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CONTEXTS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND
TEACHING

by

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A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Contexts and Perspectives for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

by

Kimberly Paige Fallis: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2018

Major Professor: Dr. Sarah Gordon

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio highlights what the author believes are important facets and implementations of second language teaching and second language learning. This portfolio is grounded in two elements: second language acquisition theory and the author's first-hand observations as a student in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. The target languages focused in this portfolio are English and French.

This portfolio is divided into three main sections. The first section contains the author's teaching philosophy statement with focuses on student and teacher roles, tasks in the classroom, and the author's experiences teaching English. After the teaching philosophy statement, there are three research perspective papers with a focus on language, literacy, and culture. The language paper addresses classroom environment(s) and student motivation, the literacy paper concerns the use of creative writing in the second language classroom, and the culture paper explores the second person pronouns—*tu* and *vous*—in French. The final section of the portfolio is a collection of annotated

bibliographies on key topics related to second language learning and second language teaching. The topics of the annotated bibliographies include first language use in the second language classroom, foreign language anxiety, and student creativity in the classroom. Each annotated bibliography presents different aspects of language learning from a student's perspective.

This portfolio establishes itself in different theories both in language teaching and in education. This portfolio delves into sociocultural linguistics for learning and communicative approaches to languages; namely sociocultural theory, communicative language teaching, the Zone of Proximal Development, and the Output Hypothesis. There is also focus on second language motivation, and second language theories within social cognition and constructivism perspectives.

(141 pages)

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Second, I would like to give my thanks to Dr. Elena Shvidko. One of the best parts of being an MSLT student has been the opportunity to be a graduate instructor for the duration of the 2017-2018 academic year. As my mentor, Dr. Shvidko has been one of my biggest supports in my time teaching for IELI. With her invaluable feedback and suggestions, I have been able to develop as a language teacher and feel more confident in my teaching styles as an English language instructor.

Last but not least, I would like to give my thanks to Dr. Jim Rogers. Dr. Rogers has helped me understand more about second language acquisition theories in respect to sociocultural theory. By learning from Dr. Rogers as an MSLT student, I understand the importance of following curiosity in the language-teaching field in regards to learning

new concepts and how to integrate newly learned information into my teaching philosophy.

I would also like to give my thanks and love to my fellow MSLT peers. When I began this program as only a prospective student in the spring 2016 semester, I was able to already meet some friends that ultimately led me to follow through with this program. Aaron, Elizabeth, I-Chiao, and Marina K.,—you four are the best for showing me just how great this program really is. Without your friendship and guidance, I would not be doing this program. So thank you for being the first friends I ever made in this program and your continued support! Emily M., Emily S., Farlin, and Dianny—you've been my best friends from the fall 2016 semester and onwards. I appreciate your friendship so much and I'm so glad I took the opportunity to take Spanish 1010 so I could learn from each of you even more than being just being friends in the program.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

AH = At-Home

ALM = Audio-Lingual Method

CALL = Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CBI = Content-based Instruction

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

DELFL = Diplôme d'études en langue française

DLI = Dual Language Immersion

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

ELL = English Language Learners

ESL = English as a Second Language

ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages

FL = Foreign Language

FLCA = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

FLE = Français langue étrangère (French as a Foreign Language)

GTM = Grammar Translation Method

IELI = Intensive English Language Institute

IELI 1000 = Conversational English course

IM = Immersion

L1 = Native Language/First Language

L2 = Second Language

LPP = Legitimate Peripheral Participation

MSLT = Master of Second Language Teaching

SA = Study Abroad

SCT = Sociocultural Theory

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

TBAs = Task-Based Activities

TBLT = Tasked-Based Language Teaching

TL = Target Language

TPS = Teaching Philosophy Statement

UFLA = Utah Foreign Language Association

USU = Utah State University

WRKWS = Wat Rai Khing Wittaya School

WTC = Willingness To Communicate

ZPD = Zone of Proximal Development

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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a culmination of all that I have studied and learned as part of the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University. Beginning in the Spring of 2016, I have read scholarly books and articles as part of various courses in order to develop and ground this portfolio consisting of research papers, annotated bibliographies, and to gain further knowledge surrounding second language theory and pedagogy. In addition, each facet of this portfolio has come from my experiences teaching English at both the secondary and collegiate levels as well as my own understanding of teaching and learning foreign languages as a foreign language student myself. The vital piece to this portfolio is the teaching philosophy section where I base my teaching beliefs not only in research literature, but also from my own experiences as a language teacher.

My teaching philosophy has changed as I continue to have experiences in the learning and teaching of foreign language(s). My teaching philosophy is grounded in four distinct sections: student/teacher roles, learning foreign language(s) through application, understanding language learning through teacher-student and student-student interactions, and utilizing the classroom as a learning community for students. Each section relates to my teaching beliefs from my personal experiences being a graduate student instructor at USU in the U.S. and a foreign teacher at Wat Raikhing Wittaya School in Thailand. Each section of my teaching philosophy is then connected to three research papers in which I further elaborate on my beliefs and perspectives as a language teacher.

In my first research paper, I explore the links between student motivation and

three distinct classroom contexts where students acquire separate and unique language idiosyncrasies to that context. Next, my second research paper calls attention to using creative writing in the foreign language classroom as a way of using the foreign language in fun and engaging ways. And finally, my third paper relates to the teaching of culture through the *tu/vous* second person pronouns in the French language and understanding the importance of these pronouns in French.

In addition, I provide annotated bibliographies where I explore the different perspectives on first language use in the classroom, the role of anxiety and types of anxiety-reducing strategies, and the reasons why creativity should or should not have a place in the foreign language classroom. These topics were chosen from understanding my own language-learning observations with not only how I practiced my second language (creativity), but also what could impede my learning (anxiety, L1 use). These annotated bibliographies relate to topics that I find integral to the classroom for successful learning by understanding and lowering anxiety, promoting creativity, and even discussing if a student's first language should be used in the classroom.

For this portfolio, I am establishing my work from different theories both in language teaching and in education. This portfolio delves into sociocultural linguistics for learning and communicative approaches to languages, namely sociocultural theory and communicative language teaching. There is also focus on the Zone of Proximal Development, second language motivation, and second language theories including social cognition, constructivism perspectives, and the Output Hypothesis.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

Learning a foreign language has been one of my interests since middle school. No two language experiences are alike as evident in my experiences alone learning four languages; French, Thai, Spanish, and my first language, English. However, learning French for me was like Goldilocks when trying to find the epitome of “just right” for the learning process. At times, French for me was “too easy” and other times it was “too hard.” But over time, I have found my French learning experience to be “just right” with the opportunities I have had as a result of how I have learned French.

The pinnacle moment of language learning came at the beginning of 7th grade when there was a small workshop that was given by the French and Spanish teachers at the school. As students we spent 2 weeks in each language and then were told we had to make a decision on what language to take from that point on until the end of high school. Based on what my parents had said earlier that year with a vague plan to return to Europe and visit France, I chose French.

At first, I thought learning French was the better choice because I thought Spanish would be “too easy” to learn and I was intrigued by French as the harder language. Ironically, as I started taking French in 8th grade, French came to me easily and quickly in terms of remembering vocabulary and the idea of verb conjugation. Even the tricky “mangeons” and “nageons” in the *nous* form failed to knock me into a reality check that French was supposed to be “hard.” Even to this day, I remember certain vocabulary words that I have only used on occasion several years later, but never heard the vocabulary word since the 8th grade class. Once I got to high school level French (years

3 and 4), the “too easy” remained as I continued to remind myself of vocabulary words and verb conjugations from the middle school classes. I became frustrated that French was not a challenge to me and I still needed an additional year or two before I could fulfill the foreign language requirement at the school. Without skipping a beat, I applied to become an exchange student through Rotary Youth Exchange for the 2009-2010 school year.

It is one thing to say that learning French was easy in the comfort of living in an English-speaking community where the only French I used was in the classroom. However, it is another thing entirely to live in France where the only English I heard was on Skype with my parents or in the English classroom *au lycée*. The French I had learned from American schooling suddenly vanished from my mind and I fell into French being “too hard” with constant migraines and not feeling comfortable enough to speak with my host families. I could not understand a word and I did not know where to begin to regain my French language knowledge. I slowly started relearning grammar and out-of-context vocabulary words from scratch with a tutor at the French school I attended.

With my tutor, I began to learn more French verb tenses, grammar structures, and even how to say and pronounce the alphabet in French for the first time. But with every lesson I had on my own, I felt more and more lost when trying to converse with my friends in the halls and at host family dinners. For the first few weeks, I could only communicate in grammar, not conversation. Luckily, my friends gave me support and helped my conversation skills by starting with the basic “How are you?” every day and would try to keep topics simple such as family or what we learned in English language

class that day. Regrettably, my nerves never went away despite the support I received from host families and friends. However, I always attempted to use French on a daily basis without using my native language (English) as a crutch and kept my conversations simple with those I knew would listening without judging me for sounding foreign and/or American every time I spoke. However, there came a time where I had no choice but to speak when I had learned in French was put to the literal test: a DELF exam.

In May of 2010, every exchange student in my Rotary District had to take a week off of regular school and go to a nearby city to take a fluency exam. Known as the “Diplôme d’études en langue française,” (DELF) we were tested on the comprehension and production of the four language skills; reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Most of us—as exchange students—felt nervous towards taking the DELF due to the variety of French use in our respective schools and towns.

From the beginning of my exchange, a friend and I vowed that we would only use English to each other in dire circumstances. We had more speaking practice than some of the other exchange students who used English more often, but the nerves remained. The moment of French being a language I had been learning and re-learning since Day 1 came to a halt as I feared the worst. Instead of French being “too hard” or “too easy,” the thought came that maybe I was “not good enough” to pass the DELF. Surprisingly to my friends and mostly myself, my speaking section had the highest marks. And on that same day, I received validation that my going-to-France as an exchange student was a decision that was “just right.”

On the way to the main *gare* in Nancy, France, on a public tram, a strike broke out downtown that resulted in stopping all public transportation. A woman next to me and I struck up a conversation to pass the time, as we waited on the tram for nearly twenty minutes before it moved again. It was brought up that I had finished taking the DELF earlier that afternoon and the woman was shocked to hear that I was an exchange student. She admitted that she thought I was a native French speaker and thought I came from southern France based on my supposed accent. For me, this was a pivotal and proud moment of my French learning as an accumulation over the previous years. The comment I received was an instant boost to my motivation and confidence and I slowly began to speak more and more French to those around me at school and at my host family's home.

For a majority of language learners, learning the target language can be a matter of survival in the real world where the target language is used. Living in France, I found my French learning experience both stressful and beneficial: I always had to use the language as I could not—and did not—rely on English. In my French classes throughout middle school and high school, most lessons were taught on small grammar points such as masculine and feminine articles (*le, la, les*, etc.) or how to use verb conjugation charts to form sentences. The use of language in the classroom was limited to what we learned from a textbook, flashcards, and American films with French audio. As students in Utah classrooms, we were not required to learn how to start a conversation with people or even understand why verb tenses mattered beyond the sentence level with various regular and irregular verb endings. We were simply taught the linguistic details of grammar and

vocabulary, with a little of bit of context to the big picture of the French language through the occasional un-authentic video.

In high school French, reading dialogues to mimic made-for-French-learners videos was common to emphasize speaking and pronunciation skills. However, most of the dialogues included only basic topics such as name, birthday, numbers, clothing, and questionable French expressions such as hearing “*sacre bleu!*” without knowing its meaning. Other common phrases were given as reference, but there was no link to the real-world with when or where these phrases would be used. The phrases would have been helpful during my exchange, but without knowing the context, they were simply just words on a page with an English translation.

Overall, my French learning experience has been unique and varied based on my before, during, and after experiences as an exchange student in France. There were days it seemed that French was “too easy,” and other days where it felt like it was “too hard.” My biggest takeaway from learning French in a variety of contexts has helped me see that learning any language is possible and the key is finding the opportunity that is “just right” for learning.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

When I first began the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program, the first goal I had was to become aware of the different theories surrounding second language acquisition. In time, I have been able to reflect on how my own teaching in Thailand with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) high school students mirrored what I learned in class compared to English as a Second Language (ESL) students that I currently teach at Utah State University in the IELI program.

With a keen interest in cultures and languages, I have developed this portfolio to match what I have learned as a student and a teacher of ESL/EFL students. Specifically, this portfolio relates to the pedagogical choices a teacher makes when teaching a foreign language. Within the realm of language teaching, decisions are made on a daily basis. Some of these decisions are based on what tasks to give students. But there are also choices that are made for helping students gain more confidence in the L2.

This portfolio reflects teaching international ESL/EFL secondary and post-secondary classrooms and American post-secondary French as a foreign language (FLE) classrooms. Within this portfolio, each section can be adapted to fit other domestic and international language classrooms without being limited to only ESL/EFL and FLE contexts.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Introduction

In my experience learning foreign languages in a variety of contexts, I have seen how teaching is an intricate piece of art that is changed and molded to the very classroom where the teaching and learning occurs. By learning language and teaching language, I have found my own understanding of how to become an effective language teacher for second language (L2) students as well as how to implement effective teaching strategies for the L2 classroom.

The learning environment in a classroom may be affected in any number of ways. For my current students and future students, I have learned a few factors that should be considered as important features of the L2 classroom. These factors have influenced my perceptions of what effective teaching is and how these factors lay out the foundation for my personal teaching philosophy.

The first factor I take into consideration are the roles I have as a teacher and the roles I wish my students to take as “active participants” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 40) in the learning process. I also consider how learning takes place in the L2 classroom based on what is known as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and how I give my students ample opportunity to practice the target language (TL) through output-based activities and the importance of output for my students. And finally, I reflect on how my students learn language in a sociocultural construct through what is known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

All three of these factors relate to the teaching and learning process in their own way but remain connected by seeing how teaching and learning can work from the teacher to the student and vice versa. As a teacher I believe that I can always learn from my students just as my students are able to learn from me in their language-learning experience based on teacher/student roles and tasks in the classroom.

Teacher Roles in the Foreign Language Classroom

In the foreign language education field, a key area of inquiry relates to the roles of teachers and students (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2011; Ellis, 2012; Izadinia, 2012; Kane, 2014; Keblowska, 2002; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). As a student I remember thinking that some subjects in school I could learn from only a book, but the teacher would always be there to help and was a reliable source of information. This was no exception during my language learning process as an L2 French learner. As both a learner and a teacher of languages, I have noticed that there are two consistent labels in the classroom: “teacher” and “student.” Other roles may take place within these two generalizations and how these other additional roles may have an effect on the language learning process.

In my experience being an EFL teacher, one of the primary roles I unintentionally acquired was motivator. This role allowed my students to see that I was someone who would help them learn the language as opposed to someone lectures endless grammar points as if I was the all-knowing expert (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). By presenting myself as an approachable person to my students, I became known as the “fun teacher” and students began to feel more comfortable coming to me when they needed homework help

or to discuss “personal problems” such as preparing for college interviews (Kebblowska, 2002, p. 320). With the role of motivator came unexpected results with my Thai students: my senior-year high school students developed a keen interest in learning English for a potential university degree and my sophomore-year students began to see how learning English could be fun and meaningful. As such, subsequent roles began to range taking other labels like helper and guide beyond their classroom experiences. By showing myself as a supporter and helper, the daunting label of teacher became varied as I continued and continue to strive towards a more diverse persona of teaching roles for my students and myself. Regardless of the role(s) as a teacher in the L2 classroom, I strive to create a student-centered classroom.

Garrett (2008) defines a student-centered classroom as one where “knowledge is co-constructed by the teacher and the students” (p. 34) and teachers “encourage active participation” from the students during class-time (p. 42). In my EFL classroom, I allowed my students to become “more active participants” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 40) in the teaching and learning process in a number of different ways. One example would be when I allowed my students to assume the “teacher” role and they would teach me their native language—Thai.

