learn to communicate in the L2. The ultimate goal for students is communication, or rather, the "expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning" (Lee & Van-Patten, 2003, p. 51; see also Savignon, 1998). For example, on the first day of Spanish 1010, I modeled a basic introduction by greeting a student, stating my name, inquiring the name of a student, and saying good-bye. After repeating this numerous times, I had students introduce themselves to at least five people. Such an activity exemplifies the concept of teacher-architect. I modeled the dialogue that provided students with a blueprint to participate in the dialogue themselves, empowering them to build their proficiency by actively participating in the activities I designed.

Although grammar instruction is beneficial, a classroom where the desired outcome is communication emphasizes communicative goals over grammatical forms (Ellis, 1995; Liamkina & Ryshina-Pankova, 2012). For instance, the objective, "Students can introduce themselves to five classmates", is a communicative goal because the focus is on meaning, not form. Contrastingly, in a grammar-oriented classroom the objective

for covering similar material might be, "Students will use correct forms of the verb *llamarse* with introductions". Such an objective reflects the belief that grammar mastery "must necessarily precede opportunities to express oneself with the language" (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 59). This belief is flawed because native speakers can often understand novice speakers despite grammatical errors. For example, if a stranger approached me in a grocery store and asked, "Where milk?" I would understand the inquiry notwithstanding its grammatical flaws.

In my own experience learning Spanish in Chile, I recall instances trying to communicate with my host mom in the beginning months of my stay. Many times, I was able to get my point across even though my speech was ungrammatical. From this I conclude that accuracy is not essential to communication, except perhaps in contexts where self-presentation is critical such as international business or politics. For the majority of situations, language teaching that is focused *solely* on grammatical accuracy is impractical (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Felix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Rose, 2012). Grammar is not irrelevant or disposable; indeed, grammar serves a purpose in the L2 classroom, but it is not the altar at which we worship. Teachers should seek to create "opportunities for communication in the classroom on the grounds that language is best learned through communicating" (Ellis, 2012, p. 196).

Hands-on experience with the language, in contrast with a strict grammar regiment, may be further understood through the analogy of learning to ride a bicycle. Researching how to ride a bike may increase theoretical knowledge but does nothing to develop the coordination and muscle memory needed to balance, pedal, or steer. The only way to acquire such skills is by mounting a bike to give it a go. Thus it is with language.

Teachers are like a watchful parent, creating opportunities for students to practice communicating; the training wheels are simplified input and non-linguistic supports. While instructors may establish an environment of scholarship and dedication, it is the students themselves who must choose to mount the language bicycle—albeit with scraped knees. The teacher cannot learn on behalf of the students; that is contrary to the nature of learning. Instructors must carefully plan classroom activities that foster an environment of coaching and encouragement.

Classroom tasks

Before construction workers excavate a site, an architect creates a detailed blueprint of the envisioned outcome in order to maximize time, avoid chaos, and ensure safety. In the same vein, I meticulously design lessons that promote student communication and language acquisition through task-based learning (Bygate, Norris, & Van den Branden, 2015; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Long, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Van den Branden, 2016). Though the exact definition of "task" varies among researchers, the common goal is to elicit "primarily meaning-focused language use" (Ellis, 2003, p. 3). This concept can be understood in more depth by examining three necessary elements of a task-based activity, identified by Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001). First, task-based activities are learner-centered, meaning that student-to-student interaction is essential in order to successfully complete the task. Second, a meaningful exchange of information must occur between students, not simply a memorized or dictated dialogue. Lastly, tasks "culminate in a concrete representation of the information shared or gathered" (Ballman et al., p. 77), or, in other words, students must yield a tangible product that ensures responsibility of task completion. In my own

classroom, information-gap tasks meeting these three criteria have proven beneficial to students' acquisition and classroom success. In the several paragraphs that follow, I will define and discuss information-gap tasks and provide examples that are carried out in pairs or small groups.

An *optional information-gap* task contains questions that elicit personal answers, creating a dynamic, personal experience for students (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). The word "optional" connotes that student responses are open-ended and do not have one correct answer. For example, when learning verbs that describe daily routines, students interviewed one another to see what time their partner did certain activities (e.g., eat breakfast, shower, leave the house, etc.). These answers were recorded on planner-like schedule papers that students then compared to find similarities and differences. Optional information-gap activities are engaging because, due to human nature, students usually enjoy talking about their own lives. This activity met the three criteria of an optional-gap information task because students were required to (1) interact with one another through an interview, (2) give a meaningful exchange of information by talking about their personal routines, and (3) produce a tangible representation of their conversation by writing their partner's schedule. Such tasks have real-world application and benefit students through building the negotiation skills necessary to accomplish real-world tasks like creating a schedule, setting up a study session, or scheduling a dentist appointment in the target language.

In a *required information-gap* task, students have complementary information that they must exchange with one another, combining parts to make a whole (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). When my Spanish 1010 students were learning

about emotions and moods, I assigned them a Disney character information-gap task.

Student A was given a list of Disney characters and their corresponding moods; student B

was given a list of reasons why the characters felt that way. Students then had to fill in

the missing information on their paper, such as Cinderella is sad because she lost her

shoe. Once finished, the partnership wrote one additional set of their choosing (name,

mood, and reason). While according to some, this may not be considered a "task"

because authenticity is somewhat lacking, meaning it would most likely not occur outside

the language classroom, Ellis (2003) validates the benefits of such tasks:

> The kind of language behaviour they [the seemingly non-authentic tasks] elicit
>
> corresponds to the kind of communicative behaviour that arises from performing
>
> real-world tasks…The participants will need to negotiate their way to a shared
>
> understanding by asking questions and clarifying meanings—aspects of
>
> interactional authenticity. (p. 6)

It may then be concluded that a task is indirectly authentic when students build

skills necessary to real-world communication. Not only was student-to-student interaction

imbedded in the Disney activity, but learners also had fun guessing the identity of

characters, as most names were translated and appeared unfamiliar (e.g., *Cenicienta* is

Cinderella). Students then turned in their papers as a concrete representation of their

partner interaction.

Examining both types of information-gap tasks (optional and required), Ellis

(2012) reports the general finding that required-information tasks result in more

negotiation of meaning. Students ask for recasts, clarification, and repetition in order to

fill in the necessary information. These skills transfer to real-world experiences when

speakers need to request clarification or repetition, a vital skill when speaking a foreign language. The result of such participation is "binding", a term coined by Terrell (1986). Binding occurs when students link a form to its meaning, rather than its translation. When students are able to associate vocabulary with its meaning instead of its translation, speech becomes more fluid because words are accessed directly in the target language rather than via translation from English. Task-based learning helps students build necessary communicative muscles.

Communicative activities go hand-in-hand with the Can-Do Statements published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2015). This document provides "self-assessment checklists" (ACTFL, p. 1) to all levels of speakers to track personal progress in the language on a spectrum from Novice Low to Distinguished. The checklists and rubrics detail tasks students should be able to complete according to level. For example, one of the Novice Mid items states, "I can introduce myself and provide basic personal information" (ACTFL, p. 6). After participating in the first week of class, my Spanish 1010 students are able to check this box. When classroom tasks are aligned with the Can-Do statements, students have a ready tracking system for their language progress that can serve as a motivator for further learning (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2001).

Task-based activities benefit the language development of students, but they also result in advantages in addition to real-world application. For example, as students interact with one another in group activities, I have time to circulate the room and give individualized instruction. While teaching middle school, I noticed that class seemed to run smoother as I cultivated personal relationships with the students. Class cohesion also

improved as I gave students structured assignments that required them to interact with one another. I witnessed that building connections in the classroom (both student-to-student and student-to-teacher connections) caused a decrease in anxiety and other negative emotions.

The Affective Filter

The Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) theorizes that negative emotion (affect) can cause a mental block that inhibits language learning by triggering anxiety, sparking self-consciousness, and decreasing motivation (Ni, 2012). Ellis (1994) reports that students' beliefs about language learning often remain constant, yet "their affective states tend to be volatile, affecting not only overall progress but responses to particular learning activities on a day-by-day and even moment-by-moment basis" (p. 483). I often witnessed this while teaching adolescents. Outbursts of negative emotion such as cruel teasing, refusal to work, anxiety, frustration, fear, and physical aggression have more than once derailed my lessons. It may be impossible for me to entirely eliminate such fluctuations of affect (Alrabai & Moskovsky, 2016), but I can employ strategies to help reduce negative emotion in the classroom.

To stabilize the classroom environment, I must first understand what triggers anxiety, low self-confidence, and diminished motivation for students. McCann, Hecht, and Ribeau (1986) claim that speakers are apprehensive in speaking a second language because they lack proficiency; no one likes to be perceived as incompetent. Students are afraid of speaking incorrectly and often do not realize that every language learner will produce speech errors. An effective way to diffuse this apprehension is for students to build personal connections in the classroom, both with peers and with the teacher (Lee,

2012; Osterman, 2000). I have observed that students who have positive relationships within the classroom feel more comfortable making mistakes and asking for assistance both from classmates and from me.

Garrett and Young (2009) conducted a study analyzing affect in one learner's foreign language experience. They concluded that the teacher is not the exclusive factor in creating an emotionally safe language-learning environment, "but that interpersonal relations between students in the classroom also affect a student's sense of well-being" (Garrett & Young, p. 223). If students' relationships with each other benefit the learning environment, then class cohesion becomes essential to lowering the affective filter. Inclusion, collaboration, and creativity all promote class cohesion, or an environment that fosters "positive interdependence" (Galyon, Heaton, Best, & Williams, 2016, p. 65). One example is my 5th period class at Brogden Middle School, a class in which some students' personalities severely clashed. I had them memorize the poem *La pobreza* (Poverty) by Pablo Neruda (2003), a poem that talks about being confident even when ridiculed by others. I believe memorizing this poem lowered students' affective filter because everyone struggled together and made mistakes at first. Then, with time, they all became confident in reciting the poem. Students bonded because they felt accomplished and received praise from me and other teachers. While I knew this assignment would be challenging, I also knew it was within their capability.

The affective filter may rise when assignments are inappropriate for the students' level (Bennett & Desforges, 1988). Tasks that are too advanced will discourage and aggravate students, while tasks that are too simple will enable academic atrophy. Krashen (1982) offers a solution through his *i*+1 theory. It proposes that instructors provide target-

language input slightly above students' current language level. Such "+1" input challenges students' emerging language systems while avoiding an overload. While this concept is somewhat nebulous (How much is +1? How would a study observe and measure it?), it conveys a notion of continually challenging students through rich but not incomprehensible input. Of course, implementing this concept is problematic, since each individual differs in level. For example, in one particular class my students ranged from those with special needs and little verbal language skill to heritage speakers. How was I to implement i+1 with such a wide spectrum of language ability? Indeed, that is the golden question of education that must be tackled by every teacher.

In the end, students all have different personalities, temperaments, and work ethics, so I should strive to understand my students on an individual basis. The rate and degree of language development will vary within the same class, and students will inevitably struggle with negative emotion somewhere along the language-learning journey, as I did in my own experience with Chinese 1010 (see pp. 57-69). But I can minimize the effects of a raised affective filter through building teacher-student relationships, promoting class cohesion, and creating appropriate assignments—I further elaborate on the effects of anxiety and trauma on the affective filter in the annotated bibliography Second Language Acquisition of Refugees (see pp. 79-86).

Conclusion

As I have come to understand and implement these concepts in teaching Spanish 1010, my students' proficiency has increased, as has my mental wellbeing in the classroom. I no longer feel sapped of my creative drive as I did before I thoroughly understood my role as a teacher. While I acknowledge that these improvements are

partially due to teaching adults rather than adolescents, I do not credit entirely the change in proficiency results and job satisfaction to the age difference. My shift from commander to resource person has enabled my students to be active participants accountable for their own learning. They engage in task-based activities that help build interpersonal relationships within the classroom because they are interacting with one another. These relationships, in addition to level-appropriate work, help students sustain positive emotion and avoid inhibitions from a raised affective filter.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Introduction

Observing foreign language classes taught by my colleagues provides excellent opportunities for me to reflect on effective teaching behaviors, habits, and approaches. I enjoy seeing how each individual's personality shines through while teaching. The ideal teacher is not a cookie-cutter mold that embodies educational theories, but a real person who 1) understands the role of teachers and students, 2) designs engaging classroom tasks, and 3) fosters a safe classroom environment. Like the legs of a three-legged stool, these three defining characteristics of an effective teacher are the basis of my teaching philosophy, and I will discuss pertinent insights about these topics from the observations I have conducted.

Understanding teacher and student roles

In each Spanish, Russian, or Arabic class I observed, comprehensible input was a critical component. Each teacher spoke only the target language, reflecting their sound understanding of language acquisition as a process. One instructor in particular exhibited incredible patience in the amount of wait time she allowed after posing a question. She clearly understood that students need time both to process input and produce output. She helped me realize that many times in my own classroom I rush students and do not give them the processing time they need. My role as a teacher is to guide students through the language learning experience, a process in which time is crucial.