In these lessons, I became a student with learning Thai pronunciation and Thai writing from my own students. For my students, they were able to “develop his/her own skills” by “acquiring new language” (Kebblowska, 2002, p. 320) through the joint use of English and Thai. English was the primary language used by both myself and my students and the aspect of teaching me their native language (L1) helped them practice

their L2 speaking, listening, and writing skills with me—their teacher (Ellis, 2012; Keblowska, 2002; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). This type of activity helped both students and myself as the teacher deviate from the tradition that it is up to the teacher to teach and the students to learn passively. However, some parts of the world still believe that teachers, not students, are the ones who transmit material to the students.

Student Roles: From Passive Learning to Active Engagement

Although there is nothing wrong with the traditional teacher roles of being the target language expert in the classroom, it is important to consider how this tradition is viewed in other teaching contexts (Izadinia, 2012; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Izadinia (2012) finds that student teachers in Iran feel “powerless to do more than transfer language content to learners” (p. 5). Ellis (2012) shares this notion based on the belief that teachers “make the major contribution in L2 discourse” (p. 116). Simply put, it is easy to view the teacher as the “primary controller of every situation that is played out in the classroom” (Keblowska, 2002, p. 319). However, research has shown that students can gain a more prominent role in the classroom, which would allow the traditional expert role to diminish (Kane, 2014; Nunan, 1995).

Kane found that students can have a more prominent role in the classroom when they have opportunities to give teachers feedback and voice their learning concerns. However, Kane explains that although teachers hear their students talk, teachers do not “necessarily listen” to what the students are saying or take the students’ comments seriously (p. 60). Opening a conversation with students is one way for the

teacher to understand what students are thinking and students are also provided the chance to give the teacher feedback.

In my EFL classroom, I allowed my students to give me oral feedback after certain activities that involved grammar or vocabulary. One example was when I taught the students how to play Charades and then asked them afterwards what they thought of using Charades to learn hobby-related vocabulary. Students liked the idea because they were not required to speak while doing the Charade, but the activity was fun; which in turn helped them remember the vocabulary better. Another way to include students' feedback is by giving them the power of choice in regards to lesson material presentation (Nunan, 1995; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

The Power of Choice: Student Contributions to Learning

During my EFL teacher, I quickly became ware of the unique ways every class of students was different. I was constantly changing lesson plan components to better fit each class and I decided that I would allow my students to choose how they would prefer to learn subject material. By allowing my students to "take responsibility" (Nunah, 1995, p. 147), my students felt that their opinion mattered and that I would accommodate to their interests. Regardless of the choice they made, however, the subject material would remain the same but how the material was presented became the students' decision.

Although the power of choice was clear for my students on a class-to-class basis, the subject material would always be linked to some type of activity that gave students the opportunity to practice the TL in some way. The constant goal for my students was to practice the TL whether in writing or speaking activities which mirrors the goal of

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through Task-Based Instruction (TBI).

Regardless of the task and/or activity, students would be required to use the TL to obtain a certain goal by using the TL itself.

L2 Practice and Application: Learning By Doing

One of the primary facets for both CLT and TBI is that students are given a task to complete that requires using the L2 (Ellis, 2012). According to Ellis, “a task takes a specific linguistic feature and puts that feature as the main focus of practice” (p. 200). By definition, then, TBI requires that students not only learn the target language, but they are required to use the target language by “*doing something*” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 62). I strive to present activities that are meaningful and communicative-based with real-life situations for my EFL lessons. For my lessons, I include vocabulary and common phrases and questions to the lesson theme.

In the Thailand school system, students are expected to learn English through the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, in a textbook and grammar-centric classroom. As an EFL teacher, I showed my students how to use grammar without textbook examples or PowerPoint slides. Although I used a textbook as a frame of reference, I modified the textbook material to form a more engaging and meaningful lesson. One example of this came from teaching my students how to ask and answer questions about things one can find at a flea market and supplemented bonus grammar and vocabulary for buying items at other locations—such as grocery stores and department stores—and understanding price differences based on location.

My students were able to learn many things from this type of lesson that involved money, questions, common phrases, locations, and even learning how to compare and contrast prices of items. This type of learning reflects ACTFL's guidelines known as Can-Do Statements (CDs) where students learn what they "should be able to do with the language in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, at various levels of performance" (ACTFL, 2015; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Although the focus for the flea market lesson was targeted towards speaking skills, I also introduced my students to shopping culture based on the compare/contrast activity with prices. Nonetheless, I gave my students an opportunity to view their language learning as a process to "assess what they 'can do' with language" (ACTFL, 2015, p. 3).

However, for some students, their proficiency levels would inhibit them from understanding the lesson even at a basic level of understanding what a vocabulary word meant with or without using authentic materials and realia. In addition, some of these struggling students were only able to perform or say a sentence or word if they had help from someone else. Upon further research, I have come to understand that this type of obstacle for students may be surpassed with additional help in their Zone of Proximal Development.

When L2 Learners Need Extra Help: Vygotsky and the ZPD

Through the perspective of Sociocultural Theory, one of the most interesting concepts that has been researched for language acquisition is how language learning occurs. In contrast to cognitivist theories in regards to SLA, Sociocultural Theory deviates itself by positing that language learning is a constant "process over time"

(Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011, p. xii). Furthermore, Sociocultural Theory bases language learning based on social interactions with the self and other people “rather than solely in the mind of an individual” (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011, p. x). That is to say that Sociocultural Theory sees learning for students as a way to learn and develop language skills by interacting with other people. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is only part of this.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is “the distance between the actual developmental level...and the potential development...under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). In simple terms, learners know what they can and cannot do on their own and can enlist the help from others to achieve a goal. For language students, it is typical to receive the additional help from “professors and other students” (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011, p. 10) via scaffolding.

According to Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), scaffolding is when “an adult or ‘expert’ helps somebody who is less adult or less expert” (p. 89). In the foreign language classroom, teachers usually assume the ‘expert’ label to the students’ ‘less expert.’ For my students and their ZPDs, there were times where I would enlist help from higher-proficiency level students to help the struggling students in order to obtain the necessary “ah-hah!” moments.

As a teacher, it is crucial to understand where students are in their language learning experience based on their ZPDs. Due to the fact that the ZPD constantly changes, it is important to also consider how I am not the only resource for scaffolded help to the students. It is my belief that students should have opportunities to help each

other in their language-learning experiences and their ZPDs in order to find a balance between learning from each other and learning from the teacher.

In IELI 1000, students from various language backgrounds attend the class to practice their speaking and conversation skills. Although my label in this class is mediator, I observe how my students develop and practice their speaking skills based on the given conversation topic(s) of the day. In addition, I allow my students the opportunity to present on topics that are familiar to them. Although most of my students share the same L1, scaffolding continues to occur from teacher-student and student-student levels. With student-led presentations, my students are able to lead a topic of their choice and essentially teach the class about the topic they have chosen. For each student, common knowledge or their backgrounds were common. But some students enlisted the help of others when attempting to explain something that is not easily translatable into English. Per my own background, I was not necessarily the best person to ask when it came to these moments for clarification in English. The students, however, were able to have authentic language use with each other in order to be understood. In the research literature, my students were unknowingly using each other as members of an English-speaking community with the classroom as the setting of practice.

A Community for Learning: Creating a Comfortable Space for Language Practice

As an IELI instructor and an EFL teacher in Thailand, I have tried my best to keep anxiety at a low level for my students regardless of their age, proficiency level, and background with English. Unknowingly, in my own teaching methodology choices I have been developing my classroom dynamic through the students' legitimate peripheral

participation, or LPP for short (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Within LPP in the classroom, the students are able to “function in a community” (Brown & Duguid, 1991, p. 48) where students are participants of learning English in the English-learning community of the classroom. Within the classroom and LPP, my students and I are able to engage with the target language by allowing the classroom to be a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 30) for their English learning. However, I view LPP through a sociocultural theory lens where I allow my students to practice their language skills in a tight-knit community of other language learners. In this community, the student as an individual is important through their own backgrounds, their life knowledge, their L1, and their academic backgrounds that have led them to come to Utah State.

For IELI 1000 students, students may be labeled as newcomers because they do not yet have the confidence nor the skill to practice their English skills effectively. However, the community that is developed in the classroom allows language practice to become two-fold via SCT. The expert-labeled students help the novice learners, and the novice learners can use the expert students as a support system. In addition, I remain an additional resource for students at all levels when clarifying English-isms for the higher-level students, and helping the lower level students through gestures, mime, visual aids, and other comprehension guides. Overall, the classroom community is not exclusively for my ESL and EFL students. Regardless of the proficiency levels of the students or the backgrounds of the students, English is used as a *lingua franca* where the classroom acts as one type of environment for low-anxiety

English language practice where a student can practice their English with other ESL and EFL-learning students that do not have the same background(s).

Part of ACTFL is the 5 C's: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (ACTFL, 2015; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). With my experience teaching English, I strive to incorporate lessons that build off of these 5 C's. I value diversity and inclusivity in the classroom and believe them to be an important part of the language learning experience. With IELI 1000, students and myself are able to discuss our own cultural backgrounds and explore other ourselves as individuals based on our cultural backgrounds and using communication to compare and contrast our life experiences based on where and how we live as English-language users. This was also the case at Wat Rai Khing Wittaya School (WRKWS) in Thailand where I taught students of the same language and cultural background, but allowed their language and culture to further enhance their English-language learning using my personal contrast as an L1 speaker of American English.

By allowing my students a comfortable space for their language practice and using the classroom as a community, I also find it important to consider that my role as a teacher furthers itself into my role of the community. As a facilitator for the classroom, I also find myself finding ways to keep my students' anxieties low. It is my belief in theory and in practice that, as a teacher, I should find ways to build my students' confidence levels and higher their self-esteem as English-language learners. By knowing what may make my students anxious, it is then possible to view how some teacher roles may increase or decrease student anxieties accordingly (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013).

Conclusion

By understanding the perspective of being a student and a teacher of a foreign language, it has been helpful to develop my teaching philosophy in ways that go beyond just what I believe to be effective teaching methods. With my own experiences learning a foreign language and connecting to my student's backgrounds, I feel as though I can adapt to any teaching situation based on what tasks can be performed in the class, how I can help my students beyond just a "teacher" label, and allowing my students to have an active learning process by collaborating with me—as their teacher—and with other students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

Introduction

Background Information

Beginning in the fall of 2016, I began to observe foreign language classes at both the elementary and post-secondary school levels. I had the opportunity to view two Dual Language Immersion (DLI) classes at two separate schools in the Cache Count School District in and around Logan, Utah. I also have had the opportunity to observe four graduate student instructors teach intro-level (1010) language classes at Utah State University.

Out of the six observations I have completed in the MSLT program, I have viewed at least three different languages: Spanish, Chinese, and French. I purposefully chose languages that I am both familiar (French) and unfamiliar (Chinese, Spanish¹) in my own language learning experiences. Even though the three languages and the six teachers come from a variety of different teaching backgrounds, I have been able to learn from each of them by observing their teaching.

In the context of my Teaching Philosophy Statement, I evaluate how my own teaching philosophy reflects what I have observed in the 1010 and DLI classrooms in three facets: the classroom environment, classroom activities, and the role of the teacher.

For the observations, I was able to observe two second-grade DLI classrooms. In Utah DLI programs, second grade correlates to the second year of the DLI program. I also observed four 1010 classes that are seen as the first semester of the learned foreign language. I had the opportunity to observe three separate Spanish 1010 classes and one

¹ I have since taken Spanish 1010 in the Fall 2017 semester.

Chinese 1010 class. For instructor anonymity, I will distinguish the teachers by referring to them as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D, Teacher E, and Teacher F.

The Classroom Environment: How To “Set-Up” the Mood for Learning

Each teacher I observed had different ways that they brought the target language and the target culture into the classroom. It came to no surprise that each of the six teachers had visual aids in their teaching. The visual aids allowed students to see what they were learning based on written-out whiteboard examples (Teachers E and F) or PowerPoint slides (Teachers A, B, C, and D). Although the visual aids were helpful to get a general feel of the language—i.e. having the words for the months next to a calendar—some of the teachers used visual aids in different ways.

Teachers E and F had their classrooms decorated to give an atmosphere of the language the students were learning with pictures from target language countries, small decorations on the walls, and even authentic objects such as Chinese lanterns and small Eiffel Tower figurines. These types of decorations were used likely due to the fact that the classroom belonged to the instructor by having a position at the school and therefore had the liberty to decorate their own classrooms. Teacher F also provided students with target language picture-books for when students finished activities early. However, it was not clear if these books were an authentic L1 book, or books that were translated from English. Meanwhile, Teachers A and C helped set the language learning atmosphere by playing target language music before the beginning of class and during small group work activities.

Overall, the general feel of each classroom observed had a general immersion-like quality to them. Each teacher used the target language exclusively for communication, but there were some instances in the 1010 classes where the instructor switched to English if comprehension was lacking from the students. Based on what I have learned from the DLI class –LING 6700—in the MSLT program, this correlates to DLI programs having strict No-English rules in the target language classroom. In contrast, the 1010 instructors followed the general guideline that the target language should be used “as exclusively as possible” (ACTFL, 2010, para. 1).

In relation to my teaching philosophy, every teacher seemed aware of how the language classroom itself may be daunting for students. By using the target culture as a way to set-up the classroom, the teachers were able to have a classroom that invited students to the target language through decorations and music. Furthermore, it is also important to consider how the classroom is also one way of showing students not only aspects of the target culture, but showing students where the language comes from. In the case of foreign language classrooms, it was also interesting to note not only the use of the target language, but how the target language is practiced by both teacher(s) and students.

Classroom Activities: Different Foci Equate to How the Language is Practiced

It comes to no surprise that most of the classes I observed had the students actively practicing the target language. Whether the language was Spanish, Chinese, or French, the students had ample opportunities to practice their speaking skills. Although speaking skills are useful, I was surprised to see a lack in the other three language skills

of reading, writing, and listening. Luckily, some of the teachers I observed did implement writing in some way whether it was recording spoken answers into notebooks or having the students practice L2 writing for the sake of practicing L2 writing.

For Teachers B, C, and D, many written activities occurred during what is known as information-gap activities. In the words of Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), the information gap is useful “for the transmission and reception of messages” (p. 73) in the target language. For the aforementioned teachers, the target language was used in a very fixed way: students ask and answer questions that only their partner would know. For example, Teacher D taught students how to read and plan a daily schedule whereas Teacher C allowed students to speak and write down answers to a questionnaire with their partner. Although both of these activities are useful, the students only seemed to practice the same questions and the same answers with multiple people in the classroom as they interviewed new people in class. There was some originality with the variation of answers, but the prompts of which questions to ask were kept the same amongst the students as a whole.

However, Teacher F proved how a general prompt can be changed to provide students with the opportunity to answer their questions based on their own personal lives. Teacher F began a pen-pal activity where students created a letter based on known topics—i.e. age, family—and modified their L2 to fit their personalized letter. I found this activity very informative because it allowed me to see how grammar prompts can be done in a way that is meaningful to the students. There was also added language comprehension checks when Teacher F asked students to clarify grammar points and

doing micro-teaching lessons about new vocabulary all while in the context of writing a self-introduction type of letter.

For my future classes, I will reconsider how grammar is being taught as if it is an isolated practice like I observed in some of the observations. By teaching grammar in a way that makes sense and is a real world example seen in Teacher F's classroom, I imagine my students will be able to see how grammar is applicable and not just an abstract concept they must learn in order to gain L2 proficiency. But in order to show my own students how grammar can be used in an active way, I should also consider how I label myself as a teacher beyond the simple label of "teacher" or "instructor."

The Role(s) of the Teacher: The Return of Vygotsky

When I think of myself as a teacher, I strive to show my students that I am a resource to their learning and that my own label(s) in the classroom go beyond "teacher." I also strive to show my students that I can also learn from them, just as much as they learn from me within the dichotomy of student/teacher in the formal classroom setting. In the classes I observed, I noticed that each teacher seemed to take three distinct roles in their classrooms: resource, scaffolder/helper, and expert. Interestingly enough, I did not expect to see the "expert" label that is referenced to in Lee and VanPatten (2003). Lee and VanPatten (2003) note how the expert label is typically used to define teachers as "the role of authority or...transmitter of knowledge" (p. 8). Although this may be the case in many L2 classrooms around the world, it was still seen in the classes I have observed. However, I have a potential guess as to why.

When I noticed the expert role, it was typically when the teacher was teaching their first language. For the expert, the teacher knows the ins and outs of their language by being a native speaking of that language. In contrast, the teachers who are not L1 speakers of the target language seemed more of a “helper” and “resource” to the students. Although these are my own assumptions, I find that it may help show how we—as teachers—perceive potential biases we may have based on the language that we are teaching versus the language we have learned ourselves that is coincidentally the same language we teach our students.

In my experience teaching English in Thailand, I was teaching my own native language—English. To my students, I was their native speaker “expert” of the language and discussions would occur based on how my American pronunciation and American spellings were different from British and Australian English. Nonetheless, I also showed my students through my learning of *their* native language—Thai—that English can be used as a resource to them as I acted as their “helper” for when my students taught me Thai. In addition, I also showed my Thai students that English was the one way they had to communicate with me as their English teacher. This was not only because they were learning English as high school students, but because of my lack of proficiency in the Thai language that forced my students to produce English constantly and consistently.

Each of the six teachers I have had the opportunity to observe have showed their own ways of being an expert and helper or resource regardless of their language backgrounds. However, I continue to wonder how my own students perceive me as either a native or non-native speaker of the language I am teaching. In my Teaching

Philosophy and in my observing, I note that not all teachers assume the “expert” role. Although the “expert” role is common in the foreign language classroom, I note it is a natural role for teachers that arise in the context of learning in a classroom regardless of the school subject.

Conclusions

I have learned many things by doing class observations during my time in the MSLT program. In light of my Teaching Philosophy, I am able to see how my personal beliefs may or may not apply to all language classrooms due to how teaching a language involves personal preferences with how to teach the language and how the classroom environment itself is a commonly-overlooked aspect of the learning process.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STATEMENT

Introduction

As a language teacher, I am grateful to have the opportunity to be observed by my peers and fellow instructors. My first experiences in being observed in the MSLT program came from two classes: LING 6400 and LING 6700. In these courses, my classmates and I carried out “teaching demonstrations.” These demonstrations allowed me to teach a mini-lesson in French. In addition, I have also been observed in my current position of graduate instructor in IELI for the Conversational English course from the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters. Although the foci of these lessons were different, I received valuable feedback from both. As such, this Self Assessment of Teaching Statement will include my experiences teaching not only in MSLT classes, but in the IELI program as well.

The structure of this paper will be as follows: an introduction to the teaching demonstration; including the context of the class, positives specifics to that teaching demonstration, and then an overall section where I delve into how I plan to improve my teaching based on received observer feedback.

Background Information

LING 6400 is the course known as “Second Language Theory and Practice” in the MSLT program and LING 6700 is the course known as “Foundations of Dual Language Immersion” in the MSLT program.

In LING 6400 and LING 6700, the teaching demonstration required me to use my L2—French—to teach grammar or vocabulary for 20 minutes. In LING 6400, I taught

my peers the days of the week and months in French. In LING 6700, I taught French numbers 1-10 via the music theory method known as *solfège* using content-based instruction. For each teaching demonstration, observers and participants of the lesson provided feedback including what they liked and made suggestions for changes in future teaching.

IELI 1000 is the Conversational English course at USU for ESL students from various backgrounds in country origin, proficiency level of English, and their time spent in Utah. The lessons highlighted in this statement include two lessons. First, a lesson about hobbies and chores. The second was a cultural lesson about Halloween as an American holiday. Two instructors provided feedback for each lesson in its entirety and provided suggestions based on positive and negative observations from the lessons that took place.

Personal and Observer Notes from Four Separate Teaching Experiences

LING 6400: CLT Methodology in Practice

One primary goal for the LING 6400 teaching demonstration was allowing FLE students to produce French without any prior background knowledge of the language itself. I decided on a communicative goal that students can ask and answer questions involving days of the week, the months, and their birthdays. My own personal goal for this lesson was staying in the TL for the duration of the lesson. I accomplished this through visual aids on PowerPoint slides, pronunciation practice, and use of gestures.

As part of common CLT methodology, I decided on an interactive approach to the lesson where I taught the needed vocabulary and then students applied their TL

knowledge through an interview-gap activity. For this lesson, I matched my TPS of having my teacher roles as supporter and helper. My observers noted that my main role throughout the interview-gap activity was model for the speaking activity. Although I was the teacher, I was still able to take a step back and let the students negotiate meaning through the L2 practice.

Another observer note was my decision to provide students with copies of the vocabulary on a worksheet for the speaking activity and a post-lesson worksheet. My observers noted that providing both worksheets to the students served two purposes. First, the worksheet provided a visual reference to the lesson. And second, the worksheet served as a memento of the speaking activities carried out during the lesson.

In the context of my TPS, this lesson serves as a good first example that matches my teaching perspectives. First, this lesson shows my ideal roles as an instructor: I do teach, but I allow myself to be a resource and helper for the students. Second, this lesson shows how I involve students in production-based tasks. Although this teaching demonstration had a focus on speaking, students were able to write small bits of personal information in French with the worksheet as an aide. While this was my first time teaching a lesson as part of the MSLT program, I believe this lesson was successful.

LING 6700: Teaching Music Using Content-Based Instruction

One of the benefits to doing a teaching demonstration in LING 6700 was the basis of the class: dual language immersion. As such, it made sense that each of us—as students—had a chance to teach in the TL to mimic the immersion classroom. Although

I understood that most people would teach vocabulary for their demonstration, I decided to teach *solfège* using content-based instruction.

According to Shleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza (2004), content-based instruction (CBI) is when the TL is taught in conjunction with “academic subject matter” (p. 68). IN the case of LING 6700’s demonstration, I used music theory as the subject matter with a basis of French numbers for the grammatical aspect of the lesson. Although French numbers for 1-8 were used to match the musical syllables of *solfège*, I also incorporated listening sections for the students with French and by playing the violin as another element to the lesson.

One of the first comments I received from my observation notes was my personal touch to the lesson plan by showing the class my background as a musician. By using music in my lesson, I was also more comfortable with the lesson in general even with the vocabulary-based components and using French as the instruction language. One observer also noted that the environment for the lesson was much more relaxed than previous teaching demonstrations in class. In addition, observers noted the use of the violin added a calming component to the lesson. Other observers also noted that the use of music made them forget that grammar was being learned explicitly due to how music was used to further enhance the number(s) vocabulary being taught through visual and audio cues.

By using a musical instrument as part of the teaching demonstration, I found how using my own strengths as a musician added to my confidence in the teaching of the lesson material. As a musician, *solfège* is very familiar to me. By teaching something

familiar and personal, I was able to complete the demonstration and feel accomplished for teaching something I could share with my peers beyond just French grammar and vocabulary.

IELI 1000: Hobbies & Chores as a Student Compare-and-Contrast Activity

A very common starter topic in language classrooms is the subject of hobbies using the grammar combinations of “I like,” “I don’t like,” and “What do you like to do?” With this in mind, I decided the IELI 1000 Conversational English students would learn about hobbies and chores (Appendix A). With a lesson about hobbies and chores, students practiced the lesson material in two ways. One, the students and I discussed the difference(s) between hobbies and chores through the song *When Will My Life Begin?* from Disney’s “Tangled” and by listening to the song. And two, the students conversed with a partner to create two Venn diagrams as compare-and-contrast between their self-perceived chores and hobbies.

From received feedback, observers noted the good use of a relevant song that explores hobbies and chores collectively as a lesson base. In my experience teaching English, I strive to find fun and relevant songs for my ESL/EFL students. While teaching EFL in Thailand, I used the same song from “Tangled” to begin a lesson about hobbies. For the ESOL students in IELI 1000, the song was also used as a background knowledge activator based on familiar hobbies—baking, reading, ballet—and unfamiliar hobbies such as candle making and ventriloquism as mentioned in the lyrics (Appendix B). With the song and the song lyrics, the IELI 1000 students were able to check their comprehension of what hobbies are prior to delving into the definition of a chore.

Observer feedback also noted the good use of discussion between students and myself to figure out the difference between a chore and a hobby. By having a discussion with students about the differences between chores and hobbies, the Venn diagram allowed for further practice with their speaking and writing skills. The discussion also provided students with small scaffolding to prepare for the Venn diagram activity.

For this lesson in particular, I felt it was rather successful due to flexibility of learning styles from my students and how I guided them to the point of conversation. In the lesson, I used visual cues from the music video, visual help from printed-out lyrics, audio from the video, and did some Google Images to aid in more obscure vocabulary. I also found it successful to use Venn diagrams as means to allow students to compare and contrast themselves with a partner and not just the lesson material differences between a hobby and a chore.

IELI 1000: Western Culture Understanding with Halloween

In the IELI 1000 class, I have been able to experience diversity on a whole new level. With students from China, South Korea, and Japan, I have been able to develop cultural competence not only with my own understanding of Eastern cultures, but I am able to help the students understand Western cultures as well. When I learned that Halloween was on a class day, I immediately began to lesson-plan what students could learn about Halloween from an American perspective.

I will admit that the Halloween lesson was not so much of a lesson. Instead of teaching vocabulary, I had students match flashcards with words in small groups. My intent for this small activity was a warm-up and negotiation of meaning-style activity

where students had to discuss what word(s) went with which picture(s). I also provided the students with their own Halloween goodie-bag realia: candy and pumpkins. With the help of my teaching assistant, we also acted out the meaning of trick-or-treat for the students. Both observers noted that the use of realia was good and provided an authentic link to an abstract word—pumpkin, e.g.—to a real object.

My main goal for the Halloween “lesson” was to make it fun for the students. I also found it fun that my observers were able to join in a small informal discussion about trick-or-treaters and what to do if the students did *not* want to have visitors come to their door. But I also learned my own lesson by presenting Halloween as a “fun day” lesson: it does not always work to do a “lesson” for the sake of having fun without any foundation for learning. As I view my teaching in the next section, I will present how I can improve from my own mishaps to better my teaching with these four lessons in mind.

Learning From My Own Teaching and Teaching Goals

Being observed is a daunting aspect of being a teacher, but I posit that it is also the most important aspect of teaching. For every observation I have had, I have learned how I can be a better teacher. The constructive criticism I have received has been helpful by allowing to view myself as a developing professional and that it is okay to have lessons that do not go as planned.

Although I felt that each of my lessons in this SATS had successes, it is not to say that I cannot learn from them. In the teaching demonstrations, I learned the importance of planning from a timeframe perspective. Although 20 minutes was ample time for me to do a teaching demonstration, I was never sure of my pacing. This is also true for the

IELI 1000 class that lasts for 50 minutes. I have noticed that I do not worry about following a lesson-plan based on timings. In my experience teaching, I feel as though timing and pacing may be a guideline and not something that must be strictly followed. In other words, it is okay to have a lesson go faster or slower than expected. However, some timing is harder to distinguish than others and I felt this in both LING 6400 and IELI 1000: Halloween lessons.

While the time-frame was different between these two lessons, I felt that LING 6400 went by rather quickly and Halloween went by rather slowly. As I reflect on these lessons, I have realized that LING 6400 was my first teaching experience in the MSLT program. At the time, I was worried I would not be able to finish my lesson with its activities in only 20 minutes. Contrastingly, Halloween went by slowly due to the vast differences of proficiency levels of the students and the student's own paces. Although the Halloween matching activity was done in small groups, students completed activities much faster than I anticipated. As such, I relearned the importance of always having more activities planned. In the moment, I had only planned a lesson plan and not how fast the students could potentially finish the activities.

Another aspect of planning I had not accounted for in these lessons was student background knowledge. In IELI 1000: Hobbies & Chores, I was only guessing that students had a basic understanding of what hobbies were. Although chore was a new word for them, I anticipated what I thought they should know and not what the students *actually* know. Although this was helpful for the students when it came to the discussion and the Venn diagram activity, I worried then and worry now that I was simply

“teaching” them something familiar and could have used hobbies as a warm-up activity and not as the first primary activity of the lesson.

In LING 6700, I had purposefully decided to teach something unfamiliar to the class. While an observer noted how different this demonstration was to previous demonstrations in the class, some students seemed to be overwhelmed due to the level of unfamiliarity with the material. I cannot assume that learning French numbers was a useful tool when teaching music. However, I would like to think it showed a good transition to show that numbers can be used in different contexts that do not necessarily relate to vocabulary and/or grammar.

By being observed on multiple occasions, I should also note how I—as a person—change that directly and indirectly affect my students’ performance. One of the first observer comments I received from LING 6400 was how my teaching was very fast-paced. This may have been due to the time limit of 20 minutes, but truthfully my pace was out of nerves. Although I do not always feel nervous and/or anxious when teaching, I have felt a distinguishable difference of my energy when I am being observed. Instead of taking my time and allowing my students time, I jump in to make my own comments before my students have a chance to respond to questions and/or other statements. With this observation note, I now try my best to allow my students time to process at their own rate. In the IELI 1000 class, I also strive to keep my own anecdotes to myself unless a student directly asks me directly. I will keep this personal goal in mind for all current and future classrooms so I do not deprive my students of their English practice time.

Overall, I am grateful to have been observed during my time as a graduate instructor in the MSLT program. Being observed not only has shown me what my strengths are as a teacher, but also how I can continue to improve myself. As a final commentary to this portfolio section, I will now discuss how this SATS and my own goals line up with my TPS.

Understanding My Teaching from My TPS: Final Takeaways

I am grateful that even with good and bad lessons, I continue to be a resource and helper for my students whether I'm teaching French or English. From day one of being a graduate instructor in IELI, I strive to show my students that I may not be the expert on everything L2 but I will do my best to help them understand English from a cultural perspective. As such, I continue to find ways were I can help my students benefit from being active participants and I do not dictate every moment of the classroom.

With IELI 1000 being a conversation course for international students, I have become more aware of the importance of tasks with a focus on speaking. In my TPS, I mention the act of using written tasks. In IELI 1000, the very goal of the course is to help students on the speaking level. I am grateful that I can allow my students time to use writing in non-conventional ways such as through Google, spelling words when we are unsure of the pronunciation of a word, and even using writing as a base to begin speaking practice seen in the IELI 1000: Hobbies & Chores with a Venn diagram.

Overall, I have found a great deal of enlightenment since I began teaching in 2014 in Thailand and into my current teaching at USU. I have been grateful that I can learn from my students just as much as my students can learn from me. With my TPS, I plan

to continue opportunities to learn not only from my students but also with my peers and colleagues. Teaching does not have to be a solitary career where I only have my own self-perceptions of my teaching. Instead, I will continue my journey into how I can better my teaching so I can be an effective teacher for all of my students.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

LANGUAGE PAPER

PURPOSE & REFLECTION

This language paper was originally written for LING 6010: Research in Second Language Learning as taught by Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini in the Spring 2016 semester. The original version of this paper was a research proposal regarding secondary students and the various gains one has while studying abroad and studying in traditional classrooms in their home country. As I was researching this topic further for LING 6010, I noticed an abundance of sources about L2 motivation. In addition, every source was also distinguished between three different classroom contexts which I have decided to explore further for this paper in my portfolio. These three contexts are known as at-home (AH), study abroad (SA) and immersion (IM).

As a former high school exchange student, the topic of L2 learning in the context of immersion and study abroad came easily to mind. I developed a general overview of language gains through the contexts of immersion, study abroad, and “at-home” (Lord, 2010, p. 49) classrooms. Each of these classrooms can motivate or demotivate students for their language learning, but there is no current research that shows how each classroom can change a student’s motivation.

With a lack of support from the research to find a link between classroom contexts and L2 motivation, this paper describes each classroom context through a SLA standpoint based on what students learn in which classroom. I also explore two different types of motivation and how this motivation transfers into the L2 learning experience.