I also often observed the effective practice of modeling an activity with a TA or advanced student. When class is conducted in the target language, the modeling of activities helps students understand assignments and expectations. In some instances, I

noticed that when teachers failed to model an activity, students were slow to begin the task because they did not understand the directions, a problem easily solved by modeling. Once students begin working, whether individually or with others, the teacher circulates through classroom to monitor and answer questions. One Spanish instructor would sit with different groups and participate with them during group activities, whereas in my own classroom I normally listened to group conversations and contributed when questions arose. I liked his approach of engaging with students, because it fits the role of the teacher as mentor instead of as dictator. I have since tried to implement that example in my own classroom.

Designing classroom tasks

Another advantage of peer observation is witnessing the teachers' creativity in crafting classroom tasks. One instructor used an optional information-gap activity about a topic of which everyone had an opinion: dating. She also capitalized on pop culture references to further engage her students. The activity was built around authentic use of the language for communicative purposes; dating was a topic certainly often discussed in the students' real world. In another class, students participated in a small group activity while their instructor wrote common errors on the whiteboard to be discussed at the conclusion of the task, allowing students to freely participate in producing language without being interrupted. One type of interactive activity I saw in numerous classes (that I use in my own class) is the bicycle chain. Students form two rows facing one another and talk with the person directly across from them. The teacher then calls for students to rotate and one line moves down, giving each student a new conversation partner. This setup enables students to talk to many partners without the pressure of locating someone

new. The activity is fast paced and gives everyone the opportunity to interact. Interaction

and communication should always be the crux of classroom tasks.

Not all activities I observed were effective. In one class, students worked in small

groups and wrote captions for pictures they shared with two other groups. Sharing

became redundant because all groups had the same pictures and very similar captions;

students seemed to lose interest due to the lack of stimulating input. This made me

analyze my own choices for classroom tasks and their accompanying pedagogical

purposes. Another instructor did an activity using a song whose target audience were

small children. Students still participated, but I reflected on the importance of correctly

matching age level with authentic materials.

Fostering a safe classroom environment

Anxiety and other negative emotions impede student progress because they build

a wall between the student and language learning. I saw effective methods modeled by

my colleagues that helped students maintain a low affective filter. I realized that tone of

voice is an important component in creating this safe atmosphere. One instructor spoke

slowly in a naturally calming tone, while another spoke quickly and with high energy. I

found it interesting that somehow both put me at ease and seemed to be equally effective

in maintaining a low level of stress in the classroom, and I reflected on the importance of

a teacher letting his or her personality shine through. I can be myself; I don't need to

mimic the way another teacher speaks.

In addition to tone of voice, laughter was a prevalent part of some of the classes I

attended. Laughter is often the best antidote to negative emotions and plays an important

role in the classroom. Enjoying the content together helps students feel more comfortable

with classmates and engenders a sense of community. I witnessed one teacher use the few minutes before class time—time that I often was using to ensure my technology was working or to make other last-minute preparations—to interact with his students on a personal level. He asked about their recent sporting competitions and other personal interests. It was evident that he had taken the time to get to know his students.

Conclusion

The insights and examples I have shared are evidence that peer observations are valuable because they promote reflection and learning. I witnessed both differences and similarities that caused me to think about my own classroom practices and make goals for improvement. Teachers can always improve, but it is important to remember that no two people are exactly the same. Each person brings something special to the classroom that cannot be exactly duplicated by another. I should try to be the best *me* teacher that I can, gleaning from the strengths of others and learning from our differences.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STATEMENT

Introduction

For this paper, I followed the observation protocol described by Spicer-Escalante and deJonge-Kannan (2016). Self-reflection and self-assessment of one's own teaching is an often-neglected means of helping a teacher identify needed improvements and celebrate daily successes (Ashwin et al., 2015; Desimone & Garet, 2015). Acting on such assessment made after presenting a lesson may engender an attitude of continual professional progress, a crucial characteristic of successful innovators. Conclusions regarding my strengths and weaknesses described in this paper emerge from three sources: (1) my own personal reflections following my lessons, (2) analyzing a video recording of one lesson, and (3) feedback from an advisor who observed that lesson. The lessons evaluated were a Spanish mini-lesson presented to novice speakers in a Linguistics 4400 class (C1) and a Spanish 1010 lesson (C2). My analysis of the video recordings proved particularly valuable because my perceptions of the lesson—both positive and negative—were sometimes contradicted by video evidence. I will first evaluate the strengths evident in my teaching methods and classroom activities and will conclude with a discussion of the areas in which I wish to improve.

Areas of strength

A positive feature of my classroom is the inviting environment I create through enthusiasm, positivity, and humor. From watching both C1 and C2 videos, I see that my conscious effort to put students at ease yields dividends in the way students participate and interact with each other. My advisor commented that I "exude positive energy", thereby helping to lower students' affective filters and making them more likely to

participate. Students whose affective filters are low are more confident and better at absorbing input, an important skill in developing and improving communicative competence. Humor helps create classroom community because shared laughter builds a safe space in which students feel comfortable speaking the target language. For example, in C1, while teaching animal vocabulary, I displayed bizarre photoshopped pictures of non-existent hybrid animals (e.g. catbird), and students enjoyed identifying them. Participation in humorous, full-class activities helps set the tone for an inclusive and successful environment.

Organization is also an important key component to any successful lesson. During my C2 lesson, I maximized time by pre-selecting groups for an activity, a practice I found to be efficient as well as advantageous, since students often limit themselves to working with the same classmates. I also spent considerable time designing activities and planning conceptual explanations with comprehensible input. I carefully selected examples and used my TA to model assigned dialogues and activities. I learned the importance of modeling when once I forgot to do so for an activity during C1. I quickly explained the activity in the L2, and, assuming students had followed, set them loose to work in groups. Almost everyone immediately started looking busy, but as I walked around, I realized no one knew what was going on. My oversight served as a strong reminder for the need of modeling and that effective modeling requires forethought and organization.

Both lessons exemplified my commitment to classroom tasks that are based on real-world application. In C1, we used the animal vocabulary to talk about animated movies we enjoyed, such as Finding Nemo, Bolt, and The Lion King. Discussing

common ground involving pop culture helps even novice speakers feel competent in contributing something. In C2, students discussed with a partner their dreams for the future and were instructed to find three dreams they shared. Such dialogue is an excellent example of interpersonal communication whose main purpose is to build relationships. I strive to create assignments that not only serve a pedagogical purpose but also foster positive relationships in the classroom. Another way to promote classroom unity is to I redirect student questions to other students. Doing so creates a classroom community of empowerment and resourcefulness where students can rely on classmates as well as on the instructor.

Areas of improvement

I will now explore specific ways in which I plan to improve my preparation and execution of lessons. C2 began with an individual writing activity about students' dreams for the future. While this activity may have been pedagogically sound, its placement within the lesson was flawed. On a rainy, dreary, Monday morning, my students were practically falling asleep while doing this activity; sitting in writer's silence was not what they needed. It would have been better to begin with something more engaging, like displaying pictures and surveying the class to see if the pictures lined up with their vision for the future. Such an interactive and potentially humorous activity would have been a more energizing opener. I plan to think more critically about the first activity of a lesson, since it often sets the tone for the duration of the class period.

While my warm-up activity mishap can be easily remedied, as I viewed the video recording of C1 I noticed a habit that will require more effort to correct: a lack of eye contact. If someone had asked me prior to watching the video if I made frequent eye

contact with my students, I would have responded affirmatively. Yet, the video revealed that, even though I was scanning the room and engaging in casual eye contact, I did not actually look my students directly in the eye very often. This is a problem because eyes can communicate understanding or confusion and help me as the teacher gauge pacing and comprehension. My goal now is to make more eye contact with my students instead of glancing around the room as if giving a speech.

Another needed improvement evident from analyzing the C2 video is keeping students accountable for partner interactions. Even though students had partner discussions about their dreams during C2, no structured class discussion took place for reporting back on their conversations. I vaguely asked students to share their answers, and one volunteered. I called on two more students, and we moved on. Due to the lack of scaffolding and a system of accountability for participating in the discussion, we missed a potentially meaningful class discussion in the L2. From this I learn that while discussion questions are valuable, I must implement a way of keeping students accountable for those interactions by stimulating follow-up class discussions.

Finally, I want to focus on providing more responsive assistance to my students. During the first activity in C1, I did not move around the room, and my advisor brought to my attention afterward that one student did not write anything. Not only should I move around the room during individual or group work, I should also take an active role in helping students as I do so. I can ask them follow-up questions to help them discover an error they are making or make a comment using the same grammatical structure correctly to help them notice the error. I do not need to wait for them to raise their hand to provide assistance.

Conclusion

Through analyzing my experiences, I realize that my teaching habits exhibit inclusion, enthusiasm, and dedication. Like many, I tend to be my worst critic, always focusing on what I could have done better, but I am encouraged that overall my classroom is a positive, organized environment focused on real-world tasks. Self-assessment has made me more careful in the selection of the activities I use as openers, as well as more diligent in finding ways to make students accountable in class discussions. Being more accessible to students during group and paired work will help them further their communicative abilities, as will also my increased attentiveness to their confusion through eye contact. Teaching is an exciting and dynamic profession where improvement is always possible; I look forward to continual growth through self-reflection and self-assessment.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

LANGUAGE PAPER

Apologizing: The Difficulties for L2 English Learners and their Teachers

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

In the spring of 2017 I took Dr. deJonge-Kannan's pragmatics course entitled Culture Teaching and Learning. During that course I wrote this paper about the teaching of apologies to L2 English speakers. The topic of pragmatics fascinates me because language and culture are tightly intertwined. Teachers may need to use students' L1 to explicitly teach pragmatic competence of speech acts if they want to produce culturally sensitive target language speakers. One such speech act is the category of apologies, a culturally dictated social necessity that assuages conflict and perpetuates healthy relationships. The construction of an apology in a foreign language is not intuitive because it is a cultural construct and varies depending on the severity of the infraction.

This paper seeks to understand the nature of pragmatic competence and the challenges L2 English teachers/learners face in teaching/acquiring socially acceptable apologies. I identify the components of an apology and review studies evaluating the pragmatic effectiveness of textbooks.

APOLOGIZING:

THE DIFFICULTIES FOR L2 ENGLISH LEARNERS AND THEIR TEACHERS

Introduction

Although every language is syntactically, phonologically, and lexically distinct, all people regardless of dialect or location "engage in greetings and leave-takings, offer advice, utter directives, [and] express apologies" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 244). These language functions that are critical to forming and maintaining human connections are termed "speech acts" (Austin, 1962). Austin defines speech acts as utterances "in which to *say* something is to *do* something" (p. 12); for example, to say, "I apologize for *x*" is to complete the act of apologizing. Although the presence of such speech acts is ubiquitous across languages, their culturally accepted enactment varies.

In order to recognize these pragmatic differences and produce speech acts appropriately, language learners require explicit instruction because pragmatic competence is not inherent in lexical knowledge (Hymes, 1972; see also, Bardovi-Harlig, 2012; Canale & Swain, 1980; Cutting, 2008; Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2013). Most textbooks used by instructors of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) contain little pragmatic information (Dendenne, 2013; Vellenga, 2004), necessitating that teachers take action without the support of conventional resources. This paper will examine current research regarding the speech act of apologies produced by second language (L2) speakers of English in order to raise teacher awareness of necessary pragmatic instruction.

Pragmatic competence

The socially acceptable way to enact speech acts is not humanly intrinsic but a construct of any given society (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 2006; Haugh, 2011; Sifianou & Blitvich, 2017). Abiding by an unwritten code of politeness requires pragmatic competence, which is "the ability to communicate your proposed message with all its gradations in any sociocultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended" (Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015, p. 1263; see also, Chang, 2016; Houck & Tatsuki, 2010; LoCastro, 2012). Understanding the intention of a message is paramount to mutual understanding—the very purpose of communication. Thus, in addition to linguistic knowledge, pragmatic competence entails an understanding of social norms, with the ability to meet unspoken and even "unconscious" (Lieske, 2010, p. 203) expectations.