One of the first aspects of this research proposal-turned-paper was the approach to write this paper. With the other papers in this portfolio, the idea comes from a very clear

idea in which I then develop from the existing research literature to support a thesis statement. However, this paper was already proving more difficult due to my interest in not only *how* students learn but also the question of *why*. Interestingly, the questions of how and why are common in the research literature but usually only discussed from one classroom context. Most of the sources I have found this paper come from study abroad sources from my initial proposal aspect of the paper. However, to keep this paper rounded and unbiased, researching the immersion and at-home contexts also proved to be interesting in how I could relate each context to language learning.

CLASSROOM CONTEXTS AS LANGUAGE-LEARNING MOTIVATION FACTORS

Introduction

For each language learner in the world, there is a classroom environment that shapes his or her experience learning the TL. Each classroom environment allows students to encounter and produce the TL in spoken and written forms. However, each classroom environment is different by how students acquire the TL. For the purpose of this paper there will be a discussion about three distinct types of classrooms: at-home (AH), study abroad (SA), and immersion (IM). In addition, these classroom environments will also be discussed in terms of what students acquire—or not—from the language in each of these contexts. It should be mentioned that not all contexts are the same language teaching methodologies due to teacher preference(s), learning objectives, any existing institutional curriculum, and other factors outside the scope of this paper.

With three types of classrooms to observe how the TL is used and acquired by students, a key area of study that arises from the current research literature is the notion of student motivation. In other words, why do students decide to learn a foreign language and what keeps them wanting to increase their proficiency? To answer these questions, I call into question how motivation may also influence students in particular in these three classroom environments.

The Three Classroom Environments

At-Home Learning: General Language Acquisition Methods & Student Gains

Without leaving the home country, language learners study in what is known as the at-home (AH) learning context (Beltran, 2014; Freed, 2004; Isabellí-Garcia, 2010;

Knouse, 2012; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Stevens, 2011). In an AH classroom, the L1 is not seen in its functions socially or interpersonally (Collentine & Freed, 2004). Instead, the L2 is focused through TL grammar and vocabulary (Beltán, 2014; Freed, 2014). The focus of TL grammar and vocabulary is not to be overlooked due to the many teaching methods that come from the AH context. For example, there is the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) and the Audio-lingual Method (ALM) that has been used and continues to be used in AH learning.

In both of these teaching methods, students are practicing the target language in controlled ways. As the name suggests, GTM is a focus on grammar and the practice of translation from one language to the next (Chang, 2011). It is very traditional and has been used in many cultures for centuries. Although language learners in the GTM classroom have a basis of comparison between languages, this method does not always allow students to effectively associate language words with specific nuanced word meanings or idiomatic usages. Instead, students only gather vocabulary and/or grammar aspects with their L1 and the TL. With older teaching methods also comes different ways with which students interact with the language. In ALM, the language is used in the style of “repetition and training” (Chomsky, 1968, p. 22).

Chomsky (1968) states that ALM’s style of learning comes from a “habit structure” (p. 22). In ALM specifically, students learn language from parroting utterances with the language teacher. In ALM, gains in pronunciation may be made due to the use of repetition or in activities such as oral drills. However, ALM is highly decontextualized for L2 learners (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Although the vocabulary of

the TL may be decontextualized in ALM, this approach also allows teachers to decide how they would prefer to teach the TL and their own chosen materials; usually a textbook (Richards 1984). In recent years, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach has become a popular method in AH classrooms. CLT allows students to view vocabulary and grammar in real-world settings and students practice the TL in true-to-life scenarios (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). As such, AH students are also able to produce language within a focus-on-form approach (Long, 1998).

For AH students, focus-on-form components can allow students to pay attention to grammar and vocabulary different than from ALM. Students are able to practice the language in controlled bits and pieces only sometimes focusing on various elements, from verb tense to sentence structure. Although the language production is controlled, students are not expected to be exposed to the FL outside of the AH setting which can account for AH student's high levels of accuracy in a foreign language (Collentine & Freed, 204; Isabelli-Garcia, 2010). In contrast, study abroad (SA) students have immediate TL exposure and can practice the TL in any means possible in various different authentic, real-life contexts.

Study Abroad; Constant Target Language and Target Culture Exposure & Practice

It is well known in the research literature that study abroad (SA) is effective in increasing proficiency, particularly oral proficiency. Jochum (2014) found that “students who study abroad...increase their levels of oral proficiency...at a rate that is significantly higher than studying on campus” (p. 101) in the home country. This finding is also mirrored by Lord (2010) who found that “SA (study abroad) students exhibited somewhat

greater fluency than the AH (at-home) students... specifically on L2 pronunciation” (p. 491). These findings may correlate with how students who study abroad are constantly engaged in the TL and TL culture on a daily basis. Moreover, for students who study abroad, speaking is a necessary skill for every-day communication, and by being part of the L2 community there are more opportunities to practice the TL (Jochum, 2014; Knouse, 2012; Lord, 2010; Stevens, 2011).

Many students who study abroad also have opportunities for pre-SA instruction that may focus on specific L2 pronunciation features. For instance, Knouse’s (2012) study provided students with pre-SA instruction on the theta (θ) phoneme in European Spanish. It was found students who took part of the pre-instruction classes allowed for “ample opportunity to hear the sound unique to region” (Knouse, 2012, p. 532) prior to studying abroad where the phoneme would be used as part of the Spanish dialect. By being aware of the phoneme, students are “more likely to realize” (Knouse, 2012, p. 523) the phoneme’s use in their interactions once abroad. Lord (2012) agrees in the advantages of pre-SA instruction. Lord (2012) posits that “both instruction and immersion can play a beneficial role in acquiring L2 phonological patterns” (p. 494). In the case of Lord, the pre-instruction came from Mexican Spanish phonemes opposed to Knouse’s European Spanish emphasis. Although Knouse (2012) and Lord (2010) show that pre-instruction helps students gain L2 competence in respect to pronunciation practice, both of these studies are limited by the students only spending time abroad for two months. Therefore, it is currently unknown if pre-instruction is deemed advantageous

when the duration of the study abroad is for a longer period of time. However, other research studies show how the L2 may be practiced during the SA experience itself.

During the SA experience, many programs allow some students have the possibility to stay with a host family. According to Di Silvio, Donovan, and Malone (2014), staying with a host family allows students to practice their language skills by “taking advantage of speaking opportunities” (p. 180) by living with those who speak the TL. By staying with a host family, students are able to have a more casual experience in practicing the TL (Jochum, 2014; Lord, 2010). They interact in daily communication within the household. But there are challenges that may occur. For example, Kinginger (2011) notes that it is the student who has to take initiative to practice their language skills. Furthermore, some host family stays could be unhelpful if a family has no interest in helping a student learn the TL or chooses to use the student’s L1 (Rivers, 1998).

The Immersion Classroom: Bringing the TL to the Students’ At-Home Setting

When considering how language is learned, a common consideration is how students do not always leave the country they live in to learn the TL. In the at-home (AH) setting, students can learn a language in traditional settings with a textbook and a teacher. However, an alternative to this type of passive learning is adapting an immersion (IM) model in the TL classroom (Freed, 2004). Freed found critical differences between outcomes of SA versus AH immersion contexts. For her research study, Freed (2004) implemented a strict “French only” rule for the students participating in the study. The “French only” rule allowed students to practice their TL skills and developed their TL oral proficiency skills from constant TL use. This model works well

with communicative approaches to language learning by using the TL as a way of communicating in the TL.

Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs in particular are quite different from regular foreign language classrooms. The TL in a DLI program is “used as medium of instruction...to deliver curriculum content” (May, 2008, p. 20). By using the TL for instruction, students are able to “acquire the target language, much like native speakers learn their first language” (Genesse, 2008, p. 32). There are many different models of DLI, some of which begin in kindergarten, with students learning content half of the school day in one language and the other half of the school day in the other language with a separate teacher. In the DLI program, students are able to learn the TL as they develop their first language at the same time, but the research on this effective environment is outside the scope of this paper.

The IM classroom context also allows for students to begin developing metalinguistic awareness in the language(s) they are learning. According to Cloud (2000), metalinguistic awareness allows students to notice certain aspects of one language and link these aspects to the language they are learning. Metalinguistic awareness usually involves the noticing of “sounds, words, and grammar” (Cloud, 2000, p. 3). Metalinguistic awareness may occur at any of the aforementioned classroom contexts based on how students practice the TL in the language learning environment. Furthermore, it is most common for students to develop metalinguistic awareness when their first and second languages are connected and compared.

The metalinguistic awareness may not develop in the same manner in the AH setting, and there are other differences as well. In An AH setting, students see the TL in a different perspective based on different language skills that are emphasized and how the language is presented. Compared to SA and IM contexts where the TL is noted as “the normal means of [classroom] communication” (Littlewood & Yu, 2011, p. 66), some AH settings do not use the TL as the primary language in the classroom. Without a focus on TL skills for speaking or writing, some students may take more general gains in proficiency with the language. Some of these gains come from TL grammar such as sentence structure and TL vocabulary (Beltrán, 2014; Freed, 2004). In addition, students in Freed’s (2004) AH setting, for example, did not openly seek out opportunities to speak the TL outside of the classroom whereas Freed’s IM and SA students had chances to practice the TL by being immersed in an environment where only the TL was spoken.

Regardless of the classroom environment for TL students, it is interesting to note the reasons for which one learns a language, whether it is through an IM program or a SA experience. According to Davidson (2007), “45% of incoming freshman at universities in the United States intend to study abroad (but) fewer than 3% of the same students actually take part of a study abroad experience” (as cited in Blake, 2013, p. 130). With this statistic in mind, one has to wonder why study abroad numbers drop, for reasons of accessibility, opportunity, funding, timing, or motivation. Below, the focus is on motivation in SA and other contexts.

Student Motivation: Why We Learn Foreign Languages

Motivation is a fervently discussed topic in the research field of SLA (Csizeri & Dornyei, 2005; Davidson, 2007; Dornyei, 1994; Dornyei, 1998; Hernandez, 2010a; Hernandez, 2010b; Kim, 2005; Kong, 2009; Lopez, 2011; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). Although definitions of motivation vary, it is generally accepted to define motivation by an “individual’s thoughts and beliefs...are transformed into action “(Dornyei, 1998, p. 118). Over time, researchers have decided that there are at least two types of motivation that I will discuss here: integrative and instrumental (Davidson, 2007; Dornyei, 1994; Dornyei, 1998; Hernandez, 2010a, Hernandez, 2010b; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012).

Integrative Motivation: The Desire to Use the Language With TL Users

Integrative motivation refers to students who “have an interest in learning the L2 in order to interact with the L2 group” (Hernandez, 2010a, p. 601) and with to interact with native speakers of the TL. By having the motivation to interact with TL speakers, it is possible that students will be more likely to eventually achieve a level of oral proficiency that is comparable to native speakers. Integrative motivation also relates to students who wish to “participate in the culture” of the TL (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012, p. 232). These students in particular are more likely to become prospective and current study abroad participants (Hernandez, 2010a). However, a pitfall with prospective SA students is brought up. This pitfall relates to SA being a “quick fix” (Davidson, 2007, p. 278) for students to improve their language skills and their overall oral proficiency.

Not all students partake in SA experiences to obtain the quick fix for their language skills. Instead, some students decide to learn a language simply by having “a general interest in foreignness and foreign language” (Dornyei, 1994, p. 279). The

general interest in foreign languages then would motivate a student to decide to study abroad for him or herself. However, in some institutions, learning a language is based off of a school requirements that introduces the next type of motivation in the field: instrumental.

Instrumental Motivation: Learning Based on Praise and Reward

Mahadi and Jafari (2012) define instrumental motivation as a way for a learner to use language “to fulfill his need” (p. 234). For some students, learning a foreign language may help to obtain good grades in the moment, or to “enhance future career opportunities” (Hernandez, 2010a, p. 601) in the long term by taking a foreign language in school. According to Kong (2009), instrumental motivation is generally linked towards students receiving “praise and rewards” (p. 146) by learning a language in order to “reach[ing] a particular goal” (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012, p. 234) in an educational context. Praise, grades, and transcripts are part of this kind of motivation.

Motivation in the Classroom Environment: What It All Means for Students

First and foremost, it should be noted that learners in the classroom draw on their own inherent motivation and personal backgrounds that lead up to them being students in the foreign language classroom. Research shows that student motivation is one of the most important factors to consider, and that it is remarkable how easy it is for motivation to change on a moment-to-moment basis. Each classroom context has its own pros and cons based on what emphases are made by the teacher for the students learning the TL and this can change quickly or over time.

Another factor that influences not only student motivation and the classroom context is the use of the TL itself. Regardless of AH, IM, and SA contexts, the TL is a constant component and the most important feature in the classroom for students studying a language. Even though each student will have a different experiences with the TL and which context they are in for learning, their motivation will ultimately decide their TL journey whether it will continue or be abandoned. As teachers, it is of course important to consider how teaching styles and methodologies may indirectly result in higher or lower student motivation. The influence of teaching styles and methodologies is another vast area of research, but there should still be consideration towards how the classroom itself is another motivation factor for better or worse for foreign language students and how the classroom itself is a diverse variable for student learning.

Between integrative and instrumental motivation, students may experience a constant change of the want or need to study language(s). This chance can be centered to how the students experiences learning the language beyond the level of individual learning (Dornyei, 1994). In other words, there are other factors that may lead to higher or lower motivation that include the context of learning, the age of the student, any level of foreign language anxiety, and a student's sense of accomplishment by the very learning of the language itself. With motivation as a changing scale for students, it is significant to consider how motivation directs students towards one type of learning over another and the classroom context(s) of learning motivates or demotivates further language learning. For SA and IM classroom types, it is easy to link motivation as the driving force for a student's learning of the TL. All the while, the AH classroom should

not necessarily be dismissed. The AH classroom itself may or may not be the very motivation factor that may lead the student to develop their language skills to the degree of an IM or SA experience.

Conclusion

Although different types of student motivation is important to consider, classroom contexts should have an equal importance to understanding where and how learning takes place. Each context allows students to make gains in the TL with or without leaving the country they live in. By allowing to a chance to visualize a link between student motivation and classroom contexts, teachers can become more ware of how these factors influence student learning. It is also then possible to see just how classroom contexts can link to a student's TL proficiency.

Even though there is no research to link to which classroom contexts have better gains for student motivation, it is still important to consider that the very classroom itself may be the most important factor for motivation. For students beginning a language in elementary, the very atmosphere of the L2 classroom may help guide them towards one type of learning over another. It is common to see how immersion begins at an early age, but not every school has this opportunity for DLI-based classes. Instead, it is possible to present the L2 classroom in the immersion style to allow students a study abroad style of learning even in the at-home learning context.

LITERACY PAPER

PURPOSE & REFLECTION

This literacy paper has been an ongoing and collaborative effort between two courses in the MSLT program: LING 6500 *Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Practice* with Dr. Joshua Thoms in the Fall 2016 semester and LING 6800 *Topics: Teaching Literature in L2 Classroom* with Dr. Sarah Gordon in the Fall 2017 semester.

What started as a research proposal for creative writing activities in the L2 classroom, this paper has developed into a semi call-to-action literature review that shows the lack of L2 writing in the creative writing genre. Although this research topic comes from my passion for creative writing, it was interesting to research the very topic of L2 writing. As a writer and researcher for this topic, it was interesting to see that L2 creative writing does exist, but there is not much research beyond L2 poetry and some nonfiction. As a result, it was important to begin noting that even researchers have different definitions for what creative writing is. This allowed me to create my own definition that could help develop my synthesis of the research literature.

By exploring the avenue of creative writing, I learned a few things about L2 writing in a general sense that most creative writing discussed was about poetry. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but I found it odd that there was only one source about L2 fiction (Al-Jarf, 2007). Even this single source was not enough to say the importance of fiction writing for L2 students even though my own anecdotal and informal research has shown otherwise. Second, I learned that my own research ideas came from my own personal experience with creative writing in French while I was still an exchange student. Although poetry was an easier genre for me to write, it still allowed me to view creativity

with language and how language play was a valid way of L2 practice. The third and final takeaway I had from researching the topic of creative writing came as a surprise: if nobody was writing about L2 fiction, then who says I can't do my own research and find out for myself?