While coding and decoding such messages may come naturally to members of the same language community, L2 speakers must actively develop these skills to prevent "cross-cultural misunderstanding" (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007, p. 288) that stems from differences in worldview, cultural values, and social expectations (Thomas, 1983). If a speaker grammatically masters the L2 yet foregoes development of pragmatic competence, the result is a "fluent fool" (Bennett, 1997, p. 16) who unknowingly gives offense far and wide. Native speakers are typically lenient regarding grammatical mistakes, but pragmatic errors are often perceived as a negative reflection on the character and respectability of the L2 speaker (Lieske, 2010; LoCastro, 2012; Tamimi Sa'd & Mohammadi, 2014). For example, if a Spanish L2 English speaker asked, "How are you, fatty?" an American would take offense and most likely conclude that the

speaker is a rude person; however, such a greeting is common and even endearing in

Spanish (*¿Cómo estás, gordito?*), thus illustrating that social norms are culturally

dependent. Such drastic differences in spoken behavior can incite misjudgments that

perpetuate stereotypes and disregard the cultural disconnect inherent in poor pragmatic

competence. Apologies are one type of speech act that require pragmatic proficiency in

order to be effectual (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain,

1984; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989).

The speech act of apologizing

Children acquire the skill of apologizing in their native language through

"acculturation processes and socializing experiences" (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007, p. 290)

that saturate their childhood, such as "Timmy, apologize for hitting your sister". An

apology is "a redressive act with a resolutive function" (Dalmau & Gotor, p. 290) that is

expected "when there is some behavior that violates social norms" (Olshtain & Cohen,

1989, p. 55). In other words, the apologizer acknowledges a real or perceived wrong

toward another person(s) with the intent to repair the incurred damage. Apologies occur

in all languages because humans are "social creature[s] and maintenance of harmony in

one's interpersonal relationships is a socially warranted necessity" (Farashaiyan &

Amirkhiz, 2011, p. 224). Apologies are critical to maintaining harmony with others, yet

people employ various strategies within one apologetic occurrence.

Brown and Levinson (1987) identify three variables that regulate the construction

of an apology: power, social distance, and imposition of the infraction. Bumping into a

stranger on the subway would elicit a different apology than breaking your mother's

cherished vase. In the former, a simple "Sorry" or "Excuse me" would suffice because

there is maximum distance, equal power, and low imposition. In the latter, the apology would be extensive, and compensation of some form would most likely be anticipated because the imposition is high, and the relationship is close. Apology strategies include "explicit or direct apology, taking on responsibility, explanation or account, offer of repair, [and] promise of forbearance" (Dalmau & Gotor, 2007, p. 291; see also Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Table 1 provides examples for each strategy type. Not every apology includes every strategy, nor should it—although you would do well to employ them all when confronting your mother about the vase!

Table 1: Examples of apology strategies

Apology Strategy	Examples
Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)	I'm really sorry / I apologize
Taking on responsibility	It's my fault / I feel so bad
Explanation or account	I didn't see it there / I wasn't paying attention
Offer of repair	I'll get you a new one / Let me make it up to you
Promise of forbearance	It won't happen again / I'll be more careful

These apology strategies are employed to preserve what Goffman (1967) refers to as "face" (p. 5), defined by Brown and Levinson (1978) as "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (p. 66). While all humans seek to preserve face, methods of doing so vary according to culture and depend on positive versus negative face-saving strategies. Positive face refers to the desire for approval and acceptance from others; negative face involves the want to maintain freedom and independence (Callahan, 2011; Farashaiyan & Amirkhiz, 2011; Brown & Levinson, 1978). For the apologizer both types of face are

threatened when offering an apology, because it may incur rejection and furthermore infringes on the freedom of the apologizer: "I did something wrong but want the other person to like me" and "The situation demands my response". The recipient's positive and negative face is also threatened: "I want the wrong-doer to think I'm competent in responding to the apology" and "The apology needs to be acted upon with a response".

Inasmuch as apologies spring from situations on a spectrum of delicate to devastating, individuals must make nuanced choices in strategies when apologizing. With such subtleties surrounding this speech act, it is not surprising that L2 speakers of English (or any language) struggle to produce native-like apologies. Researchers within the realm of speech acts have conducted many studies to analyze L2 speakers' production of apologies in English (Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Cedar, 2017; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Dalmau & Gotor, 2007; Langat, Onyango, & Bartoo, 2017; Lieske, 2010; Mir, 1992; Prachanant, 2016). These studies will be reviewed in the paragraphs that follow.

EFL speakers' production of apologies

With English developing into a global language (Schulzke, 2014), researchers are able to survey L2 English speakers from native language backgrounds that have previously been underrepresented. For example, Prachanant (2016) conducted a study to determine the typical apology strategies of Thai EFL learners. Similarly, Bagherinejad and Jadidoleslam (2015) investigated the effect of proficiency level on apology strategies of Iranian university students majoring in English. In the majority of studies regarding apology production, researchers gather data using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). A DCT is a written compilation of scenarios in which participants write their hypothetical

responses to the situations usually targeting speech act production. In the studies herein examined, DCTs contained circumstances "designed to elicit apology strategies" (Prachanant, 2016, p. 28). One disparity between apologies of native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) was the length of the apology.

One of the considerations in gauging the appropriate length of an apology is the imposition of the infraction. Impositions are perceived differently across cultures, and apologies are carried out in "an assortment of patterns and clutch a specific cultural value" (Farashaiyan & Amirkhiz, 2011, p. 224). For example, in Lieske's (2010) article "Bumping into someone: Japanese students' perceptions and observations", Japanese L2 English participants were asked via DCT if and how they would apologize to a person they accidently bumped into. In addition, they were asked if that apology would change if the person dropped something as a result of the collision. Results showed that "over one-third of the students were unaware that the apology when H [the hearer] drops something is longer than the apology when S [the speaker] merely bumps into H" (Lieske, p. 202). For instance, a native speaker would use multiple apology strategies (e.g., Oh I'm so sorry, let me help you) whereas the non-native speaker would use only one (e.g., I'm sorry). Such nuances must be explicitly taught because exposure alone does not ensure student learning of pragmatic competence.

While some L2 English speakers give apologies of unsatisfactory length, others do the opposite—that is, they overelaborate. Dalmau and Gotor (2007) investigated the acquisitional patterns of apologies in Catalan speakers of British English and found that proficient-level speakers "employed reinforcement techniques from Catalan" (p. 308) when apologizing. More specifically, Catalan participants used a combination of

intensifiers (e.g., really, very, so) and downgraders such as "Am I late?" (Jeon, 2017, p. 10) customarily used in their L1, while in the same situation NSs only used intensifiers. Naturally this resulted in NNSs producing lengthier apologies than NSs. This is because the Catalan system of politeness is positive face based, meaning the speaker seeks to reassure the hearer of "belonging, common ground and forgiveness" (Dalmau & Gotor, p. 293). In contrast, a negative face-based politeness system such as British English centers on "avoiding disharmony and conflict" (Dalmau & Gotor, p. 293). These fundamental differences in politeness constitute what Ellis (1994) refers to as "'deep' cultural elements" (p. 182). In other words, children are conditioned from birth to distinguish between polite and impolite behavior dictated by their culture. L2 speakers often use rules from their L1 politeness system in L2 contexts because such constructs are deeply ingrained in their perception of the world.

Applying social norms or patterns from the L1 when speaking the L2 is called pragmatic transfer (Chang, 2009; Dendenne, 2014; Kasper & Rose, 2002; LoCastro, 2012; Žegarac & Pennington, 2000). Pragmatic competence does not automatically increase in tandem with speaking proficiency, and, consequently, pragmatic transfer is inevitable. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) give an example contrasting North American and Korean apologies that illustrates how pragmatic transfer could result in cultural misunderstanding. If a North American English L1 speaker accidentally bumped into a stranger, the ensuing apology would likely be "Sorry" or "Excuse me". Yet,

> Koreans are taken aback at the perceived North American confrontational style in
>
> taking such overt notice of their physical contact. In such situations, Koreans…
>
> rely on more subtle means to apologize, such as facial expressions, gestures, or

even murmuring an "U-meo-na!" [Oops!] to themselves. (DeCapua &

Wintergerst, 2004, p. 246)

I imagine that many North Americans while intending to be polite have been perceived as

abrasive and disrespectful amidst Koreans due to pragmatic transfer. The only way to

help students avoid misunderstandings like these is through explicit pragmatic

instruction. Unfortunately, studies concerning the inclusion of pragmatic material in

textbooks—one of the most common teacher resources—find vast deficiencies.

Challenges

Dendenne (2013) conducted an evaluation of Algerian EFL textbooks to assess

the amount of pragmatic instruction therein contained. Dendenne found that apologies, if

included, were oversimplified through exclusively teaching the use of "I'm sorry",

without taking into account the severity of an offense and its accompanying strategies.

Concerning this finding, the author concludes, "The over presentation of one linguistic

form in the textbooks is likely to push learners to over-learn it and, thus, over use it later"

(Dendenne, p. 179). In a similar study evaluating textbooks for pragmatic information,

Vellenga (2004) found that out of eight ESL/EFL textbooks, only one mentioned

apologies, even though apologizing is an important and frequent part of "naturally

occurring language" (p. 8). Unfortunately, the scant pragmatic instruction contained in

the majority of textbooks reflects the oversight and neglect of pragmatic competence by

publishers and textbooks writers.

These sobering studies shed light on major obstacles facing teachers: awareness

and resources. Textbook writers do not prioritize pragmatic instruction as promoted

content because, in my experience, teachers who stress pragmatic competence are the

minority. I admit, prior to taking a pragmatics course, I was not aware of the importance of pragmatic instruction. So, what can be done? Are language learners consigned to be "fluent fool[s]" (Bennett, 1997, p. 16), wandering through the wilderness of pragmatic incompetence without even the ability to effectively apologize? If teachers remain puppets of the textbook—perhaps they are. But if teachers actively promote pragmatic awareness and competence by using their own knowledge and authentic sources outside the textbook, students will begin to develop vital skills in cross-cultural communication (Houck & Tatsuki, 2010; Prachanant, 2016). Of course, this presents the challenge of finding pragmatically competent EFL teachers and also raises the question of the nature of pragmatics in world Englishes (Bhatt, 2001; Jenkins, 2006; Matsuda, 2003), a topic beyond the scope of this paper.

In addition to a scarcity of pragmatically conscious textbooks, the majority of research on the speech act of apologizing analyzes data collected from DCTs as opposed to natural conversation. DCTs by their very nature test knowledge instead of performance (Bialystok, 1993; Nguyễn, Pham, & Cao, 2013). Not only are DCTs the prevalent testing tool, but also, in many studies, the majority of participants are university students (Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Lieske, 2010; Prachanant, 2016), which is mostly due to the "convenience of sampling" (Farashaiyan & Amirkhiz, 2011, p. 226). In contrast, I am interested in how the average, everyday L2 speaker of English responds with an apology in a moment of conflict. I anticipate the results would be different from a group of university students given ample time to craft their written responses. The challenges of collecting and coding natural conversational data are time

and accessibility; nevertheless, further research could determine the disparities between speaker knowledge and performance.

Conclusion

While there may be gaps in textbooks and teacher education concerning effective pragmatic instruction, instructors can—and must—assume an active, innovative role in the pragmatic education of students. The first step is raising awareness of the differences between L1 and L2 practices, norms, and expectations, because politeness is a cultural construct (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Once students identify differences, they must be given opportunities via role-plays to practice culturally appropriate responses that elicit targeted speech acts. Apologizing, a particularly challenging and delicate speech act, requires strategies beyond saying "I'm sorry" if relationships are to flourish. While native culture remains a defining feature of individuals, students who have developed pragmatic competence will be empowered to successfully navigate cross-cultural communication.

LITERACY PAPER

Basics, Benefits, and Challenges of Twitter in the L2 Classroom

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

My interest in researching Twitter as an educational tool began in Dr. Thoms' Technology for Language Teaching course that I took spring semester of 2017. Originally, I read articles in order to create an annotated bibliography on the topic of Twitter in the L2 classroom, but I decided to expand its scope into a research paper while taking Dr. Albirini's Research Methods course in the spring of 2018. My teaching experience prior to being a graduate instructor at USU was with adolescents, grades 6-12. This age group has grown up in a digital world, the majority constantly relying on their devices for information, communication, and socialization. As such, social media platforms—often disconnected from and prohibited within the classroom—can be a motivating tool to promote target language use and class cohesion. I selected Twitter as the platform of study for beginning language learners for two reasons: (1) its widespread popularity, and (2) the character limit of tweets provides a less intimidating and equalizing publishing format for language learners.

BASICS, BENEFITS, AND CHALLENGES OF TWITTER IN THE L2 CLASSROOM

Introduction

While I was teaching middle school, students often snatched dry erase markers from my desk to scribble messages on the whiteboard, causing me to keep the markers under lock and key. Even with preventative measures I would inevitably find messages left by determined and clever students. Almost without fail these notes contained a username (@name) and a plea for classmates to *follow* the student on various social media platforms. One teenager even scrawled, "Don't be a ghost follower", meaning the user wished peers to *like* and comment on posts in addition to following. Such experiences have caused me to reflect on the apparently inextricable connection between identity and social media for many of the rising generation. These "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1) have grown up in a world of constant Internet connectivity and seem to thrive on likes, shares, and comments. One of my goals as a teacher is to engage students by using mediums relevant in their lives; I am therefore interested in incorporating social media in the second language (L2) classroom. More specifically, I have pursued research evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of Twitter with an emphasis on developing L2 writing skills.