Starting in Fall 2017, I have been able to do just that: informal research into L2 fiction writing. Both groups were able to learn from the experience via a character-sketch prompt and used their L2 vocabulary and grammar to create their own fictional character. Since doing this informal research, I am now looking forward into researching more about L2 creativity and how students can benefit from creativity and language play just as I had many years before.

This paper connects to my other sections of my portfolio by exploring a topic that can be included in how students practice the language as creative writing a task on its own. Furthermore, it has been seen in research that some writing activities may reduce anxiety in the L2 classroom. Creative writing as a topic allowed me to view my own teaching philosophy by uncovering the varied aspects of teaching of assigning tasks, the very practice of L2 writing, and even connecting writing to an aspect of the classroom culture where students can explore and play with the language in their own ways that may lead to higher motivation levels and their potential to increase their L2 proficiency by using creative writing.

CREATIVE WRITING IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Introduction

Students may not understand that part of learning a language is producing the language in unique ways. One such unique way is the very act of creating new meaning within the language they are acquiring. Therefore, part of learning a foreign language (FL) is integrating the four different language skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. It is common to refer the speaking and writing skills collectively as output (Swain, 1985). The role of output for students can show how previous language knowledge can become “a tool to create new knowledge” (Swain, 1998, p. 330). Swain (1985) also notes that output in its very nature can “provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use and to test out hypotheses about the target language” (p. 252) for FL students. In other words, output allows students to take what they learn in a language and apply what they have learned to a variety of speaking and/or writing tasks.

For FL students, second language (L2) writing is most commonly seen via the academic writing genre with respect to reports and argumentative essays (Smith, 2013). In academic writing, students learn “how to express and support one’s ideas in a well-organized and comprehensible manner” (Smith, 2013, p. 2). Even with the lens of academic writing, the student’s responses are not seen as new or creative when academic writing usually involves teachers assessing students’ comprehension about how well they can articulate their opinions. However, a second type of writing has also been introduced into the FL classroom: creative writing (Amado, 2010; Canmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bley, &

& Hwang, 2015; Dai, 2015; Hanauer, 2012; Khan, 2011; Khan, 2012; Lim, 2015; Mansoor, 2010; Pople, 2014; Tarnoplosky, 2005; Yasuda, 2011).

In the existing research to date, L2 creative writing has been limited to a few genres: poetry (Amado, 2010; Canmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bleyle, & Hwang, 2015; Dai, 2015; Hanauer, 2012; Khan, 2011; Lim, 2015; Mansoor, 2010; Pople, 2014; Tarnoplosky, 2005; Yasuda, 2011), playwriting (Elgar, 2002), nonfiction (Fan, 2011; Dai, 2012) and screenwriting (Amado, 2010). Some genres that have yet to be addressed in research include fiction, multimedia compositions, and satire. Regardless of the genre, each of these writing genres shows various benefits that creative writing can hold for L2 students.

Creative Writing for L2 Students: Why It Matters

First and foremost, a definition of creative writing is necessary. According to Tütüniş (2014), “all writing is creative writing” (p. 83). The same definition of creative writing is seen by McVey (2008) because all writing contains “the author’s own ideas and imaginings” (p. 289) into their writing. That is to say that all writing that is done contains originality and thought from the writer even if there is a format to follow with rules such as a five-paragraph essay or writing a haiku poem. With this in mind for this study, I will define creative writing as writing includes fiction, poetry, playwriting, and/or screenwriting. This definition will not include the genres of non-fiction or journalistic writing.

Using creative writing in the FL classroom can allow students to have a means of self-expression as a way to “further explore thoughts and concerns” (Feurer, 2011, p.

135). Students can also “combine familiar utterances with unfamiliar ways to construct new meanings” (Tin, 2011, p. 231). In other words, students can practice L2 grammar and L2 sentence structure by using a creative writing form such as a haiku poem, a sonnet, a fairytale, or a short story. It is also important to consider that students may feel more confident with their writing skills than their speaking skills to express themselves (Tütüniş, 2014). Interestingly, Feurer (2011) posits that writing activities may allow students to have a “marked increase in speaking confidence” (p. 135) because students are able to practice storytelling skills.

Related to creative writing is also the practice of storytelling. Guillen (2011) states that one of the benefits from learning storytelling skills via creative writing activities is how students can “internalize English language patterns and development of the four skills” (p. 43). Within storytelling, students can take learned forms with aspects of language (vocabulary, grammar, word choice, etc.) and “make direct and unconscious language learning meaningful” (Guillen, 2011, p. 40) through writing activities. Furthermore, the variation of creative writing activities can help students in three primary ways:

First, students can practice their writing through means of self-expression (Amado, 2010; Dai, 2015; Feuer, 2011; Guillen, 2011; Hanauer, 2011; Ho & Rogers, 2013; Khan, 2011; Mansoor, 2010; Smith, 2013; Tok, 2015); second, students can practice and develop language skills such as sentence structure and grammar (Cahnmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bleye, & Hwang, 2015; Dai, 2015; Feuer, 2011; Guillen, 2011; Hanauer, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Maley, 2009; Mansoor, 2010; Pople, 2014; Smith, 2013; Tin, 2011;

Tok, 2015; Tütüniş & Küçükali; Urlaub, 2011; Yasuda, 2011), and third; creative writing can provide increased L2 motivation (Khan, 2012; Lim, 2015; Maley, 2009; Smith, 2013; Tütüniş & Küçükali, 2014).

Creative Writing For L2 Self-Expression

It is generally accepted in the research literature that writing is done in order “to write and convey...messages” (Khan, 2012, p. 58). For students learning a FL, creative writing provides opportunities to “express their own ideas without any restriction” (Mansoor, 2010, p. 202). In other words, students do not have to be confined to specific topics and/or ideas when performing writing-based tasks. Within creative writing, students are able to have a “playful engagement with language” (Maley, 2009, para. 2) that allow them to experiment with the L2 in different writing genres. Playful engagement with language may also contribute to students’ “sense of agency” (p. 99) by giving students “the opportunity to develop their sense of ownership of the [English] language” (Ho & Rogers, 2013, p. 97).

Guillen (2011) posits that one of the biggest advantages that comes from L2 creative writing is students move “from a one-word level to the sentence level” (p. 39) in their writing. Not only do students find ways to engage their FL knowledge into their writing, students are able to “find an identity and voice in a second language” (Pople, 2014, p. 48) by learning how a language works in context. A student’s voice can be seen here metaphorically and literally based on how a student experiences language for themselves with their own experimentations of how the language does—or does not—work.

Students are also able to view creative writing as “playful engagement with language” (Maley, 2009, para. 2; Smith, 2013, p. 17) that allows students to express themselves “without any restriction” (Mansoor, 2010, p. 202). For creative writing tasks, L2 students may be given the opportunity to write within a specific genre, but the details of how they write within that form is up to the students (Tarnopolsky, 2005; Yasuda, 2011). In an article presented by Smith (2013), it is noted that the poetry genre allows students to combine “meaning-focused and form-focused tasks” (p. 13). In other words, L2 students to write poetry are able to focus on creative writing components while producing the target language within specific poetic form(s); e.g. a haiku (Smith, 2013) or an acrostic (Tin, 2011).

Yasuda (2011) posits that learning through creative tasks allows students to receive “knowledge of a new genre...in one language context” (p. 126) and how the new genre “may be transferrable to another language context” (p. 126). For instance, students who practice creative writing may learn how to better convey meaning in academic writing (Smith, 2013; Yasuda, 2011). Although the types of writing genres between creative and academic may change, it is abundantly clear in the research literature that creative writing also allows students to continue developing their L2 grammar skills (Cahnmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bleye, & Hwang, 2015; Dai, 2015; Feuer, 2011; Guillen, 2011; Hanauer, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Maley, 2009; Mansoor, 2010; Pople, 2014; Smith, 2013; Tin, 2011; Tok, 2015; Tütüniş & Küçükali; Urlaub, 2011; Yasuda, 2011).

Creative Writing for L2 Practice and Language Development

A current and ongoing debate in FL pedagogy is how L2 grammar is taught in a decontextualized way (sources). Creative writing may be one answer where creative writing genres allow students to gain “understanding of English structure and vocabulary” (Cahnmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bleye, & Hwang, 2015, p. 10). Elgar (2002) suggests that creative writing genres--such as playwriting--gives students “an authentic context for language practice” (p. 24). Within creative writing genres, grammar and vocabulary are the most practiced aspects of the L2 (Cahnmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bleye, & Hwang, 2015; Dai, 2015; Feuer, 2011; Guillen, 2011; Hanauer, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Maley, 2009; Mansoor, 2010; Pople, 2014; Smith, 2013; Tin, 2011; Tok, 2015; Tütüniş & Küçükali, 2014; Urlaub, 2011). As a result, authors in the research literature describe how creative writing tasks contains a focus on pertaining meaning while practicing with genre-specific forms (Lim, 2015; Smith, 2013; Tok, 2015; Yasuda, 2011).

According to Yasuda (2011), one of the benefits of genre-based tasks comes from systemic function linguistics (SFL). In SFL, language is seen “as a resource for making meaning in a particular context of use rather than as a set of fixed rules and structures (Yasuda, 2011, p. 112). For the creative writing context, genre-based tasks allow students to gain “a firmer understanding of the form-function relationship in specific instances of L2 use” (ibid, p. 125). Within L2 writing, the form-function relationship can be presented through grammar tenses and how the past, present, or future tense can be used via storytelling. In some cases, research has shown that the poetry genre allows students to note a specific form—such as a haiku or acrostic—and produce language with only form constraints (Smith, 2013; Tin, 2011). Therefore, it may be concluded that

some formal constraints may be as a way of introducing students to creative writing-based exercises.

Although some creative writing forms have formal constraints, it is not to say that creative writing is constricting for students. According to Pople (2014), one of the benefits of creative writing is how the L2 writer is “in dialogue with the language” (p. 42). In other words, students are able to practice and experiment with the L2 in any way they—the students—deem fit for their L2 writing. A focus for the creative writing exercise may directly correlate to a grammatical goal, but students are given opportunities to “improve their vocabulary and sentence structure” (Mansoor, 2010, p. 205). However, it is also important to consider how formal constraints may also help students with their L2 writing through creative writing.

L2 Creative Writing: Effective L2 Practice within L2 Writing Constraints

It possible to view constraints in two ways: first, students may already be limited in their language use based upon how much they knowledge they have about the L2; and second, giving students limitations to practice the L2 in a controlled manner. Although it may sound counterproductive to purposefully give students constraints when practicing L2 writing, these limitations may allow students to isolate L2 misunderstandings, mistakes, and errors. Students can practice these limitations to reinforce the students’ understanding of the L2 (Cahnmann-Taylor, Zhang, Bleyle, & Hwang, 2015; Elgar, 2002; Ismail, 2011; Tin, 2011; Urlaub, 2011).

According to a study completed by Ismail (2011), one of the biggest factors towards success in L2 writing is how writing “reinforces grammatical structures,

vocabulary and idioms” (p. 73). For some L2 writing, these grammatical structures may be presented as constraints such as in Tin’s (2011) work with students writing acrostics. In short, Tin (2011) presented students with keywords and these keywords would be the topic for a poem written by the students. Each keyword contained one primary formal constraint: “every line must start with the letter” (Tin, 2011, p. 220) as presented by the keyword. With the acrostic form as a constraint, students were able to view “the application of structures or rules...from one context to another” (ibid, p. 218). In other words, students were given a constraint to allow them to write their poem based on a keyword to actually writing the poem based on the keyword letters given. Similarly, Elgar (2002) used playwriting as another type of constraint in terms of dialogue practice via L2 creative writing. In both Elgar (2002) and Tin (2011), rules and constraints were shown to have a positive effect on learners all while students kept a solid foundation in their creative output.

Elgar (2002) posits that playwriting can provide “an authentic context for language practice” (p. 24) for L2 students. At the basic level, students are practicing L2 writing. However, students are also presented in ways to practice L2 oral skills based on their own writing of character dialogue. In addition, playwriting allowed students opportunities for “correction of grammatical and lexical errors [through the] general process of revision” (Elgar, 2002, p. 24). The same types of results were seen by Amado (2010) that presented screenwriting as a tool for students to increase “the use of vocabulary, accuracy, grammar...and setting” (p. 163). It should also be noted that screenwriting and playwriting genres also present themselves in formal constraints based

on the formatting that is required by both of these genres. In this way, students are already given a formal constraint based on the very layout and structure of the creative genre they write in.

For some students, L2 writing is seen as a daunting task due to the amount of knowledge and proficiency that comes into play when producing language. Creative writing activities can be seen as a fun way to practice language, which may ultimately lead to an increase in student motivation.

Creative Writing May Enhance Student Motivation for L2 Learning

In a study carried out by Al-Jarf (2007), students were told that creative writing exercises were written by students “to express themselves and write for communication” (para. 12) without a set focus on grammar or structure within poetry and fiction genres. The results of the study showed that the online creative writing activities “provided a non-threatening environment for trying out new ways of expressing themselves [in English]” (para. 23) and there was an increase in motivation and the students’ sense of achievement. However, creative writing may enhance student motivation due to the fact that creative writing pertains to a “far less negative experience than that of academic writing” (Hanauer & Liao, 2016, p. 222).

Although creative writing may focus on a grammatical or vocabulary-based point, Lim (2015) notes that students “can confer greater confidence, ease, pleasure, play and motivation” (p. 352) when given the opportunity to write in a non-academic setting for L2 writing. Furthermore, creative writing allows students to use “one’s imaginative and intuitive faculties” (Khan, 2012, p. 57) when creating L2 creative writing.

Referring back to Smith (2013) and Maley (2009), creative writing offers opportunities to experiment with the L2 through the act of “playful engagement with language” (Maley, 2009, para. 2; Smith, 2013, p. 17). Language play can motivate students to take what they have learned in the language and create “new arrangements of previously familiar structures” (Urlaub, 2011, p. 99) and “manipulate the language...to express uniquely personal meanings” (Tok, 2015, p. 1636).

Creative writing also allows students to potentially enhance their L2 motivation because they “have both a personal *and* professional orientation to their writing” (Antoniou & Moriarty, 2008, p. 159). This orientation relates to how creative writers understand the written task as an intellectual activity and the importance of the writer’s “self” during the writing process (Antoniou & Moriarty, 2008, p. 159). In addition, another type of motivation comes from how the creative writing is presented in the L2 classroom (Amabile, 1985; Dai, 2012).

Amabile (1985) and Dai (2012) explore how creative writing activities may be more successful and motivating for students when “students...write their own stories instead of writing for the sake of an assignment” (Dai, 2012, p. 26). Similarly, Amabile (1985) presented a study where “artwork under the expectation of external evaluation produced work that...was...lower in creativity” (p. 394). As long as students feel like their writing exercises are meaningful to their L2 development, there remains the potential increase for L2 motivation. To further the potential for L2 motivation, the use of creative writing may be seen as a new style of applying the TL in a new facet.

Creative Writing Workshops: Informal Case Study Findings

For informal case studies, I had the opportunity to present creative writing in two ways: an intermediate and French writing class for university students and at the Utah Foreign Language Association (UFLA) conference to language teachers. Although the two groups varied in the difference between FLE students and then varied L1 and L2 backgrounds at UFLA, I gave each group an opportunity to create a fictional character sketch within an allotted timeframe of 25 minutes. Each character was created by the participant themselves and participants had the choice to decide how to write their character sketch; whether in paragraph format (FLE students), or a bullet-list of the characters' traits (UFLA). It came to no surprise that the use of fiction and imagination mirrored the research findings of previously mentioned sources in this research paper.

For the FLE students, the most obvious gain to creating their own fictional character was their combined use of known vocabulary and grammar in order to write their character sketch regardless of the written format. Like any language lesson, there were some mistakes in the written French. However, the students were able to see how their L2 vocabulary and grammar could be used beyond an academic essay like in their typical French lessons. Furthermore, their freedom to experiment in their L2 French proved to be useful and exciting: creative writing was an entirely new method of L2 writing. As such, students found it difficult where to begin, but the time spent brainstorming also allowed students to develop their characters as they developed and experienced their own personal creativity at the same time.