While the design of Twitter lends itself to developing writing proficiency, the platform was not created expressly as an L2 learning tool. As of 2016, Twitter had 328 million monthly users according to www.statista.com and its purpose is to share information, conversation, and news (Lomicka & Lord, 2012), embodied in the prompt "What's happening?" (http://twitter.com). As with any technology, Twitter serves as a tool—not a magic elixir—that can enhance L2 learning and competency. As such,

instructors must actively harness the power of this platform by implementing well-structured, objective-oriented activities (Domalewska, 2014; Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, Freynik, 2014; Sullivan & Bhattacharya, 2017). I will elaborate on the benefits and potential challenges of Twitter as an L2 learning tool, as well as provide examples of practical applications in the L2 classroom.

Twitter Basics

Whereas all technology entails a specific vernacular, it is necessary to define key Twitter terms. A *tweet* is a post made by a Twitter user and is limited to 140 characters, including letters, spaces, punctuation, and emoji. To *retweet* means to repost a tweet from another user that, as a result, appears on the retweeter's profile. A *hashtag* is any word or string of words without spaces preceded by the # symbol and serves the purpose of tracking or linking all similar material. *Tagging* a user sends a notification to a specific person regarding that tweet and is done by adding @ in front of the person's username. Other users' updates appear in one's feed when one subscribes to, or *follows*, their account; the people following any given user are referred to as *followers*. Unless privacy settings are enacted, users can interact with any tweet in four ways: like, comment, retweet, or direct message. To be considered a true Twitter user, the tweeting of *gifs* is imperative. A gif is a brief video (typically 2-6 seconds) played on a loop to convey emotion, typically referencing pop culture. Now, with a foundational knowledge of Twitter, let us examine how it can reinforce ACTFL standards in the L2 classroom.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) collaborated with other foreign language teacher associations[1] for the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996), which established five categories of

foreign language standards referred to as the 5 C's: communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities. While challenges may arise in each, the category of communities has been particularly difficult for me to enact in my Spanish classroom. The standard states that students are to "use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate… [as well as] for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement" (www.actfl.org).

Prior to using Twitter in my classroom, I felt successful with students' Spanish use within the classroom but grappled with motivating students to collaborate for their own gratification and improvement. I have witnessed increased engagement outside the classroom with the introduction of Twitter in my course. Students are now using the target language to interact with each other in their personal lives, thus meeting the ACTFL ideal. The shift from disinterest to engagement through social media is similar to the way a dam harvests hydroelectric power from a river. Students will continue to use social media—just as a river continues to flow—regardless of whether educators promote or discourage its use. Teachers can harness the magnetism of social media for language learning and "transform social networking to educational networking" (Antenos-Conforti, 2009, p. 82). Let us dam the river and power our classrooms with the untapped energy of educational social media.

Benefits

Learning theorists such as Vygotsky (1986), Krashen (1982), and Lee and VanPatten (2003) support this approach. Vygotsky theorizes that language develops through social interaction. In our modern age, social interaction—to see and be seen—is the essence of social media. Krashen (1982) submits that input must be comprehensible

to be effective, which is accomplished as classmates of similar language ability comment on each other's tweets. Lee and VanPatten (2003) declare the need for communicative, real-world activities. What is more real world than an online hive of current events and people's reactions to those events? Countless authentic communicative opportunities are now available because "online communicative platforms have ended the limitations of the physical world" (Fewell, 2014, p. 224). Time and location are no longer constraints on communication as a result of Web 2.0 tools; indeed, our modern era is marked by the digital revolution (Collins & Halverson, 2009; Kaplan & Giedd, 2012; Haenlein, 2016; Miller et al., 2016). In the past, the Internet was used primarily to access information, whereas Web 2.0 centers on "the creation of online communities through creativity, sharing, and social interaction" (Fewell, p. 225). The consumer of information has become a collaborative producer of information, employing skills of various literacies.

Traditionally, literacy is defined as the encoding and decoding skills involving written language (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Goody, 1975; Stubbs, 2014); however, with the advent of new technologies, this definition must be broadened. In an article entitled "New Literacies", the authors comment on the changing state of literacy:

> To have been literate yesterday, in a world defined primarily by relatively static book technologies, does not ensure that one is fully literate today where we encounter new technologies such as Google docs, Skype, iMovie…or thousands of mobile apps. To be literate tomorrow will be defined by even newer technologies that have yet to appear. (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2017, p. 1)

In other words, modern literacy surpasses reading and writing to include the ability to navigate technology devices, platforms, and apps for communicative purposes (Bawden, 2008; Rowsell & Pahl, 2015). Students who are comfortable integrating technology into traditional education will be more flexible in assimilating future tools.

The immensity of cyberspace has replaced the physical walls of the classroom, enabling language learning beyond the confines of the schoolhouse (Khan, 2012). Because of technology (e.g., computers, smart phones, internet), the twenty-first century is characterized by a radical shift in the way people socialize (Haythornthwaite, 2005). Classroom use of platforms such as Twitter can empower instructors to "[increase] the learning potential and [reduce] the affective filters" (Antenos-Conforti, 2009, p. 71) of students. The affective filter refers to the mental block a student may experience as a result of negative emotion such as stress, frustration, or anxiety (Krashen, 1982). This means that when students are overloaded, stressed, or uncomfortable, their ability to process and produce language decreases (Horwitz, 2002; Young, 1992). Twitter can potentially help lower the affective filter of students.

One major contributor to emotional distress in the L2 classroom is the possibility of immediate response (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), which is not expected when using Twitter because students can allow themselves necessary processing time to tweet or comment. Social media platforms reduce additional problems such as "time constraints…fear of making mistakes, social control, personal complexes, [and] stereotypes" (Larreta-Azelain, 2013, p. 134). Personality traits (e.g., shy, introverted) cause some students to be more anxious than others, yet in Larreta-Azelain's study, students liked the 140-character limit on Twitter because it "reduced…anxiety and made

them feel less shy when communicating in [the L2]" (p. 132). The very nature of Twitter as an asynchronous form of communication is beneficial for students developing L2 writing skills because they can communicate in a low-stress environment with real-world application (Gao, Luo, & Zhang, 2012). In addition to avoiding raised affective filters, Twitter can serve to motivate students (Taskiran, Gumusoglu, & Aydin, 2018).

As a teacher, one of my greatest desires is for students to be intrinsically motivated; not only will students perform better, but they will have a more fulfilling experience (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2001). Extrinsic motivation necessitates rewards or consequences, but once those disappear, motivation wanes. Intrinsically motivated students "are more successful on the account that they are willing to accept and meet challenges in order to achieve satisfaction and enjoyment inherent in the activity or task itself" (Chang, 2005, p. 219; see also, Deci & Ryan, 1985). Using Twitter can be intrinsically motivating because students have a greater purpose than complying with the requirements of the teacher: they are establishing online identity. For example, the assignment to post a family picture with a description on Twitter is likely to be more motivating than submitting a paragraph to the teacher with the same content, because students are interacting with a wider audience, building a culture of community with their classmates, and developing their digital identity.

Lomicka and Lord (2012) introduce the concept of digital identity by discussing "social presence" (p. 50), a term coined by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) that refers to interaction as the infrastructure of community building. In my own experience, the most successful classes are the ones where students develop class cohesion because "the development of community, both within and beyond the classroom, is vital for the

effectiveness of the educative process" (Lomicka & Lord, p. 51). This means that assigned activities outside the classroom can build a sense of community and trust that benefits students when they are within classroom walls. For example, in my Spanish 1010 class I often heard students follow up with each other about a post on Twitter, such as "How was your trip?". Topics of tweets that revolve around students' interests, the class itself, or current news may stimulate interaction in the form of likes, comments, and retweets. This development of community fosters intrinsic motivation because humans thrive on interaction and acceptance (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Plaks, 2011).

Aside from community-building benefits, Lomicka and Lord (2012) also explore the instructional benefits of Twitter. The authors reference a statement from the National Education Association (NEA) that details some of these benefits: "[The NEA] recommends that Twitter can be used to help students 'crystallize thoughts, focus attention, and make connections'" (Lomicka & Lord, p. 49). Apart from making metaphorical or thematic connections, students can make literal connections by using hashtags (#), a system to tag related content and simplify searching. In addition, Twitter can focus the attention of students because users are forced to "write concisely and for an audience" (Lomicka & Lord, p. 49). The 140-character limit compels students to choose words wisely. Users employ various space-saving strategies that create a writing modality unique to social media hereafter referred to as social writing. If students are not aware of tweeting conventions specific to the social writing of the target language, L2 tweets may be difficult to understand.

Potential challenges

  In my own use of Twitter, I have seen that tweets often replace words with emoji, omit unnecessary words, forego punctuation marks, and use abbreviations/acronyms. (Table 1 provides examples.) This is done to circumvent the imposed character limit but is also characteristic of the platform's informality. For example, the common Spanish phrase "Te quiero mucho" (used between friends means "Love you lots") is usually shortened to "tkm" in social writing. If students did not know that "qu" is often replaced with "k", they would have little hope of guessing the meaning of this acronym. Thus, teachers using Twitter or other social media platforms in the L2 classroom should discuss these trends with students in order to equip them with the knowledge necessary to comprehend tweets from L1 users of Spanish. As a characteristically informal platform, Twitter helps students develop their basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) as opposed to their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), as set forth by Cummins (1979; 2017). While developing BICS is vital for language fluency, educators must provide balance by including CALP in the classroom. Both are vital to language development and merit direct instruction.

  Another challenge with using Twitter as an L2 classroom tool is the potential for its misuse by students—especially adolescents. Prichard (2013) addresses this issue by suggesting that teachers and students discuss problems such as "security, privacy, inappropriate content, and cyberbullying" (p. 207). Cyberbullying among adolescents is becoming an increasingly salient topic of research due to its damaging effects, in the most extreme cases leading to suicide (Alipan, Skues, Theiler, & Wise, 2015; Campbell & Bauman, 2018; Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012; Menesini et al., 2012; Stauffer,

Table 2: Space-saving strategies when tweeting

Space-saving strategy	Example in a tweet
Abbreviations	Went 2 @DearEvanHansen @bensplatt ur my absolute fav!! The performance was out of this world seriously ur the BEST plz never leave #broadway
Acronyms	Really POTUS REALLY idk how this happened #politics #whyohwhy #4longyears
Replace words with emoji	Be still my beating ❤️ my🌎 will NEVER be the same #newpuppy #labradoodle #loveatfirstsight
Omit unnecessary words	Best meal in very long time thanks @BrazilianSteakhouse food & service on point
No punctuation	*See all previous examples*

Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). While definitions of cyberbullying vary among

researchers, "each definition…contains some aggressive, hostile, or harmful act that is

perpetrated by a bully through an unspecified electronic device" (Tokunaga, 2010, p.

278). It becomes incumbent on teachers who use social media as a course component to

discuss the prevention of these behaviors and stress the importance of civil cyber

behavior. Seemingly intuitive rules should be explicitly taught: 1) don't damage your

"reputation"; 2) don't "embarrass, hurt or offend others"; and 3) don't "annoy or

offend…friends" (Prichard, p. 214). Abiding by such behaviors is referred to as

netiquette, or "the moral and ethical values that people exercise online" (Park, Na, &

Kim, 2014, p. 74). To teach these skills, teachers can carry out awareness raising

activities by presenting tweets and discussing their (in)appropriateness.

Finally, the last potential downside is the lack of negotiation of meaning by Twitter users. To illustrate this point, let us examine Antenos-Conforti's (2009) L2 Italian classroom study in which students were required to tweet three times a week. Knowing that students are digital natives, it is not surprising that 95% of participants "enjoyed tweeting better than traditional writing assignments" (Antenos-Conforti, p. 78). Instead of assignments being viewed by the teacher only, students were able to share their work with a wider audience, which promoted student participation and a class culture of community.

The majority of tweets were "status updates" (Antenos-Conforti, p. 71) as opposed to interaction with others, which would require negotiation of meaning (Varonis & Gass, 1985). Twitter may be a useful tool in helping students develop writing skills but does not inherently elicit negotiation of meaning, an indicator of mutual understanding and a hallmark of effective communication. This does not discredit classroom Twitter use but simply reinforces the need for other resources and activities to help students develop all aspects of communicative competence; however, that is beyond the scope of this paper. In terms of the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational), it seems that Twitter vacillates between interpersonal and presentational writing depending on whether other users respond or comment.