One of the first comments I received from a participant at UFLA was how this participant had not thought of creative writing for language learners before. In that

moment, I found it fortunate that I was able to use this literacy paper as a way of showing others in the second language learning and teaching field that we—as academics and teachers alike—should take creativity seriously in our classrooms. In turn, the use of creative writing in the UFLA workshop continued to prove the importance of self-expression and motivation for further language practice. Even some of the FLE students in the writing course mentioned that their biggest takeaway from the workshop was how different creative writing was as a way of practicing French. Opposed to academic essays and oral exams, creative writing allowed participants to take their time with what they know about the language and they could decide just how to use the language in their own way.

Even though there are other findings from these informal experiences, it is very telling that creative writing should become implemented into language classrooms regardless of the proficiency level or the language being learned. The use of fiction was used in these informal settings by requiring participants to create their own characters, but this is only the first-step towards L2 fiction writing for L2 students.

Conclusion

With the plethora of research that provides insight into how students may and do benefit from creative writing, there remains a larger question: why is there a lack of practice in regards to creative fiction writing in the L2? Aside from one small study from Al-Jarf (2007), there is no further research on fiction writing in the L2 classroom. This lack of research may be explained by the fact that some teachers do not want their students to engage in creativity at all (Westby & Dawson, 1995) despite research stating

that creative tasks may link to “higher student achievement” levels (Birdsell, 2013; Pishghadam, Khodadady, & Zabihi, 2011; Ottó, 1998). For the defense of any and all creative tasks—whether using an L2 or in the L1—it is important to understand why creativity is discouraged.

According to Sternberg (2006), one of the biggest issues regarding creativity is students are not given an environment that is “supportive...of creative ideas” (p. 89). This lack of positive environment for students is mostly due to the reflection of society in the classroom and how many teachers do not value creativity (Sternberg, 2006; Westby & Dawson, 1996) and how students may also be punished for being creative (Westby & Dawson, 1996). In the classroom, some teachers view creativity as a “nonconformist” (Westby & Dawson, 1995, p. 6) identity label in their students. Labeled as a non-conforming student, teacher(s) may neglect creativity when teachers themselves emphasize “control over the students” (Westby & Dawson, 1996, p. 9) over student autonomy. However, allowing creativity in the classroom proves for not only student autonomy but also learning successes (Birdsell, 2013; Pishghadam, Khodadady, & Zabihi, 2011; Ottó, 1998).

CULTURE PAPER

PURPOSE & REFLECTION

This culture paper was written as part of LING 6900 *Culture Teaching & Learning* taught by Dr. Karin DeJonge-Kannan in Spring 2017. When we first started discussing pragmatics in this class, we learned that pragmatics was similar to developing cultural awareness and cultural competence when learning a language. With my experience learning different cultures, I initially wanted to explore differences in non-verbal gestures. This interest stemmed from my experience living in France and in Thailand. For both countries, I lived and observed cultural differences from typical American customs and how each country does non-verbal cues differently. Regrettably, this topic was not something I could easily find in research literature. Therefore, I had to go back to the drawing board with trying to find a new topic. With help from Dr. DeJonge-Kannan, I realized that I could still do something cultural with a paper topic and decided to learn more about second person pronouns in French.

Known as “tu” and “vous” in French, it is the French language way of saying “you.” Even with my experience learning French from middle school, I associated early that “tu” was for informal settings and “vous” was for formal. However, with this research topic, I decided to go deeper than just the pragmatic meaning of “you” in French. My interests continued further as I began to wonder how these two pronouns have changed over time and how they continue to change meaning in present day.

What I learned quickly from researching this topic for LING 6900 was the diversity of “tu” and “vous” beyond the textbook level. I found it useful that the pronoun use came from a historical background and that the pronouns’ history still plays a big part

in their use today. By understanding “tu” and “vous” in its historical context, it was then possible to research how the pronoun use has been changed further due to the Internet age. As I wrote this paper, it was intriguing to find why these pronouns have changed over time and how English as a language has also gone through its own changes. My curiosity drove me through every aspect of this paper and I am grateful that I could write a paper about something I had learned myself several years prior.

The use of “tu” and “vous” pronouns in French is more than just an informal and formal marker. They are used in the context of French as a culture and how European French has stayed constant over the centuries as a way of showing culture through language use.

PRAGMATICS FOR YOU:
TU AND VOUS IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

Introduction

In second language (L2) pragmatics it is common to learn politeness in the L2 culture. One common feature in languages is the formal and the informal use of the L2. In some languages, the formal and informal use is based on word choice and interlocutor familiarity. These languages require the L2 learner to understand the difference between the formal and informal forms of the language itself. For example, the French language has distinct informal and formal second person pronouns known as ‘tu’ and ‘vous.’

In the research literature, ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ are usually defined in two main contexts. The first context is the distinction between the informal (tu) and the formal (vous) of the English equivalent of ‘you’ (Coveney, 2010; Gilman & Brown, 1958; Maley, 1972). Secondly, ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ are used to express the singular and plural ‘you’ in French (Dewaele, 2004; Liddicoat, 2006; Tarte, 2014; van Compernelle, 2010; van Compernelle, Williams, & McCourt, 2011; Williams & van Compernelle, 2007).

The use of these forms in the French language has been around for several centuries. As a result, the topic of second person pronouns is interesting based on how their pragmatic meanings have changed throughout history (Maley, 1972; Peeters, 2004). In the research literature, scholars have noted that the ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ forms are also commonly referred to as *tutoiement* and *vouvoiement* respectively. Simply put, *tutoiement* refers to using the informal ‘tu’ pronoun and *vouvoiement* refers to using the formal ‘vous’ pronoun. Schoch (1978) also shortens these pronouns further as T/V for

brevity. I will use T Form and V Form to distinguish between the two pronouns where appropriate.

For the purpose of this paper, T and V Forms will be discussed from both historical and pedagogical perspectives. Although T and V Forms are common in many modern Romance languages, this paper will also discuss how these pronouns have shifted in use over time due to the beginning of the Internet age.

Second Person Pronouns in French: A Brief History

Some of the first instances of the T and V Forms are shown in Anglo-Norman French writing beginning in the 11th century (Löfstedt, 2010). However, based on spoken and written interactions from the past to present-day, a problem arose due to the pronunciation of the T and V Forms. This problem is reiterated by Löfstedt that “le vocalisme du singulier ne garantit pas le singulier... seul le pronom personnel peut assurer la distinction entre le pluriel et le singulier” (p. 79). In other words, relying on pronunciation does not guarantee a distinction to T and V forms. To those unfamiliar with the French language, the biggest problem about French morphology is how some words in the singular and plural forms sound identical, even if the spelling is varied (Arteaga, 2012; Löfstedt, 2010). Regular verb conjugation endings in the ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ forms are no exception to this complication in French morphology. In addition, T Form and V Form also distinguish an interlocutor’s social distance with one another in spoken French.

In the history of the French language, the instances of T and V Forms in speaking contexts began as a “mark of power” (Peeters, 2004, p. 4) between people of different

social classes. This mark of power indicated the T Form for “inferior addressment” and the V Form for “superior addressment” (Maley, 1972, p. 1002) with the rise of feudalism. Even with feudalism, the act of choosing between the T and V Forms are “determined socially and culturally” (Schoch, 1978, p. 57) with additional factors that influence which form is chosen. Some of these factors include the identities of the interlocutors in terms of social class and respect, age, gender, and the level of familiarity between the interlocutors (Coveney, 2010; Dewaele, 2004; Gilman & Brown, 1958; Ismail, Alladin, & Ramli, 2014; Maley, 1972; Norrby & Wide, 2015; Peeters, 2004; Schoch, 1978; Tarte, 2014). In the words of Liddicoat (2006), the basic understanding of how these two forms are used is by “the relative social positionings of the individuals” (i.e. social class) and how the address forms relate to the “social identity” of someone within a social context (i.e. familiarity status between the interlocutors) (pp. 58-59). This type of “vertical status” (Gilman & Brown, 1958, p. 170) is seen within a variety of languages to primarily “express degree of intimacy” (p. 174) between individuals.

Additionally, there is also the distinction of how interlocutors perceive their first meetings with strangers (van Compernelle, 2015). The concept of social distance is also a valid point when considering when to use the T or V Forms in the French language. Furthermore, learning and understanding the differences about the T and V Forms has been referenced as a “sociolinguistic tightrope” (Dewaele, 2004, p. 383).

The “Rules of Thumb”: Understanding the Variation of T and V Forms

When learning the French language, several points of French pragmatics come from over-generalized “rules of thumb” (Ismail, Aladdin, & Ramli, 2014; Liddicoat,

2006; van Compernelle, Williams, & McCourt, 2011). For example, the very use of T and V Forms are commonly misunderstood. L2 learners of French do not realize that “there are no steadfast or immutable rules governing T/V choices because indexical meanings are variable...from one individual to the next” (van Compernelle, 2015, p. 47). As a result, it is important to comprehend these forms as part of an individual’s “development of their overall communicative competence” (van Compernelle, 2010, p. 45) in the French language. Interestingly enough, just how the T and V Forms are introduced through conversation can change which form the interlocutors decide to use based on the aforementioned social distance.

According to Coveney (2010), the use of T and V Forms are usually based on a decision because “each speaker needs to know whether to use T or V with each interlocutor they are likely to encounter” (p. 134). The decision making process that L2 speakers of French encounter may become easier under the rule of thumb that the T Form is used for someone with whom the interlocutor is familiar (Dewaele, 2004; Gilman & Brown, 1958; Norrby & Wide, 2015; Tarte, 2004). For both L1 and L2 speakers of French, it is important to learn what these forms are, when they are used, and with whom.

For L1 speakers of French, they regularly distinguish between the T and V Forms with the basic “rules of thumb” that can be simplified further. For example, L1 speakers choose the V Form with people they are unfamiliar—such as strangers—“close to 100% of the time” (Dewaele, 2004, p. 391). However, L1 French speakers also decide between the T and V Forms by understanding how this choice “reflects speaker’s perceived or real relationship with his or her interlocutor” (van Compernelle, 2010, p. 448). In other

words, how someone perceives the relationship with the other person in the interaction is key when making the decision whether to use the T or V Form.

In addition, L1 speakers of French also have correlated their judgment with whether or not to use the T or V Form based on “first meetings/interactions” (van Compernelle, 2015, p. 59) with strangers and the stranger’s characteristics. Some of these characteristics include the interlocutor’s age, gender, level of familiarity with the speaker, and the nature of the conversation (Coveney, 2010; Dewaele, 2004; Maley, 1972; Norrby & Wide, 2015; Peeters, 2004; Schoch, 1978; van Compernelle, 2010; van Compernelle, 2015). However, there is another type of interaction where the choice between the T and V Forms is used more ambiguously: online chat-rooms.

One of the hardest parts of learning any language is becoming pragmatically aware of how a language functions in all social contexts whether in-person or online. With the online context in mind, it is common to see the T and V Forms with the singular and plural ‘you.’ Formal and informal is also seen online interactions, but is more in regards to the familiarity with the other people in the online setting such as the chat-room. The table below shows a brief overview of this for a visual representation:

Table 1: Tu and vous pronoun use, English equivalent(s), and familiarity context.

TU	Second person singular of “you” (i.e. ‘you’ as only one sole person in English)	Informal; used for friends, family members, people you know very well
VOUS	Second person plural of “you” (i.e. “you all” or “ya’ll” in English)	Formal; use for people you don’t know (strangers), but also used for referring to a group of people similar to the Southern “y’all” in the U.S.

The understanding of singular and plural forms may be easier for some students with native language (L1) backgrounds in Italian, Spanish, or German, due to the fact that “there are no distinct forms for second person singular and plural pronouns” (Landert, 2014, p. 201) in Standard English. From an English speaking background, L2 learners of French may find it difficult to remember the T and V Forms in terms of the singular and plural ‘you.’ With online chat-rooms, Williams and van Compernelle (2007) found the use of V Form as the most common way to “address the (chat)room as a whole group of people” (p. 811) as the second person plural. In addition, there is also a debate about T and V Form usage in other indirect interactions.

One type of interaction that reconsiders T and V Forms comes from one unexpected location in particular: Twitter. A common issue with the decision between the T and V Forms relies on using the pronouns in online interactions over social platforms such as Twitter, a platform that limits posts to 140 characters. In the case of French language users, this limitation causes some people to prefer the T form (‘tu’) since it is two letters shorter than the V Form’s four-letter configuration (‘vous’) (Engelhart, 2012; Lawn, 2012). Although the character limit is something to consider, it is still argued that the V Form remains too formal for online use (Lawn, 2012).

Much like its French counterpart, the V Form in online formats is “used...as a lexical equivalent of English *you*” (emphasis in original, van Compernelle, Williams, & McCourt, 2011, p. 8). In online chat-rooms specifically, second person pronouns “are used with specific reference, referring to speaker/writer and the addressee, respectively” (Landert, 2014, p. 200). With the T and V Forms, it is important to understand when and

why these pronouns are used. In online platforms, the concept of familiarity may also change due to the nature of chat-rooms allowing for anonymity amongst individuals.

Even with online anonymity, Williams and van Compernelle (2007) say that one of the main features of chat-rooms is that they have consistent users to facilitate the informal T Form because the users “know each other well enough” (p.

811). Furthermore, online interactions with strangers also appear to be more informal and using the V Form may be seen as “out of place” (Lawn, 2012, para. 4). This lack of V Form use may also confuse L2 French learners further based on the “first contact” (Lawn, 2012, para. 35) that is being made in the chat-room. With previous research, the first contact with a person would indicate the formal ‘vous’ form, but using the ‘vous’ form online is automatically seen as too formal and is almost discouraged (Lawn, 2012). Moreover, the differences between the T and V Forms through the lens of online interactions have also brought up a crucial question: will the ‘vous’ pronoun as a formal marker cease to exist?

The Death of a Pronoun: Could It Happen, or Is It Already Happening?

One phenomenon a language may face is when aspects of its grammar cease to exist. For example, in English, the pronouns of ‘ye’ and ‘thou’ suffered the change of merging into ‘you’ and are now mostly seen in written texts (Gilman & Brown, 1958). Similar to the second person pronouns in French, the ‘ye’ and ‘thou’ was in reference to feudalism based on superior and inferior terms when addressing someone of higher or lower social class (Maley, 1972). Although these types of pronouns still exist in languages such as French, German, Spanish, Italian and others, these pronouns are

now used to “express intimacy rather than social class” (Gilman & Brown, 1958, p. 174). However, a bigger question remains: can a pronoun be dropped altogether?

In the case of French, there is a debate in the research literature about this very question in regards to pronoun deletion. Due to the growth of the digital world, the ‘vous’ pronoun in French may become an obsolete aspect of French grammar (Lawn, 2012). However, in the case of the French language, V Form usage varies based on the location of where French is spoken. Quebec, Canada, for example, is just one of these locations that show where pronoun preferences has changed over time in the Montreal French dialect.

Van Compernelle (2008) posits that the reason the V Form in Montreal French has decreased is because “social class and class distinctions are less important than they were in the past” (p. 2065). Meanwhile, the T Form has also become more of a “generic pronoun” (Blondeau, 2001, p. 459) in everyday speech instead of as an addressment title or a social class marker. In the perspectives of Canadians, they view T and V Forms differently in contemporary culture in the following way:

Quebec culture tends to be more hierarchical and the formal vous form is frequently used for strangers and elders (especially in rural areas). However, the informal tu is used more freely than in France or many other French-speaking countries (Global Affairs Canada, Cultural Information—Dress, Punctuality & Formality, para. 7).

While this may be true for Montreal French users, European French users still believe that the potential loss of the V Form is a sign of “loss of respect in modern society” (van Compernelle, 2008 p. 2065) due to the importance of the T and V Forms in everyday interactions between interlocutors.