Conclusion

Twitter as an L2 tool to develop writing skills is just that—a tool. Direct instruction and face-to-face interaction are irreplaceable facets of the L2 classroom; nevertheless, Twitter may be used to augment out-of-class learning and engagement. The 140-character limit of a tweet provides a low-stress environment in which students can

post about real-world experiences in an unintimidating format. Even with such byte-sized contributions, 83% of students in Fewell's (2014) Twitter study "felt that using Twitter was a productive tool" (p. 229) in using the L2 for authentic and applicable purposes. Apart from instructional benefits, students will become more intrinsically motivated to participate because they are developing community in addition to digital literacy. Facilitating class cohesion will lower the affective filters of students, thus allowing them to absorb more within the classroom. Instructors should take special care to help students understand common social writing conventions in the L2, as well as provide guidance regarding (in)appropriateness of posts. Damming the mighty river of social media will not only help students meet ACTFL standards but will also potentially inspire them to be life-long learners. Web 2.0 tools have revolutionized L2 learning and will continue to evolve, improving the effectiveness of the educators who wield them.

Notes:

1. ACTFL partnered with the American Association of Teachers of French, American Association of Teachers of German, and American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese to write the National Standards in Foreign Language Education.

CULTURE PAPER

Chinese 1010: Analyzing my Language Learning Journal

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

This paper fulfilled a requirement of a portfolio project in which I was allowed to audit a beginner's level class of a language unfamiliar to me and reflect on my learning process. Having no previous background in Mandarin, I decided to take Chinese 1010 with a fellow MSLT student in the fall of 2017. After class we often discussed our frustrations, challenges, and successes, following which I documented my daily learning experience in a digital journal. Each section heading in this paper refers to a quote from my language learning journal and provides research evidence to support my claims.

At the end of the course, I analyzed my journal to identify trends of challenge or success in order to more fully understand the student perspective in language learning. I identified emotive descriptors from a total of 47 entries and categorized them according to positive or negative affect; out of 42 emotive descriptors used 125 times, the most common was "frustrating". This finding increased my interest in understanding how to decrease the affective filter of my students. I had forgotten the feelings of insecurity and dread that often accompany novice language learning and my empathy for my students increased. I also learned the value of maintaining a learning log to process the emotional journey of language learning. I would highly recommend such a project to any educators feeling stagnant in their teaching approach or who lack empathy for the learning difficulties faced by their students.

CHINESE 1010: ANALYZING MY LANGUAGE LEARNING JOURNAL

"I entered the classroom, hesitant and apprehensive…but excited. My entire vocabulary consisted of three phrases (hello, thank you, I love you) and I feared that I would be out of my league in this beginning Chinese class. How would I navigate such an intimidating, labyrinthine language? Fortunately, my teacher unknowingly assuaged my nerves by introducing herself in English. I felt relieved yet somewhat disappointed that the entire class period passed without a single utterance in Chinese. I had mentally primed my psyche for feelings of incompetence and frustration, but such preparation was unnecessary for today's introduction, yet I am sure that my mental fortifications will not be in vain, because I am certain I will be lost and confused before long" (Day 1). Such were my reflections on my first day of Chinese 1010 at USU.

I determined to take Chinese as a foreign language in order to self-observe my language learning process from its inception: no familiar letters, sounds, or concepts. In addition, I wanted to defy the norm of enrolling in Latin based languages (Thompson, 2017). I had virtually no exposure to spoken Chinese and could not recognize—let alone write—a single character prior to the course. For English speakers, Chinese is a "truly foreign language" (Jorden & Walton, 1987, p. 111) because it is both "culturally and linguistically remote" (Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, 2014, p. 56), and thus I wanted to document my experience drinking from the fire hydrant of foreign language instruction.

After one semester of Chinese, I wholeheartedly agree with Moser's (1991) satirical statement that "[t]hose who are actually attracted to the language precisely because of its daunting complexity and difficulty will never be disappointed" (para. 5). Whether venting frustrations or enumerating successes, I never lacked topics for entries

in my daily language journal. This paper explores themes and topics covered in my journal as I assumed a "participant observer" (Bailey, 1983, p. 71) role in my language learning experience and draws on research to support my conclusions. Each section centers on a quote from my journal.

"How intimidating"

The acquisition of my L2 (Spanish) was gradual, spanning the years between elementary school Spanish classes and the completion of a semester abroad in college. At the beginning of my study abroad, interactions with my host family were difficult; yet I never felt completely helpless thanks to the grammatical and lexical base I had spent years developing, but, I had no such base for Chinese and regularly felt helpless, as reflected in this excerpt from Day 7: "This class is such a good reminder of how intimidating, scary, and uncomfortable it is to learn a new language." I often experienced communication apprehension, which is defined as "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated (oral) communication with another person" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). For example, I would avoid eye contact with the teacher when she posed even a simple question to the class.

As a language professional taking Chinese to observe the learning process, I was surprised at the amount of anxiety I felt. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) assert, "If the target language [TL] belongs to a familiar linguistic family, anxiety tends to be significantly lower" (p. 238). Indeed, my TL was linguistically distant from my L1 (Odlin, 1989), causing my anxiety to increase. I analyzed my journal entries and identified three general topics that invoked my anxiety: two are specific to Chinese language learners and one is common to all language learners.

Tones

Every syllable in the Chinese language is produced using one of four pitches or tones (apart from the occasional neutral tone). Unfortunately for the learner, not only is "the tone taken by each syllabic morpheme…entirely arbitrary" (Zhang, 2016, p. 432), but it is also vital to "specify lexical meanings of words" (Zhang, p. 432). This means that any given syllable or word can change meaning depending on tonal inflection, as evidenced in Table 1. The Romanization of Chinese speech (pinyin) represents the four tones with diacritic marks, but Chinese characters contain no component indicating tone.

Table 3: Meanings of the syllable "shi" according to tone

Pinyin	Character (simplified)	Tone	English Translation
shī	师	1 (high sustained)	Teacher / master
shí	十	2 (rising)	Ten
shǐ	使	3 (falling & rising)	To make / use / cause
shì	是	4 (sharp falling)	Am / is / are / to be / yes

Note: Translations from mdbg.net

I quickly became accustomed to distinguishing between tones thanks to my musician background, but new vocabulary heightened my anxiety because tones added another layer of memorization. This sensitivity is universal to those whose L1 is non-tonal: "the tones not only created extra memory loads and communication difficulties but also caused the students to focus on the tones instead of meaning negotiation when conducting a task" (Ruan, Duan, & Du, 2015, p. 183). In addition, the inability to perceive tones as being lexically significant quadruples the number of homonyms (Zhao, Guo, & Dynia, 2013). For instance, the four Chinese words in Table 1 are perceived as

four separate words to a native Chinese speaker, but to an untrained ear they are the same. In addition to remembering and distinguishing tones, the Chinese writing system creates an extraordinary memory load on learners, thus increasing anxiety.

Script

Read the following sentence out loud: 这很容易 [1]. Without a background in written Chinese (or Japanese, due to shared characters), it is impossible for English speakers to approximate the sounds from the script. While Chinese characters have a "semantic component (radical) and a phonetic component…[that] provide clues to their pronunciation" (Zhao, Guo, & Dynia, 2013), learners will be disappointed if they approach reading as a phonetic activity in Chinese. Reading even the simplest passage required almost Herculean brainpower for me. What is the pinyin for this character? What is the tone? Is this a whole word or part of a word? What does it mean in English? How does it fit into the meaning of the sentence? I struggled getting the gist of a paragraph because decoding demanded so much attention.

The time I spent decoding small passages paled in comparison to the amount of time spent learning to write characters. As with letters of the Latin alphabet, characters are written with a specific stroke order. The seemingly simple rules—left to right, top to bottom—had many exceptions that baffled me, and in the first week I spent hours practicing just six characters[2]. I often expressed exasperation in my journal: "It is frustrating how many things I need to learn at once: how to write the character, the pinyin for the character, the tone of the word, and the meaning of the word. So. Many. Things" (Day 21). In addition, my anxiety also increased when online dictionary queries yielded a

long list of definitions with varying characters, as exhibited in Table 2. Such a list

reinforced in my mind the seemingly insurmountable complexity of Chinese, often

triggering negative self-talk such as "I could never learn all this" or "This is too hard".

Needless to say, during the first weeks of class I questioned my sanity in signing up for

Chinese 1010, but little by little I developed cognitive skills to rise to the intellectual

demand, and even found myself enjoying character writing, such as the day I wrote that I

was excited "because it feels like unlocking a secret" (Day 14).

Table 4: Characters and meanings of the syllable "shi"

shī		shí		shǐ		shì	
师	Teacher	十	Ten	使	To make / use	是	To be / yes
施	To bestow	时	O'clock	史	History	市	Market
诗	Poem	食	To eat	始	To begin	试	Experiment
失	To lose	石	Rock	驶	To gallop	释	Buddhism
湿	Wet	拾	To pick up	矢	Arrow	事	Matter / item
釃	Strain	蚀	To erode	屎	Ear wax	世	Generation / era
狮	Lion	鼫	Kind of rat	豕	Hog	氏	Maiden name

Note: Translations from mdbg.net

Fear of incompetence

Fear of incompetence is another prominent cause of anxiety among foreign

language learners. This distress is described as "fear of public failure" (Bailey, 1983, p.

72), "fear of negative evaluation" (Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, 2014, p. 60), or

"apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts" (Liu & Jackson,

2008, p. 72). Part of human nature is the innate desire to be perceived as competent

(LoCastro, 2012), a need that is often compromised in foreign language classrooms due

to the "uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986,

p. 128). For example, after classes in which I struggled to comprehend the material, I expressed negative feelings varying from "unpleasant" (Day 27) to "miserable" (Day 33). Some days I even wrote that I felt "dumb" (Day 7) or "stupid" (Day 59). Of course, my intellect was indeed intact, but I was experiencing perceived competence: "much of language learning anxiety stems from the learners' perceptions of their competence rather than their actual competence" (Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, p. 60). Upon reviewing my journal, I realized that much of this negativity stemmed from comparing myself to my classmates.

"Some catching up"

I compared myself to fellow learners without realizing it. "Other students took Chinese for 3 years in high school or spent time in China. It seems I already have some catching up to do with my classmates" (Day 1). In a review of language diary studies, Bailey (1983) noticed that participants "actively compared [themselves] to other learners in the classroom" (p. 81). Due to human nature, individuals tend to gauge personal competency based on comparison to those engaged in similar endeavors. Naturally, all learners "desire to appear successful in front of [their] peers" (Garrett & Young, 2009, p. 210), but constant comparing can hinder headway. In other words, "What is success in class? Is it only by comparison? Do I feel good because I think I did better than my classmate?" (Day 9)

I found that the most helpful comparisons were juxtaposing what I could do yesterday with what I did today—comparing myself only to myself—and accordingly make reasonable goals for tomorrow. For example, the first time I conversed with my Taiwanese friend in Chinese marked personal progress, and I felt exultant. I had never

conversed in Chinese with her (or anyone) and, albeit a very simple conversation, now I had. My feeling of triumph did not arise from a classmate's failure, but purely from successfully navigating authentic interaction. I wanted to learn more Chinese in order to carry on additional conversations with her about different topics. Unfortunately, I sometimes fell "back into undergrad habits" (Day 44) of hyperfocusing on grades as a form of competition despite taking the class pass/fail. When I received a high grade on a quiz, I felt successful and confident; when I did not, I felt discouraged and irritated.

"The spirit of the day"

The most unanticipated aspect of my Chinese 1010 course was the volatility of emotion I experienced in the classroom: "There are so many factors (emotional, physical, weather, etc.) that contribute to the spirit of the day, especially as a learner" (Day 25). As a teacher, I sometimes erroneously think of my classroom as a vacuum where students can leave all problems behind and cheerfully focus on Spanish. The language learning trenches are tumultuous and filled with "a melee of emotions, rational and irrational" (Moore, 1977, p. 108). In reviewing my journal, I paid particular attention to positive and negative emotive descriptions: the adjective I used the most was "frustrating". It is evident from Table 3 that my reflections focused more on negative emotions.

Considering that "a majority of cognitive psychologists agree that emotion is essential to human cognition" (Garrett & Young, 2009, p. 210), acknowledging negative affect is not necessarily harmful. Indeed, negative affect can be an impetus for progress, but it must be healthily balanced. Commenting on such a balance within the classroom, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) state: "Positive emotion can help dissipate the lingering effects of negative emotional arousal, helping to promote personal resiliency in the face

of difficulties" (p. 241). Of course, positive and negative affect do not exist in a classroom vacuum; students do not magically transform into emotional blank slates when they walk through the door.

Table 5: Coding of adjectives from my journal

Emotive Descriptors		
Positive	*Negative*	
Total adjectives: 15 Total uses: 56	Total adjectives: 27 Total uses: 69	
• Cool (16) • Successful (8) • Good (7) • Happy (5) • Comfortable (3) • Exciting (3) • Fun (3) • Ancient (2) • Glad (2) • Interesting (2) • Artistic (1) • Comfortable (1) • Grateful (1) • Motivating (1) • Poetic (1)	• Frustrating (19) • Scary (5) • Intimidating (4) • Tricky (4) • Complicated (3) • Emotionally spent (3) • Overwhelmed (3) • Confusing (2) • Drowning (2) • Dumb (2) • Tired (2) • Impractical (2) • Terrifying (2) • Uncomfortable (2) • Weird (2)	• Afraid (1) • Behind (1) • Controlled (1) • Cumbersome (1) • Discouraged (1) • Heavy hearted (1) • Miserable (1) • Ridiculous (1) • Stupid (1) • Unpleasant (1) • Upset (1) • Zoned out (1)

Limitless components contributed to my emotional state before arriving at 9:30 AM for Chinese class: Did I eat a good breakfast? Did rehearsal go well last night? Did I have time to meditate? Was the national news particularly disturbing? etc. When I came to class in a bad mood, I would often mentally channel my negativity towards Chinese. For example, on Day 39 I expressed that "so much about Chinese and Chinese culture seems impractical to me, and I think it's because we have such different values." On other days I felt that learning about Chinese culture and values was intriguing and reflected "a sort of beauty [and] poetic-ness" (Day 4) not prominent in the United States.

With respect to cultural values, East and West are quite antithetical. "Western societies value independent self-construal, autonomy, and egalitarian relationships. In contrast, Eastern societies value interdependent self-construal, harmony, and hierarchical relationships" (Zhou & Lam, 2012, p. 1164). Chinese 1010 helped me understand and respect these foundational differences, even if I do not fully grasp their depth. I agree with the adage, "People fear what they do not understand", as well as its implied inverse—understanding banishes fear.

"More comfortable"

The first communicative activity in class made me apprehensive and uncomfortable. Upon assuming an assigned identity, we were instructed to introduce ourselves to eight classmates and have a short conversation. "It was scary at first, but then I got more comfortable as I talked to more people. I wish we did more activities like that" (Day 19). Classroom confidence in target language interaction entails more than knowing words; two additional factors are feeling comfortable with classmates and understanding task directions. In this particular example, I was nervous because I had never talked to most of my classmates, and I felt intimidated because I assumed they knew more Chinese than I did. Harkening back to the section regarding comparisons, I was afraid of the negative evaluation of my peers (Bailey, 1983; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, 2014). But as I executed the task I became more confident in my abilities and felt more at ease interacting with others. In addition, numerous classmates made me laugh with humorous responses or invented names, further decreasing the tension I felt.

I was experiencing for myself that laughter can help diffuse apprehension and "have a healthy effect on learners" (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, p. 264). At the beginning of the semester, my study buddy and I would often "have the urge to laugh in class just because everything sounds funny…in Chinese" (Day 6). Such moments helped me feel more comfortable and decrease my tenseness. In another instance, I was working with a group on conversational skills, and we laughed about possible ridiculous answers. Truly group work helps create a "fear-free environment" (Ruan, Duan, & Du, 2015, p. 181). As I befriended my classmates and accepted that "failure is a natural part of learning" (Wang, Spencer, Xing, 2009, p. 47), I became "less afraid of being wrong in front of the class" (Day 27) and thus participated more.

Students build confidence when they contribute to target language interactions, such as the day "I felt successful because I responded to a question the teacher asked me" (Day 10). Surely, "experiencing real achievement is the surest route to self-esteem and enjoyment" (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, p. 264). Over the course of the semester, my moments of success became like deposits in a bank that I could mentally reference when feeling depleted. The outside-class speaking practice with my study buddy was indispensable in building my confidence because we developed skills of "responsible risk-taking" (Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, 2014, p. 56)—we tried and failed and tried again. Developing this adventurous spirit is "an important characteristic of successful learners" (Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, p. 60).

Conclusion

The excitement and motivation I felt because of my progress is reflected in my Day 24 entry: "I didn't know how to write a SINGLE character when I walked into class

the first day, and now I can write an entire dialogue!" The first week of class I spent over three hours studying to count from zero to ten (or in other words, memorizing eleven one-syllable words) and felt frustrated with such sluggish progress. Yet I persevered because I understood the nature of language learning as described by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009):

> Language learning is a sustained and often tedious process with lots of temporary ups and downs, and I felt that the secret of successful learners was their possession of a superordinate vision that kept them on track. Indeed, language learning can be compared in many ways to the training of professional athletes. (p. 25)

My driving vision as a student was to directly apply the language learning concepts I studied as a teacher in the MSLT program. Also, a healthy amount of competition between similarly-enrolled colleagues motivated me to keep moving forward. In our respective languages, my colleagues and I would teach each other recently acquired phrases, an excellent habit for language learners (Xie, 2014). I consider my experience in Chinese 1010 to be immensely valuable because not only did my compassion for my Spanish students grow, but I became more aware of my own teacher behaviors. For any future language students, I highly recommend recording daily thoughts about the individual language learning process. Doing so has allowed me to identify difficulties, process emotions, and celebrate successes during my Chinese learning marathon. Indeed, the language learning process may be frustrating and difficult, but perseverance yields intellectual and interpersonal dividends.

Notes:

1. 这很容易 (Zhè hěn róngyì): This is easy.

2. 我 (wǒ): I
   你 (nǐ): you
   老 (lǎo): old
   师 (shī): teacher
   早 (zǎo): early
   好 (hǎo): good

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

INTRODUCTION

The following annotated bibliographies consist of topics I explored outside of course reading assignments. The first, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is a topic I pursued at the beginning of the MSLT program. While my coursework provided a solid base for understanding CLT, I wanted to know if such an interactive method is viable in countries with more traditional educational systems. The second annotated bibliography discusses some of the challenges that refugees face in second language acquisition. I independently chose this topic because my heart aches for those who suffer innocently during this global migrant crisis, and I seek to understand how I in my field of study can alleviate their difficulties. The third paper deals with student, parent, and teacher satisfaction in dual language immersion (DLI) programs and also provides details regarding varying types of DLI programs. I wrote this paper while enrolled in Dr. Spicer-Escalante's class, Foundations of Dual Language Immersion.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

In preparation for my first MSLT course, I studied selected chapters from *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen* (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) which provided my initial exposure to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Having taught Spanish for three years in challenging secondary public schools, I was eager to stimulate my mind with topics other than classroom management strategies. **Lee and VanPatten** (2003) begin by describing the Atlas complex exemplified by Audiolingualism in which teachers bear the weight of all classroom activity, motivation, and learning. I identified with the instructor roles therein described: "lecturer, leader, warden, [and] disciplinarian" (Lee & VanPatten, p. 7). I realized that my prior teaching experiences aligned with this description, affording an explanation for my feelings of exhaustion and ineffectiveness. This personal insight evoked in me a desire not only to theoretically grasp CLT, but also to master its implementation in my classroom.

Whereas students in an Audiolingual classroom are passive listeners, students in a CLT classroom are active participants and stakeholders. Students are given "opportunities for communication, that is, using the language to interpret and express real-life messages" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 10). Most students enroll in a language class because they desire to learn the language. Consequently, a class focused on the expression of "real-life messages" aligns with students' motivation and is more likely to promote participation and language acquisition. Lee and VanPatten also discuss the hallmark of real-life communication: negotiation of meaning. Whether native or nonnative, all interlocutors negotiate meaning when authentically communicating, meaning they seek clarification to validate comprehension of the intended message.

For Linguistics 6350 I also studied selections from *The Communicative Classroom* (**Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell**, 2001). Ballman et al. (2001) write extensively on how to design communicative tasks for the classroom that inherently elicit negotiation of meaning. The authors state the class objective "is that students use the target language to carry out a particular task" (Ballman et al., p. 76). Such a "particular task" is not a mechanical drill or a memorized dialogue, but a task-based activity. This means that students meaningfully interact with one another within a certain context and produce a "concrete representation of the information shared or gathered" (Ballman et al., p. 77). Task-based activities require forethought and a specific design crafted by guiding questions such as: How will this activity center on meaning and not simply on form? What do the students need to know in order to complete this activity? How will learners be held responsible?

While teaching middle school in North Carolina, I did not often contemplate such questions because I was in survival mode—trying not to drown in a sea of discipline difficulties, student/parent apathy, and endless paperwork. The times I ventured to assign activities requiring peer interaction normally spiraled into chaos. I believe such results stemmed from a lack of structure and clearly delineated expectations, in addition to the behavioral issues of the students themselves. Whatever the contributing factors, I avoided peer interaction in the hope of maintaining class control. Even now, as an advocate of CLT, I struggle to visualize an effective implementation of such an interactive approach with that particular group of students.

With this in mind, I read **Burnett's** (2011) article that centers on implementing CLT in secondary classrooms. The author followed two graduate students into the

workforce to observe their implementation of CLT with the twofold purpose

of assessing the effectiveness of the teacher education program and identifying obstacles

encountered by the teachers. I can relate to the "off-task behavior and defiant and

disrespectful attitudes" (p. 9) Burnett observed in both classrooms. Having

previously taught middle and high school, I have experienced a wide spectrum of

disruptive student behavior.

Due to my experiences with challenging students, I have concerns about

maintaining control of the class when implementing CLT in a secondary setting. Burnett

(2001) advises, "Learner-centeredness, which comes hand-in-glove with CLT, carries

with it a variety of interactional challenges for which teachers must be prepared" (p.

14). When students are required to do pair or group work in communicative activities,

challenges could include monitoring on-taskness, student interactions, and

pacing. Teachers can employ strategies to combat these difficulties such as having clear

procedures and doing concise activities with a short time limit.

Yet, this article addresses a more profound problem than student misbehavior in a

CLT classroom. Burnett (2001) summarizes the research of Hollins and Torres-Guzman

(2005) in which these authors "highlight the gulf in cultural frames of reference and

points of view between white mainstream teachers and their diverse students" (Burnett, p.

19). Being myself a white mainstream teacher, I have experienced the "gulf" to which

they refer because the majority of my students have been working-class minorities. Such

a chasm is manifest in cultural misunderstandings, differences in ideologies, and lack of

personal connection. Hollins and Torres-Guzman allege that without specific training

targeting these differences, "teachers may have difficulty serving as role models or

culture brokers between school and home" (Burnett, 2001, p. 19). A broker is an

intermediary who advises and represents a group; a teacher acting as "culture broker"

bridges cultural gaps between school and home. To advocate in such a manner,

teachers need training to understand diverse populations specific to their student body.

In light of identifying this complex cultural disconnect, I conclude that CLT

can be effective in a public school setting as long as teachers have proper training. Of

course, such cultural advocacy and brokerage is not a cure-all; teachers must also monitor

students, design interactive lessons, and complete a myriad of other teacher-related

responsibilities. With my misgivings about secondary implementation of CLT resolved, I

turned to one of its early advocates to understand the foundation of CLT. **Savignon**

(1987) states that learners in a CLT classroom "experience language as well as…analyze

it" (p. 237). In this quote, Savignon asserts that both comprehensible input and grammar

instruction are components of CLT. This is an important distinction from

contemporary Krashen's (1982) claim that language is acquired exclusively through

comprehensible input.

In dominant teaching methods of the past, such as Grammar Translation

and Audiolingualism, individual grammar concepts regulate curriculum development.

Contrastingly, Savignon (1987) states, "No language curriculum, any more than the

language proficiency it promotes, should ever be thought of as neatly divisible into

separate tasks" (p. 238). In other words, language should not be an isolated entity studied

in carefully packaged grammatical parcels. **Canale and Swain (1980)** confirm this idea

by identifying such "communicative competencies" (p. 1) as strategic, sociolinguistic,

grammatical, and discourse competency. Focusing on one sole aspect of competence while neglecting the others does not build communication skills.

When considering proficiency skills, overlap occurs naturally: speaking and listening are two sides to the same coin. Speaking without a listener serves no purpose (beyond self-talk); listening without a speaker is nonsensical. The same principle applies to reading and writing. Authentic communication does not compartmentalize competency skills into "separate tasks" (Savignon, 1987), nor should curriculum design. To avoid this separation, ACTFL (2012) has shifted from highlighting the four proficiency skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), to emphasizing the "three modes of communication [specifically] interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational" (p. 6). This change enables students to develop various skills and competencies simultaneously, CLT being the vehicle by which such implementation occurs.

In her article, Savignon (1987) also notes the importance of having authentic experiences through contact with the target-language community. The resources available for such contact in the 1980's, apart from fluent speakers living in the area, were limited to letters and phone calls. Thankfully, this aspect of language learning has become exponentially easier with the advent of the Internet. In addition to email, students can now instantly communicate with anyone anywhere using social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. The world has become more interconnected, affording language learners easy access to real-world communication.