It may be too early to determine the fate of the second person pronouns in French, but it is possible to hypothesize how the V Form may eventually cease to exist in some French dialects. This is already beginning in Montreal French, but this is not to say that all French dialects will face the same fate of pronoun deletion. However, the V Form will remain relevant due to the plural 'you' in French verb morphology and French grammar as a whole. The digital world may change pronoun usage in other languages, but only time will tell if complete pronoun deletion will occur as a direct result of the Internet age.

Conclusion

As a pragmatic feature in the French language, it is crucial to understand the complexity of the T and V Forms as second person pronouns. Although these forms have a few contexts to use beyond a general 'you' in French, pragmatic awareness should be taught in order to understand how language works in context. The history of the T and V Forms, hardly taught in class, is beneficial in order to understand how historical context and pragmatics work together.

Regardless of the grammar point, context plays a key role in the French language. The T and V Form distinctions can be learned through a variety of ways whether in the formal classroom, online, or in its historical background. Furthermore, the use of T and V Forms are prevalent in other languages that show how pragmatics occurs at micro and macro levels in language as a whole. T and V Forms are just one type of cultural tool to understand how French functions as a language and as a way to understand the people who use the language.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY

Introduction

Learning a new language can be a scary and daunting task for any student at the beginning of their language-learning journey. With a new language comes one of the most common features in nearly every foreign language classroom: anxiety.

It is safe to assume that students of all levels and all age groups experience some type of anxiety. This may come from personal anxieties that are unique to the individual or even anxiety that comes from a specific learning environment. In the case of second language learning, it is no surprise that anxiety can also be a part of the L2 classroom. Some researchers have labeled this type of anxiety as foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). Within FLCA, there are many factors that may attribute to higher anxiety levels in students. Some factors include students' under-developed language skills (Baran-Lucarz, 2014; Dolean, 2016; Minahan, 2014) or students having a negative connotation with the language classroom and learning an L2 (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). FLCA researchers posit that classroom anxiety may be “an indication we (language teachers) are doing something fundamentally unnatural in our methodology” (Young, 1991, p. 429). Based on personal and academic research, it can be argued that learner anxiety might also be influenced by teachers' classroom practices and teaching methods. Therefore, FLCA should be taken seriously. Furthermore, it can also be argued that teachers should have the responsibility of implementing anxiety-reducing strategies in the classroom.

In my experience teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), I frequently encountered anxiety in my classes. My students in Thailand attributed their anxiety levels to feeling uncomfortable with their English speaking skills. In Thailand, it is not uncommon for students to “learn English” in classes taught in Thai, their L1. As a result, it was anxiety-inducing to use English to communicate with me, their English native speaker-teacher. Several studies have posited that speaking an L2 evokes the highest level of anxiety for language-learning students (Alrabi, 2015; Baran-Lucarz, 2014; Dolean, 2016; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1991). As a result of personal interest in foreign language anxiety and how to lower this anxiety, this annotated bibliography will discuss what FLCA is in the research literature and examples of anxiety-reducing strategies for the L2 classroom.

Foreign Language Anxiety: What It Is and Why It Matters

Beginning the research relating to FLCA, I found several sources had mentioned the preliminary source of **Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986)** and how FLCA has been defined from the language learning perspective. The authors report that FLCA is usually attributed to the specific environment and setting of the foreign language classroom. For students in particular, there are three concepts based on what is known as “performance-based anxiety”: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (p. 127). These types of anxiety come about due to the limited amount of person knowledge about topics discussed in class and the requirement of speaking the target language.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope note that FLCA occurs more often for students because learning and using an L2 “entails risk taking” (p. 128). An inherent risk for L2 students is the fear of not being understood when speaking to the teacher in the target language. Consequently, FLCA can be the result of the apprehension of speaking a language that is not the student’s native language (L1). By reading this article, I have learned that most of my own FLCA came from communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation from peers. However, an unanswered question I had after reading Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope was how communication apprehension relates to the individual learner. **Baran-Lucarz (2014)** answers this question with a concept known as willingness to communicate.

Baran-Lucarz has posited that willingness to communicate (WTC) is related to FLCA by the apprehension to practice the target language. More specifically, the author reports that anxiety is heightened in relation to L2 pronunciation and how a learner’s pronunciation is “directly related to the learner’s identity” (p. 453). It is then possible to assume that WTC is a factor that may decrease or increase students’ anxiety based on their confidence levels with the L2. In my own classroom, I noticed my students’ anti-WTC increased their anxiety during speaking activities that were done by one student on their own. To help my students combat their low self-confidence, and high anxiety, I allowed my students to perform a speaking activity with other classmates as moral support.

According to Baran-Lucarz, allowing students to perform speaking activities in groups could lower FLCA and students would no longer feel like they were “constantly

being evaluated by teachers and classmates” (p. 450) in the moment. Instead, the teacher (myself) and the classmates could help the student succeed in the activity. Furthermore, students who work together are able to experience a learning environment that is more supportive and not as anxiety-inducing compared to when a student is put on the spot in front of others. As a result, I began to wonder how the classroom setting might be another factor for FLCA for students.

Von Würde (2003) researched how students perceive the setting of the classroom as an additional factor that may increase anxiety. In accordance with findings of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), Von Würde found that having a sense of community between students and the teacher is a good start to decreasing anxiety. It is also important to find what types of activities may further reduce anxieties such as “skits, plays, and games” (p. 42). However, it should be noted that classroom settings also figure in the teacher and the teacher’s behavior as another potential source of anxiety for students. Von Würde explores how a teacher’s attitude “toward the language itself... appeared to play a role in reducing anxiety” (p. 42). I found this hypothesis interesting because of my own experience observing other language teachers and their classrooms. Based on my observations, a teacher’s positive energy and interest would then reflect onto the students and the overall learning environment became positive and fun. However, the moment a teacher became upset or angry, students would begin to shut down and would then become visibly uncomfortable with practicing the target language in front of the teacher out of fear. With this in mind, I turned to research that relates to anxiety-reducing strategies in the L2 classroom.

Helping Our Students: Anxiety-Reducing Strategies

One anxiety-reducing strategy is using music. **Dolean and Dolean (2014)** explored the impact of teaching songs in an EFL classroom in Romania. Their hypothesis was that using music would allow for more language exposure and how music could allow students to gradually “become more comfortable with the language” (p. 517). Using songs in a follow-up study, **Dolean (2016)** found that music enabled students to “gain phonological awareness” (p. 641) by showing how phonemes create words. Using songs also allowed for “an emphasis on oral communication and reading comprehension” (Dolean, 2016, p. 642) and students had “more opportunities to improve pronunciation skills” (p. 648) if they sang along to the songs. Although music can be used in ways for students to become more familiar with the target language, it can also be used as a way to create a supportive learning environment.

Dolean (2016) also presents how music has “the potential to change the mood valence (i.e. negative versus positive emotions” (p. 641) when music is played in the background of the classroom. Linguistically speaking, music can also foster “substantial vocabulary gains” (p. 642) due to music aiding as a memory tool. However, music has been met with opposition from students of certain ages and anxiety levels.

Although music in the classroom offers advantages for high-level anxiety students, Dolean (2016) found that students with low-level anxiety found music as “too playful” (p. 649) and childish. Another potential issue with music is that the sound may become distracting to students who have lower-levels of anxiety and who may not directly benefit from the use of songs and music in the classroom. As a result, I have

done my best to consider how the use of music in my classrooms will help students acquire language through sentence structure or vocabulary. Music may be at least one type of an anxiety-reducing strategy for secondary and university students. However, music should also be used in elementary students to supplement the data from middle-school aged students in the Dolean (2014) and Dolean and Dolean (2016) studies. However, music is not the only potential strategy for reducing anxiety. Another strategy involves talking to students directly about their anxiety.

Alrabi (2015) suggests that opening a conversation with students about anxiety will help students overcome their anxieties. Through open conversation, teachers and students can “tackle learners’ beliefs and misconceptions that can evoke feelings of anxiety” (p. 183). Relating back to Von Wörde, the classroom setting of being open and having a “sense of community” (p. 41) with the teacher and students through conversation allows students to see that some of their peers may share the same feelings. In addition, Alrabi recommends promoting “cooperative learning in which the students work together instead of competitively” (p. 183) by providing encouragement for the students based on their performance in the target language, giving positive feedback to the students, and even “involving students in decision-making” (p. 183).

For students, it is important to have validation that they are doing well in a class. Providing encouragement to students is also crucial in the foreign language classroom mainly due to how even the slightest aspect of the way material is presented may bring about anxiety. Involving students in decision-making also allows students to see that their thoughts and opinions matter to the teacher; anxiety would also lower when

they recognize their feedback was implemented. Based on Alrabi (2015), I see how involving students in the learning process and giving students positive reinforcement about their learning may reduce anxiety greatly. FLCA may also be reduced in other fun ways. Although not as frequently researched in regards to FLCA, there is the potential for the use of humor as another anxiety-reducing strategy. Using humor is something I strive to do in my classrooms as a way of showing that learning does not always have to be serious or be taken seriously. By showing my own students the potential of learning from fun and humorous activities, I wondered how some research articles might feel towards humor as a potential anxiety-reducing strategy.

Askildson (2005) presents humor as a format to “teach specific elements of [the] language and culture at all levels of proficiency... (as) an entirely *authentic* medium for the presentation of the language” (emphasis in original, p. 46). Humor itself can be used in the TL classroom because different aspects of language can become the focus for learning based on “linguistic, discorsal, and cultural elements” (p. 49) in regards to the TL’s phonology, morphology, lexicon, and even syntax. For Askildson’s study, foreign language students and instructors were given a Likert-scaled questionnaire that would measure their perceptions based on teaching effectiveness in respect to using humor in the classroom.

Although this study did not directly relate to using humor as a way to reduce FLCA specifically, it was noted that most of the participants in the study viewed humor as “an important element of creating an overall environment conducive to learning” (p. 55). This finding may posit to how humor could be used to reduce tension, increase

levels of interest in the subject material when teachers used humor, and how using humor also improved “approachability of teachers” (p. 55). For my own students, I attempt to use humor to increase TL comprehension, but I had not thought about teaching my students jokes or puns in the TL—English. This may be due to my belief that they would not understand the humor at their proficiency levels, but I realize now through this study that that would not have made a difference in the end for some students.

In addition, some aspects of my own teaching style of trying to make learning fun allows humor to come from body language and gestures to perpetrate humor for understanding vocabulary at lower proficiency levels or for dramatic emphasis for higher proficiency levels. One example of this comes from the use of mime or gesture when showing visual signs for certain words like hot, cold, sleepy, or something similar. Although verbally saying the word is sufficient for some students, other students benefit from an action to link the word’s meaning. By using gesture and mime, students who are at a lower level can still communicate their understanding even if they are unsure of how to say a word or if they cannot remember the word in the moment.

Concluding Thoughts

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety is far from a new topic in the SLA research as noted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). However, finding anxiety-reducing strategies and evaluating whether these strategies help students in the classroom is rather new in the field. Foreign language instructors should be aware of how teaching methods and the classroom environment may also impact anxiety in a negative or positive

way. While considering FLCA, it is important to pay attention to how students react to activities and other factors that increase or decrease accordingly.

By reviewing the literature on FLCA and noting different types of anxiety-reducing strategies, I seek to show my students that practicing the target language does not need to be a scary or daunting task. Instead, I wish to show my students that the classroom is a welcoming and low-anxiety setting that will only further engage them in learning a language in a fun and positive way.

L1 IN THE L2 CLASSROOM

Introduction

When teaching a second language (L2), instructors have to decide how to balance the use of the students' native language (L1) and the L2. For some students in traditional classrooms there is a tradition that students only practice the L2 passively, but there are other contexts where students are expected to only produce and use the L2 in the classroom for their learning. Dual language immersion programs, for example, is one interesting environment to consider due to the level of L2 use in the classroom and the L2 is the "medium of instruction...to deliver curriculum content" (May, 2008, p. 20). In dual immersion classrooms, it is common to see different percentages of how much the L1 and the L2 are spoken. For example, some classrooms follow a 90/10 model and others use a 50/50 model (Alanís & Rodriguez, 2008; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2008; Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Utah Dual Language Immersion, 2016). Interestingly enough, the L1 and the L2 are purposefully separated in dual language immersion contexts whereas there is some combination of L1 and L2 use in other language classrooms. It is my understanding that different classroom environments have different expectations for students based on teaching choices made by the L2 instructors. As such, this annotated bibliography attempts to explore just how L1 use in the classroom varies based on methodology and different second language acquisition theories. There is also an emphasis given to immersion classrooms due to their popularity in the state of Utah.

The L1 is a hot topic in the research literature in many ways. Research has shown its advantages and its disadvantages while in the perspectives of different teaching methodologies. As a result, I was curious as to how perspectives of the L1 change from one research study to the next while considering the differences between the Communicative Approach, Sociocultural Theory, and Dual Language Immersion programs.

The Use of L1: General Perspectives

The Advantages

One of the first thoughts I had about this topic was how students perceive L1 use in the classroom. As such, I began my research by reading articles about L1 use perceptions in various L2 classrooms around the globe. According to a study by **Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008)**, student perceptions of L1 use vary. These students were beginners in a university L2 French class that reflected an immersion setting with the “view of minimizing L1 use” (p. 256). The students in this study found two primary uses for the L1: first, the L1 helped students understand and learn French vocabulary and grammar; and second, the L1 was used for classroom management such as when the teacher would give the class instructions.

For some students in Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney’s study, the L1 was useful because not all of the French grammar was easy to understand from mere exposure to the language; examples from the study included students trying to understand French sentence structure and verb conjugations. Furthermore, the students could begin to grasp the L2 more efficiently after the teacher provided “grammatical explanations” in the L1

to the students (p. 259). Due to the fact that these students were in their first class of French, it was noted how L1 translations helped them “remember vocabulary” easier and faster “if you know what they (the words) mean” (p. 258). By using the L1 as a connection between the foreign word in French and the native language (English) equivalent, the L1 helped students gain awareness as to how to connect the two languages based on meaning.

The use of the L1 also enables students to provide each other “with definitions of difficult vocabulary and explanations of grammar” (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003, p. 765) when students lack the ability to explain linguistic structures in the L2. When I began to research how the linking between L1 and L2 would be used in the classroom when proficiency levels are higher, I found that Storch and Wigglesworth explored this very concept with intermediate-proficiency level students in regards to ESL writing tasks.

Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) report that some ESL students felt that using their L1 “would slow down the activity” (p. 766) when students were involved with group-work activities. Some students felt that “the L1 would have helped them (the students) complete the tasks more efficiently” (p. 767). But, they preferred to use their L2 (English) as much as possible during writing tasks. For the students in this study, their L1 of Chinese was used for a discussion that related to “the requirements of the task and clarification of information” (p. 763). In addition, how the L1 is viewed may change if the teacher decides to give the students “explicit instructions to use their L1s” (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003, p. 768). This type of explicitness comes with a price: students no longer have to focus on using and practicing the L2. By using the L1 for explanations, it

is possible that students begin to disregard the importance of using and hearing the L2 being used in the classroom. Furthermore, using the L1 in sudden bouts in an L2 lesson may completely disturb the natural learning process for the students.

The Disadvantages

Some students agree that one of the main problems with using the L1 in the classroom is how the flow of the L2 is disrupted and the beginnings of L1 reliance may occur (Cook, 2001; Ghobadi & Ghasemi, 2015; Raman, 2015; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008). Cook (2001) argues that L1 use may in fact take away time for students to practice the L2. It is also common to view the L2-only approach as a way of learning the L2 in a “monolingual mode” (Cook, 2001, p. 408). Within the mode of L2 acquisition, the L2 can be and should be used as the main mode of communication between teacher(s) and learner(s) for constant and consistent TL exposure (Cook, 2001).

In my experience teaching EFL in Thailand, I quickly noticed that translation to the L1 (Thai) for my students was common for lower-proficiency level students and their L1 became a scapegoat so they did not have to practice English. By only using the L1 in the classroom, students would no longer have an opportunity to “work on [phonetic] features of the TL” (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008, p. 261) and a classroom environment begins to develop where the students would receive a “lack of exposure” of the L2 (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008, p. 262).