With this mindset, I read **Li's** (1998) article in order to understand the success (or failure) of CLT outside North America. Li conducted a study of Korean EFL teachers while they were attending CLT training in Canada. Previous to the seminar all teachers

had studied—or at least heard of—CLT, but they were seeking further guidance in implementation. Through questionnaires and interviews, Li identified four categories of difficulty in making CLT a reality in Korean EFL classrooms. The categories were "difficulties…caused (a) by the teacher, (b) by the students, (c) by the educational system, and (d) by CLT itself" (Li, p. 686). In other words, CLT faces numerous implementation obstacles in Korea.

More specifically, difficulties caused by the teacher include a lack of fluency in the target language and a lack of confidence implementing CLT. Jin-Kyu, one of Li's (1998) interviewees, comments, "In our [Korean] culture, teachers are supposed to know everything and be always correct" (p. 687). This cultural difference from Western education poses a challenge in implementing a new teaching method. Difficulties in international CLT go beyond a lack of training and may involve fundamental differences in educational theory and cultural traditions. Other obstacles to CLT in Korea include large class sizes, grammar-oriented entrance exams, and a school culture of lecturing.

An article by **Hasanova and Shadieva** (2008) details teachers' challenges implementing CLT in Uzbekistan. They comment that CLT is "more a topic of discussion than an approach being implemented in many Uzbek classrooms" (Hasanova & Shadieva, p. 139). Similar to Li (1998), Hasanova and Shadieva acknowledge roadblocks such as lack of confidence and fluency, but they discuss in greater depth the repercussions of resource deficits specific to their country. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, "nongovernmental funding" (p. 141) became essential to the salaries of teachers and many qualified instructors left the profession seeking increased financial stability. As a result, many of the current teachers "seem less passionate about devoting time and energy

to understanding…new methodologies" (p. 142). Such impediments to CLT are culturally and logistically complex. From another perspective commenting on a similar problem, Nishino (2012) states, "There is a gap between…policy and classroom reality" (p. 383). Change takes time, especially when it involves the diverse backgrounds of communities, countries, and cultures.

As I have implemented CLT in my own classroom at USU, the language abilities of my students have increased. Their participation in task-based activities centered on communication has yielded growth unlikely to occur in a teacher-fronted classroom. Although international and intercultural implementation may be problematic, CLT is a method that facilitates communicative competence and increases proficiency in the American L2 classroom.

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF REFUGEES

My five-month study abroad in Chile profoundly affected my ability to empathize. Within the first weeks, I experienced the emotional, mental, and physical throes of culture shock. Nothing was familiar—not even the electrical outlets—and feelings of hopelessness born from incompetence quickly set in. Thankfully, I overcame those feelings through learning to communicate in Spanish and by befriending locals who graciously taught me about their culture. Because of this experience and the world's current migrant crisis (Baker, Lioumi, Albadawi, Aljasem, & Perrigo, 2017; Lucassen, 2018; Mavelli, 2017; Volkan, 2017), I have a compassionate interest in marginalized or disadvantaged people such as refugees who unavoidably pass through a similar yet far more drastic adjustment phase. The turning point in my own acclimation came through learning to communicate and thus I seek to understand the distinct challenges refugees face in acquiring the host-country language.

In the article *Determinants of Second Language Proficiency among Refugees in the Netherlands*, **Van Tubergen (2010)** posits that research findings about the second language acquisition (SLA) of immigrants cannot necessarily be applied to refugees because the fundamental differences between these two groups require that they be studied separately. Van Tubergen states, "Refugees differ from family and labor migrants in terms of migration motives and integration trajectories" (p. 518). Refugees flee their native lands due to war, persecution, famine, or other life-destroying circumstances outside their control; they leave to preserve their lives. While immigrants may also be escaping unsuitable conditions, they normally leave their homeland to seek opportunity and an improved quality of life. These different "migration motives" result in differing experiences between refugees and immigrants.

Van Tubergen studied a group of 3,500 refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, and Somalia who now live in the Netherlands. The author posits five hypotheses in this study, which are all empirically supported by surveys completed by refugees. Refugees who

(1) spend less time in a reception center, and (2) participate in an integration course upon arrival, have better L2 skills in reading and writing. Also, refugees who (3) have more exposure to the L2 through clubs and/or volunteer organizations are more proficient in Dutch. If refugees are (4) in poor health and experience "depressive feelings" (Van Tubergen, p. 520), their L2 reading proficiency suffers, but interestingly there is no statistical difference in speaking ability. Van Tubergen suggests this is because "reading skills require more formal instruction" (p. 526). Finally, (5) refugees originally from urban areas develop better L2 skills than those from rural towns because they are already accustomed to an urban way of life. This article helped me realize that studying the SLA of refugees is a vast undertaking because the word "refugees" refers to an academically, culturally, geographically, and emotionally diverse group of people.

    Finn (2010) discusses the unique challenges in ESL courses for migrants available through the Urban Hospital Program for Survivors of Torture (pseudonym) in her article *Overcoming Barriers: Adult Refugee Trauma Survivors in a Learning Community*. Many students at this New York City institution suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with symptoms including memory suppression, memory loss, high stress, and "emotional distress" (Finn, p. 587). These results of trauma inhibit language learning because students have a high affective filter (Krashen, 1982). Although teachers are rarely medical professionals trained in aiding those with PTSD, they can employ techniques that diffuse stress in the classroom. Finn discusses the importance of teachers who "foster trust" with students (p. 590), which inspired me to learn more about creating an atmosphere conducive to a low affective filter.

    Minahan and Schultz (2015) detail the effects that anxiety can have on students and ways teachers can help. First, the authors acknowledge that student anxiety often leads to poor classroom behavior, something I witnessed while teaching middle school. Students' lives seemed to center around how their peers perceived them and they would lash out to save face when they could not meet the demands of an assignment. Adolescents often do not have the skills to

healthily cope with high levels of stress. Minahan and Schultz state, "Trying to teach a child to relax in the midst of high anxiety is like trying to teach someone how to swim when sharks are in the water" (p. 48). Apart from being unproductive, swimming lessons in a shark tank would be terrifying. In the same sense, students experiencing high anxiety will cease to function as learners in the classroom. When their emotional safety is jeopardized, higher-order thinking skills necessary to acquire language will shut down in accordance with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs.

The question then remains: what can be done? Minahan and Schultz (2015) discuss the importance of communicating openly with students. Teachers can help students develop skills such as deep breathing and self-reflection to deal with stress. Teachers should be aware of students' moods; the simple question, "How are you doing?" can help a student feel at ease. Whether it be among refugees, immigrants, or traditional students, the best way to reduce student anxiety is to facilitate confidence because "confidence leads to competence, and competence reduces anxiety" (Minahan & Schultz, p. 50). Students with little or no confidence will most likely avoid class participation and hence will not progress. The longer students stay silent, the greater the chasm between them and their participating classmates, causing greater anxiety. I believe that such anxiety can be decreased through positive relationships in the classroom.

Although what I learned from Minahan and Schultz (2015) can apply to refugees in the classroom, I wanted to explore concepts specific to trauma survivors. I experienced a paradigm shift while reading *"But Is It Education?": The Challenge of Creating Effective Learning for Survivors of Trauma* **(Horsman, 2004)**. Before reading this article, I would have defined trauma as what happens after experiencing severe violence. But Herman's (1992) definition quoted by Horsman helped me conceptualize trauma's far-reaching effects: trauma results from occurrences that "overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning" (Horsman, p. 138). Refugees have not simply been through traumatic things; their very

sense of control, connection, and meaning has been fractured. That degree of disruption will infiltrate every aspect of life, including and perhaps especially education.

Horsman (2004) focuses on adult women trauma survivors in literacy learning, discussing the erroneous yet prevalent belief that counseling is separate from the classroom and is "not part of the work of the teacher" (p. 131). For some trauma survivors, returning to a classroom may trigger distressing childhood memories because the last time they set foot in a classroom was as a child. These memories can terrorize the mind and "lead to panic" (Horsman, p. 132). Instructors who do nothing to help students cope and who believe that problems should be solved in counseling perpetuate the problem because "silence is not neutral" (Horsman, p. 135). Failing to address experiences with violence gives the impression that the repercussions of traumatic experiences can be removed from the educational journey of the student, when in fact the effects may be hauntingly pervasive.

My paradigm shift came with Horsman's (2004) discussion of the education of the entire person: mind, body, and spirit. "Western education systems rarely invite the whole person into the learning process" (Horsman, p. 140) because as a culture we value intelligence of the mind but seldom address issues of spirit or emotion. Yet, second language acquisition is a highly emotional process because language is closely tied to personal identity and how one interprets the world. Emotions and the wellbeing of the spirit should not be ignored, especially in a language classroom—yet I acknowledge the challenges of this claim. First, each student has individualized experiences and nuanced needs requiring personalized help; second, trauma is "invisible" (Horsman, p. 136). This means instructors have no way to address issues without openly communicating with students, something many teachers feel inept in doing when relating to violence such as rape, torture, war, etc.

Kaplan, Stolk, Valibhoy, Tucker, and Baker (2015) discuss how ongoing ramifications of "prearrival trauma" (p. 81) result in refugee students' overrepresentation in special education

because "ongoing grief…is often underestimated as a cause of emotional and learning difficulties for children" (p. 88). Testing for learning disabilities within this demographic is problematic considering language barriers, academic background, and emotional health. In trying to overcome obstacles, "nonverbal tests may be recommended for illiterate ELLs, but these tests, too, have cultural and language loadings: pictorial representations may be unfamiliar and are often culturally loaded" (Kaplan et al., p. 93). Students may be unfamiliar with testing procedures or misinterpret the gestures of the teacher. Local personnel often lack training or resources to obtain reliable results, increasing the misdiagnosis of learning disabilities among refugee students.

In addition, due to temporary living circumstances in several countries, many refugee children "have acquired a number of languages but achieved full proficiency in none" (Kaplan et al., 2015, p. 89). Such children often have an overall broader vocabulary through codeswitching than their monolingual peers but may struggle to fully express themselves within the confines of one language, thus complicating test translation. Learning disability misdiagnosis may also stem from misunderstanding the effects of trauma: "Intrusive memories of traumatic events may cause the child to be distracted from a learning task and to develop a style of forgetting that dispels the traumatic memories but also inhibits spontaneous thought" (Kaplan et al., p. 85). Instead of compartmentalized into special education, these children require emotional support, academic guidance, and community inclusion.

Freire's (1970) seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* deals with the related theme of how to approach "the pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation" (p. 53). Although he observed oppressed laborers in Brazil, his conclusions are relevant to refugees because they too may "struggle to recover their lost humanity" (p. 44). Liberation cannot be bestowed upon the oppressed because true freedom is internal as well as external; the removal of taskmasters does not ensure that people "come to feel like masters of their thinking" (p. 124).

Freire advocates for empowerment through self-sufficiency and outlines how to be an effective mentor:

> False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world. (p. 45)

On the grounds that "no reality transforms itself" (Freire, 1970, p. 53), this book is a call to action for educators to defend human rights and join the "quest for mutual humanization" (p. 75). While the author often refers to a diverse conglomerate as "the oppressed", he also asserts the importance of seeing people as individuals rather than a collective group that has endured injustice. Both refugees and their educators will benefit from cultivating teacher-student relationships in the classroom: refugees in acclimatizing and teachers in learning from their resilience. It should be borne in mind that while teachers may find great satisfaction helping students during the resettlement process, they may also encounter unforeseen obstacles.

MacNevin (2012) examines the challenges teachers on Prince Edward Island face in teaching an ever-increasing number of refugee students. The author addresses three main questions: (1) How are refugee students being engaged in the classroom? (2) What are challenges experienced by teachers and learners? (3) How can teachers be equipped with skills to overcome these challenges? The majority of surveyed teachers stated they did not have any professional development (PD) regarding teaching "students from refugee backgrounds" (p. 49). The author's people-first use of the term "students from a refugee background" (instead of refugee students) reflects the belief that being refugees does not define students. Being forced to flee their homeland is an aspect of their personal history but first and foremost they are fellow human beings.

Teachers reported having little to no PD regarding how to best teach this group of students. A major challenge is that students from refugee backgrounds often have interrupted education and never developed strong L1 literacy skills, a strong indicator of educational success (Christian, 2011; Kaplan et al., 2015; MacNevin, 2012; Tashabangu-Soko & Caron, 2011). On Prince Edward Island, students have English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes and concurrently attend mainstream content classes. The teachers of these mainstream classes were the individuals surveyed in this study. One teacher stated her experience was "really like feeling your way in the dark" (MacNevin, p. 55). Such feelings of incompetence would possibly decline if administrators offered proper training and support.

For this reason, MacNevin (2012) inquired via survey what type of PD teachers believed would be beneficial. Their responses generally regarded four categories of desired assistance: helping students work through trauma, including them in the classroom despite language and cultural barriers, teaching basic literacy, and knowing more background about their previous education. Similar to teachers needing more guidance, "the needs of youth from refugee backgrounds go beyond language acquisition" (MacNevin, pp. 59-60). This harkens back to Horsman's (2004) discussion of educating the "entire person" (p. 140), not simply focusing on educating the brain.

Despite various challenges, MacNevin (2012) reports teachers "enjoyed working with youth from refugee backgrounds because they found the perseverance and resilience of these youth inspiring" (p. 55). In my limited experience with people from refugee backgrounds, I could not agree more. While current literature reflects that much needs improvement and reform, it is ever important to remember that refugees are part of the human family. As such, we can and must learn from each other and help one another.

From these various articles, I learned there is much research to be done about the language acquisition of refugees, especially longitudinal studies (Kaplan et al., 2015). The trauma

many refugees experience has far-reaching effects that influence their educational experience, and instructors should seek to communicate openly rather than suppress the difficult topic of violence. Teacher education policies should include instruction on trauma survivor support, inclusion techniques, and literacy strategies in order to best serve the refugee population. This will create a safe space where students can practice the target language while mentally and emotionally processing their experiences.

PERSPECTIVES ON DLI EDUCATION

Prior to taking Linguistics 4700, a course dedicated to studying Dual Language Immersion (DLI), I knew very little about the implementation of DLI programs. This class provided a solid understanding of the tenets and benefits of DLI, while making me curious about research regarding parent, teacher, and student perceptions. This annotated bibliography will provide a brief overview of the types and importance of DLI programs, and the responsibilities and perceptions of their participants. Before delving into DLI specifics, it is helpful to understand the deep connection between language, culture, and identity.

With the globalization of English as the ever-increasing lingua franca, some English monolinguals may wonder why learning or preserving other languages merits attention. **Fishman's (1996)** seminal article *What do you lose when you lose your language?* addresses the tragedy of language loss and its effect on identity. Speakers of a language have "this sense of sanctity, this sense of kinship, and this sense of moral imperative" (Fishman, p. 74) toward their mother tongue. Language binds people together and provides a medium through which individuals can make sense of the world, creating community. When an indigenous language is endangered, officials may seek to revitalize it through the school system. In such circumstances, Fishman states that "the school has to go beyond tokenism" (p. 80); in other words, offering language instruction simply to fulfill an educational requirement is insufficient because "a real—not institutional—social space has to be created for the language" (p. 79). In the context of DLI programs, my question then becomes whether DLI provides only an institutional space or if it also begets social space for the target language. As Fishman's article

addresses only the maintenance of indigenous or heritage languages, it is necessary to identify the types of DLI programs.

Traditional language courses are characterized by targeting foreign language fluency through explicit study of the language via grammar instruction, vocabulary acquisition, and interactive activities; however, DLI students learn a language through content instruction **(Christian, 2011)**. This means "the programs seek to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in the two languages, grade-level academic achievement, and multicultural competence for all students" (Christian, p. 3). For example, instead of dedicating a class to the study of the Chinese language, a student in a Chinese DLI program learns math and science in Chinese. Such a program operates within the prerogative of additive bilingualism, or striving for biliteracy, as opposed to subtractive bilingualism in which a students' native language (L1) is used only as a means to learn the second language (L2) of societal dominance. There are four types of DLI programs: developmental, indigenous, two-way, and one-way.

In a *developmental* DLI program, all students speak the same minority language which is used as one of the mediums for instruction. Indeed, "maintenance of the native language can play a role in second language learning as well as content mastery for language minority students" (p. Christian, 2011, p. 10). An example would be a Spanish-English DLI school in southern Texas where all students are native Spanish speakers and have yet to learn English. Such a program takes the place of remedial English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in which students are pulled from mainstream classes for explicit English instruction. Developmental DLI programs allow minority speakers to learn content while also learning English and reinforcing their native language. An

indigenous model of DLI uses an indigenous language for instruction in order to teach children of that heritage their often-endangered mother tongue, such as Navajo or Maori. Doing so helps preserve not only the language but also the cultural values, identity, and history of these marginalized groups, since language "is a fundamental part of their cultural heritage" (Christian, p. 10).

A *two-way* DLI program has 50/50 native speaker enrollment of the two instructional languages, and thus "is distinguished by the student population" (Christian, 2011, p. 12). Students in such a program mutually benefit from peers' fluency in either language. A *one-way* DLI program is the most common model in Utah and refers to a group of majority language speakers learning a minority language, such as English-speaking students in French immersion. In most one-way programs, "the partner language is chosen for its global status" (Christian, p. 11), for example, Spanish, Chinese, French, or Portuguese. Having established a basic understanding of DLI programs, I will examine the teacher's role in making material comprehensible.

Takahashi-Breines (2002) observed a third-grade DLI class in order to research teacher-talk. DLI teachers are tasked with providing "instruction to integrated groups of native speakers and second language learners…always be[ing] mindful of ways to make the content comprehensible to the nonnative speakers, while still making sure that the lessons are stimulating and challenging to the native speakers" (Takahashi-Breines, p. 462). While it may seem that only superhuman teachers could nurture student growth in such a setting, this article in addition to many other studies (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Fortune & Tedick, 2008; Genesee, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 2005) provides evidence for the effectiveness of DLI. One way to bolster comprehension is through "extra-linguistic

cues" (Takahashi-Breines, p. 473) such as pictures, gestures, or props. Also, teacher-talk should use "clarification requests, comprehension checks, repetitions, and rephrasing of their own and the learners' utterances" (Takahashi-Breines, p. 472). The author also highlights the importance of keeping the two languages separate by avoiding code switching or translanguaging (e.g., Spanglish). Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the zone of proximal development of their students (Vygotsky, 1978), meaning students' capabilities on their own versus with guided teacher support. With a clear understanding of the teacher's role, let us now consider the parental involvement within DLI programs from a study carried out in California.

Los Angeles is a multiethnic, multilingual city where "more than 185 languages are spoken at home…including Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, and Armenian" (**Ee**, **2017**, p. 136), making it fertile ground for DLI; yet, California has an interesting history regarding DLI. In 1998, voters passed Proposition 227 which banned bilingual education. As of November 2016, this proposition was repealed by Proposition 58, allowing DLI schools to be publicly funded and reinstating the legality of bilingual education. DLI programs are now thriving in California, where Ee studied how parent demographics contribute to involvement in their children's DLI schools. "Children in immigrant families will shape a critical part of the American population in the future" (Ee, p. 131) and as such parents and teachers should collaborate to provide the best support for students' success. Parental involvement is a field widely studied in education and researchers agree that it "can promote children's educational outcomes and enhance the learning process" (Ee, p. 134). It is important to understand what challenges arise for immigrant parents within DLI programs.

Ee (2017) found that challenges facing immigrant parents' involvement included "English proficiency, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, school environment, length of stay in the United States, time availability and family issues" (p. 134). Such issues are not limited to a DLI context but often arise for immigrants within any educational setting. Yet, "DLI programs are recommended as one way to promote racial integration and ameliorate tensions among diverse racial groups" (Ee, p. 146) and may benefit immigrant families. Of course, human beings tend to associate with those who are similar to themselves to avoid discomfort and, as a result, parents may limit themselves to interacting with those of "the same racial or linguistic groups" (Ee, p. 145). In such cases, schools should be innovative in making "conscious efforts to create supportive milieus where various types of parents' community/ family capital and networks can be transferrable at school" (Ee, p. 147). Regardless of demographics, Ee found that the most common barrier to school involvement for parents was the "lack of both flexibility in work schedules and childcare for younger children" (p. 146). Now with an understanding of parent challenges, let us turn to the satisfaction of parents within DLI programs.

Parkes and Ruth (2011) surveyed 724 families from eight DLI programs within the United States to assess parental satisfaction because "in general, there is…a connection between parent satisfaction and school effectiveness" (p. 702). The authors take a business-like approach when stating that DLI programs are "programs of choice and thus, at least in part, need to share the entrepreneurial stance of charter schools and schools of choice that considers parents to be consumers and customers" (Parkes & Ruth, p. 701). Viewing parents as customers necessitates understanding their motivation for selecting a DLI education for their children:

Parents whose home language is the minority or target language primarily seek

out dual language programs to maintain their home language and culture, whereas

parents whose home language is the dominant language tend to do so to help their

child become multicultural and able to respond to a globalizing world. (p. 702)

Despite varying motivations, all parents shared a similar level of satisfaction in

"academic, linguistic, and multicultural proficiency" (p. Ee, 715). The authors stress the

importance of parents communicating their expectations to the school, seeing as some

native L2 speaker parents were only somewhat satisfied with children's progress.

In addition to parental satisfaction, **Lee and Jeong (2013)** studied student and

teacher satisfaction in a two-way Korean DLI program. Korean has one of the highest

language attrition rates in the United States, meaning that fewer children of immigrants

are learning Korean than other immigrant language groups. The two-way Korean DLI

program "creates interactional spaces where both languages are equally needed" (Lee &

Jeong, p. 90). Data was collected through interviews and observations. Teacher concerns

included "parents' strong push for English, providing equal opportunities for Korean &

Non-Korean students, [and] teaching children to be bicultural" (Lee & Jeong, p. 98).

Also, in some cases teachers had to translate materials into Korean, a process both taxing

and time consuming. Both parents and teachers shared concerns of "tension between

Korean and Non-Korean parents, lack of teachers' native-like cultural and language

proficiency, no strict rule for language use, …[and] outdated materials" (Lee & Jeong, p.

98). Indeed, staffing DLI classrooms with culturally and linguistically proficient teachers

is a universal challenge. Unlike Parkes and Ruth (2011) where parents expressed similar

satisfaction, the minority language parents in Lee and Jeong's study felt an unequal

balance of parental involvement.

Although Lee and Jeong's (2013) study reported many concerns, participants also

discuss the benefits. Students, parents, and teachers all agree that their DLI program

promotes "bilingualism, ethnic identity, cultural reinforcement, [and] respect for

languages and cultures" (Lee & Jeong, p. 95). Parents also report that they would not

have felt comfortable participating in school activities without Korean, something

unavailable at other schools. Up to this point, all the included studies have dealt with DLI

programs in elementary school because secondary schools with DLI programs function

differently (less time in the target language) and are less common.

Przymus (2016) conducted a study in a high school DLI setting and challenges

"the monolingual paradigm" (p. 279). His study is set in a 90-minute American

government class where the first 30 minutes are in English, the following 30 minutes in

Spanish, and the final 30 minutes using "hybrid language practices" (p. 280) meaning

students use a combination of both. The author states that the stance of learning

languages in the United States is usually guided by how students will benefit

educationally, economically, or politically, instead of more "intrinsic values, such as

identity" (Przymus, p. 280). Translanguaging, or switching between languages, helps

students develop their identity and gives them freedom from the constraints of a

monolingual bias on the basis that a "third space where students can position themselves

in between the two languages would better prepare them for creating an identity as a

bilingual" (Przymus, p. 283). This viewpoint contradicts normal practice within DLI

programs which keeps the languages separate to promote target language fluency.

Przymus (2016) claims that DLI has become "two monolingual classrooms" (p. 286), perpetuating the view that "monolingual instructional methods are superior to the use of two languages concurrently" (p. 283). It is of note that the majority of Przymus's students were heritage language learners. I believe that such an approach—creating a third space with translanguaging—would be of less value to other types of learners since heritage learners already have an identity connection and possible linguistic foundation in the language. I include Przymus's study in this paper to illustrate that evaluating the needs of the student population is vital and also to demonstrate that there is more than one approach to DLI.

In conclusion, DLI programs throughout the United States, whether they be developmental, indigenous, one-way, or two-way, promote cultural tolerance, celebrate diversity, and embrace an ever-increasingly globalized world. While parents and teachers have concerns regarding curriculum or school involvement, DLI participants overall feel satisfied with students' education. I believe that DLI programs provide not only an instructional space for the target language but also a social context for fluency in view of the nature of a school community. DLI principals and administrators should ensure that teachers have the necessary support, as well as organize unifying school events where parents of all situations can feel welcome and wanted.

LOOKING FORWARD

As a graduate of the MSLT program, I feel confident in my ability to adapt to the needs of my future students and provide a quality foreign language education. The highlight of my MSLT experience was teaching Spanish at USU as a graduate instructor. Having a venue in which to directly apply the theories I was learning in my coursework reinforced their validity and effectiveness. As I contemplate the path of my future career, I anticipate teaching Spanish to adolescents in the United States and travelling the Spanish-speaking world during summer vacations. While I have enjoyed teaching college students, I feel that my life mission may be mentoring youth during their crucial years of decision.

Thanks to the encouragement and confidence of Dr. deJonge-Kannan, Dr. Thoms, and Dr. Albirini, I am interested in eventually pursuing a doctoral degree in teacher education, an undertaking I never previously envisioned as a personal possibility. I am passionate about the importance for teachers to form positive and meaningful relationships with students, in addition to teaching curriculum effectively.

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