To combat with the lack of TL exposure, it is possible to consider how not to use L1 to aide in L2 comprehension. Without using L1 translation as a scapegoat, a teacher can instead use gestures and visual aids for students at the lower-proficiency levels

((Butzkamm, 2003; Cole, 1998; Karim, 2013; Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008; Yuvuz, 2012). However, the teaching methodology that is in place in the classroom also changes how the L1 is viewed.

The Use of the L1: CLT and SCT Stances

While some students use the L1 as a learning device and a strategy to solve communication problems” (Karim, 2013, p. 120), it is interesting to see the L1 as a tool that can “tap into...prior knowledge” (Stapa & Majid, 2012, p. 149) for students in the L2 classroom. As I continued my research, I began to wonder *how* the L1 is used in different classrooms in addition to the how the L1 is ultimately used, if used at all. Thankfully, I was able to find two different teaching perspectives that view the L1 in different ways: communicative language teaching (CLT) and sociocultural theory (SCT).

Communicative Language Teaching: L1 as a Crutch

One of the most distinct features of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the belief that L2 learners need “as much exposure to the target language as they can” (Wu, 2008, p. 52). This means that students should hardly ever use their L1 in order to get the most out of the L2 classroom. Wu (2008) notes that if the L2 is the only language that is spoken in the classroom, students will learn to not rely on their L1. **Littlewood and Yu (2011)** also agree that the TL exposure is of utmost importance because the L2 is seen as “the normal means of classroom communication” (p. 66). Therefore, the L1 in the communicative classroom diminishes the importance of the constant use of the L2 both in exposure and in practice.

Cook (2001) found that most CLT classrooms take on an L2-Only approach so the learning process can mirror “characteristics of L1 acquisition” (p. 406) by only having one language to use in the classroom and learning the language from exposure and practice. Although Cook (2001) discusses the perceptions and misconceptions on L1 use in the classroom, it is generally understood and agreed that in traditional L2 classrooms, the teacher must find “the right balance between the use of L1 and L2” (Wu, 2008, p. 52). Although CLT allows for some variance in L1 use from teacher-to-teacher, Sociocultural theory views the L1 in an entirely different way.

Sociocultural Theory: L1 as a Neglected Resource

Moore (2013) posits that in the L2 classroom, “learners naturally and inevitably draw on their L1” (p. 241). Moore suggests that intermediate EFL learners primarily used their L1 (Japanese) to “signal a lack of engagement” (p. 248) between themselves and the task they were to complete. In other words, Moore found that students used their L1 when they were not participating in classroom activities or tasks. This presents an interesting point with the rest of language classrooms where students may be speaking to each other in the L1 when they are not sure of what they are supposed to do as seen in Storch and Wigglesworth (2003). Furthermore, the L1 can be used as a way to check “students’ comprehension of what they are learning” (**Swain & Lapkin, 2013**, p. 103).

Checking students’ understanding through the L1 is useful when students use the L1 as a systematic approach to “work out L2 meaning” (Swain & Lapkin, 2013, p. 106). This type of learning comes from the potential to compare and contrast one language with the other and how students begin to understand the L2 as its own system.

Through Swain and Lapkin's literature review that includes dual language immersion (DLI) students in Canada, it is important to consider how L1 and L2 use is fundamentally different from a CLT and sociocultural viewpoint from that of a DLI program. As a result, I decided to look into how DLI models present the two languages by separating the L1 and the L2 completely.

Dual Language Immersion: When The L1 and the L2 Are Separated

In the public school system, dual language immersion (DLI) programs have been implemented as a way of teaching students a foreign language through pure exposure of the TL in the classroom. The main goal of DLI programs is for students to “become proficient in using two languages for communication and learning” (Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005, p. 147). According to Gómez, Freeman, and Freeman, (2005), DLI models begin as early as kindergarten and children begin to “learn subject matter effectively in either their primary or second language” (p. 153). In DLI classrooms, native languages and second languages are presented through two separate models: 90/10 and 50/50. In each of these models, the levels of the native language (L1) and the second language (L2) correspond to the percentage of how much each language is used. Usually, students begin learning the L2 at a maximum of “90% of general instruction” time and the L1 is used for the remaining 10% of instruction time (Genesee, 2008, p. 27). In most DLI programs, the students' native language is seen as “an important personal asset and life-long resource” (Genesee, 2008, p. 28). However, this is not the case for Utah DLI schools with the 50/50 model.

In the Utah DLI 50/50 model, the L1 and the L2 are presented in two separate classrooms based on a half-day configuration. Utah DLI students spend “half of their school day” in the target language and “the other half-day in English” (Utah Dual Language Immersion, 2016, para. 2). Students are able to gain bilingualism benefits, but it is a strict code of TL-Only and English-Only rules. Although students themselves may see connections between lessons and the two languages, the TL classroom requires students to only use the L2 and the English classroom requires students to only use English—most likely the L1 for most students. Similar to CLT and the Communicative Approach to foreign language teaching, the target language is purposefully kept separately so students have maximum TL practice and exposure in the TL classroom.

Conclusion

As a result of reading research and my own experiences, I view the L1 as an important component to consider when teaching an L2. However, the L1 should always be used in moderation when considering the classroom context and the proficiency levels of the students.

Using the L1 can be an integral part of L2 learning, but the L1 should not be used as much in order to refrain students from using it as reliance instead of the occasional tool for L2 comprehension. In the words of Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008), the “L1 appears to play an important function in gaining explicit knowledge of linguistic features of the TL, and yet students...are also aware of the need for exposure to the TL” (p. 269). In my future classrooms, I will consider how the L1 for my students can be used and how my own L1 may influence my decisions for when I consider what

approach to use for my TL teaching and how I can give my students alternative ways to learn the TL without the constant use of the L1.

PERSPECTIVES OF CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Introduction

When I first started researching about creative writing in the classroom, I had not thought about creativity as a topic I needed to cover. As I began to revise the creative writing paper for subsequent drafts, I came to realize that creativity as a topic was integral to my argument for second language (L2) creative writing in the classroom. As a result of this realization, I began to research the literature in order to understand what scholars have discussed within the realm of creativity as a whole. What I soon realized from early on in my own research is how sources continue to fight each other with their opinions for or against creativity. I also decided to research on sources of creativity in general so I could then apply the research authors' thoughts and perspectives to apply their arguments towards the L2 classroom specifically for the creative writing paper itself.

Research Perspectives of Creativity in the Classroom

The preliminary source I found on the topic of creativity came from **Westby and Dawson (1995)**. In Westby and Dawson's article, they are trying to research the perspectives of teachers and their opinions of creativity in the classroom. The teachers in the survey were only elementary-school teachers in New York where they filled out a questionnaire about what they preferred in their students via a "characteristic check list" (p. 4). Results in the study showed that teachers "appeared to have a negative view of characteristics associated with creativity" (p. 8). This result is matched with the fact that

teachers equate creativity to a student that is “nonconformist” (p. 6) and how these creative students “may even be punished” (p. 9).

As I was reading Westby and Dawson (1995), I realized that the authors show that students begin to show their creativity as early as age 8. This was true for myself in elementary school, but it was surprising to read that the authors had their survey include teachers that taught grades 1 to 5 (refer to p. 3). From this source, I was able to realize that teacher perceptions are what ultimately lead to students acting on creativity in the classroom, or not, based on their own views of creativity being an “asset or burden” (Westby & Dawson, 1995, p. 1). From reading this source, I have also learned that I believe in creativity as one way of allowing student autonomy in the classroom. Although this autonomy varies between my teenage and adult-aged students, there remains the choice to be creative in their TL (English) use and how they decide to present themselves as language learners. As I was reading Westby and Dawson (1995), I came across the fact that creativity can help students with their learning process. As a result, I turned to **Ottó (1998)** and **Pishghadam, Khodadady, and Zabihi (2011)** as my next sources involving creativity and how creativity helps develop a stronger connection to second language learning.

Ottó (1998) references creativity as a mode of unique problem-solving where students in the study were required “to come up with a variety of ideas” (p. 771) to various speaking prompts that required critical thinking. Ottó focused on four primary types of factors for the secondary school students, but the one relating the most to creativity was measuring the students’ originality through “verbal responses to specified

tasks” (p. 765). However, I found it interesting that this study was attempting to find out how creative or original students were when measuring originality may be subjective. Ottó even posits that “students with higher levels of creativity can be expected to be more successful language learners” (p. 770) but there is a lack of *how* students with these higher levels of proficiency may or may not be more successful learners. Furthermore, I find it difficult to understand how Ottó posits that “creativity is an important difference among individual learners” (p. 771) but this study in particular did not show creativity beyond spoken language. However, it is possible that Ottó is interpreting creativity of a student via creative thinking where student responses to a task “are perceived in some way as novel or unusual” (p. 764). Although subjective, Ottó is fortunately not the only source that attempts to find a link between creativity and foreign language achievement.

Pishghadam, Khodadady, and Zabihi (2011) formally researched creativity of 272 EFL learners based on a five-point Likert scale as a self-assessment type of questionnaire. Interestingly, the results were compared to a scale of self-perceived creativity and matched the results with the learners’ GPA. It was found that the GPA score and levels of creativity was “significant” (p. 469) for students with higher creativity scores than those with lower creativity scores.

Pishghadam, Khodadady, and Zabihi (2011) were also to provide helpful implications in regards to creativity in the classroom even though their study had a focus on EFL students. First, the authors suggest that “the classroom environment should contain a variety of materials and encourage lots of different experiences” (p. 470). I thought this quote was interesting because it does not mention a teacher’s potential role in their

students' creativity opportunities. Yet, the authors do mention that teachers "may...be trained how to ask novel or unexpected questions which...require some improvisation on the learners' part" (p. 470). This type of opportunity for students may also "help learners solve their problems in English through exploration" (p. 470). In my own experience, creativity was one way that I was able to explore the foreign language I was learning. As brought up by Pishghadam, Khodadady, and Zabihi (2011), the creativity I had with the language came from "wordplay, stories" (p. 470) through my own personal written tasks. Although creativity helped my French L2 learning, I am curious as to just how much of this creativity came from my own interests from my L1. The authors involved in this study iterate a statement from Fisher (2005) that "all children are capable of thinking creatively" (p. 466). However it may be of importance to understand why some language learners decide to be creative in their problem solving while others do not. To answer this question, I began research potential sources on a student creativity through the perspective of intrinsic and/or instrumental motivation.

The first quote that caught my eye in the **Birdsell (2013)** study was how Birdsell explains a catalyst that is necessary to be creative:

To become creative with the language extends the language beyond the often basic utilitarian view of a foreign language (especially English) or the superficial 'self-talk' about family, interests, and work and perhaps may even be connected to learners' intrinsic motivation to learn the language (p. 887).

In other words, being creative in a foreign language requires a perspective that goes beyond the basic grammar and vocabulary level of known subjects. To be creative in a language, students need to have opportunity to go beyond the "over-literal" (p. 887) way of speaking and writing the language in the ways they are taught. For language

students in particular, creativity may be suppressed out of fear through the possibility of punishment (refer to Sternberg, 2006; Westby & Dawson, 1995). Luckily, creativity may be part of the language learning experience purely because of intrinsic motivation through “the openness and respect for the culture and the language and in interest to become closer to it” (p. 891). Birdsell researched a group of undergraduate students in northern Japan to potentially find a link between motivation types and the potential creativity of EFL students. The primary creativity tasks for the students in the study included completing a picture from “some connected lines on a piece of paper” (p. 892) and finishing a haiku poem on a pre-selected theme.

Interestingly, Birdsell’s article was the first one I have read for this annotated bibliography that presented creativity as a “highly individual product” (p. 897) and that this research article does not show “the social side of creativity” (p. 897). I found this quotation fascinating because it shows that creativity amongst students does not have to be a solitary activity. Birdsell confessed that “providing the theme...in the haiku task might have also constrained the participants’ creative potential” (p. 897); whereas if students were able to choose their own haiku theme, they could have the opportunity to discuss their haiku themes with other students to help brainstorm their haiku’s content. This is also where motivation may have been further explored based on the use of creativity as a tool to differentiate “changes [in] students’...motivation over the course of the semester to learn the language” (p. 898).

For students with higher intrinsic motivation, Birdsell notes that students perceive their teachers as “less controlling” (p. 891). This may explain why some students are act

on their creativity based on their comfort levels with being creative within language-learning tasks. As a language teacher and language learning student, I perceive creativity as one stress-free way of engaging my students in the L2. In turn, intrinsic motivation comes through from developing language skills through having fun with the language in non-traditional ways. But with non-traditional methods of learning and teaching language, there comes complication with understanding the very process of language learning and teaching.

Ghonsooly and Showqi (2012) had a different approach for their research article. In this study, the authors used both EFL and non-EFL learners and compared these groups of students through the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. This test is used to measure creativity in students of any language background that is “comprised of four scales: fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility” (p. 163). In this study, the authors noted that creative thinking may help students “adapt themselves to this new experience” (p. 164) of language learning. Furthermore, the act of creating and creative thinking allows students to gain “familiarity with two cultures (which) makes them see the world through two different conceptual systems” (p. 164).

For L2 learners, one could posit that creativity also leads itself into different problem-solving methods. However, the main lack of research coming from the implementation of creativity dilutes into a more “informal approach to learning” (Ghonsooly & Showqi, 2012, p. 164). For some teachers, informal learning approaches may lead to differences in student behavior and this behavior may be viewed as “disruptive to the existing organization” (Torrance, 1962, p. 1, as referenced in

Ghonsooly & Showqi, 2012) of the classroom. As seen in prior sources, the research literature shows how creativity is seen as a negative component to a student's personality (sources). Yet, Ghonsooly and Showqi make it a point that having a creativity-supporting classroom allows students to develop their "creative abilities...through practicing flexibility to openly face novelties" (p. 164) when students become familiar with a "new linguistic system, new cultures and customs" (p. 164).

When students are able to adapt to concepts that are new to them, creativity can help them problem solve their problems within their language learning. However, some other resources note that allowing students to be creative in the classroom comes from "a decision that can be made by anyone but most people do not because they are afraid of its costs" (Ghonsooly & Showqi, 2012, p. 162). As I continued to read Ghonsooly and Showqi (2012), the quote above caught my attention. I began to think about how creativity is seen in language teaching and in language learning, but I had never thought of implementing creativity as a choice by the aforementioned "anyone" (Ghonsooly & Showqi, 2012, p. 162).

Sternberg (2006) posits that one of the integral parts of allowing creativity in the classroom is having an environment that is "supportive and rewarding of creative ideas" (p. 89). Yet, it is all too common that the environment changes the views of creativity both for better and for worse. One example of this from Sternberg (2006) comes from the fact that the allowance of creativity may come from age. I find it interesting that Sternberg (2006) notes that "creativity... is harder to find in older children and adults because their creative potential has been suppressed by a society that encourages

intellectual conformity” (p. 93). With language learners in particular, creativity may be of use if the students “will be rewarded rather than punished” (p. 90). To find creativity as a technique for students, creativity is partially stemmed to intrinsic motivation based on *if* a student decides to be creative or not (Birdsell, 2013; Sternberg, 2006). However, student motivation to be creative can be linked to the very learning environment they are in and how that environment does or does not promote student creativity.

Sternberg posits that the learning environment may be the most effective aspect for creativity. Without an environment that is supportive of creativity, students may never realize their creative potential and therefore never “display” (p. 89) this potential. In my own language learning experiences, I found that creativity was never spoken about in the classroom. As such, I involved myself in language play on numerous occasions in both L2 French and L4 Spanish. I never recalled a moment the teacher would allow for more creative activities due to TL writing activities being structured and controlled. Although the use of grammar and vocabulary was used in these activities, my creativity came about with explaining grammar and/or vocabulary without knowing the word in the TL. One example of this came from using the phrase *good shoes in water* when trying to find a Spanish equivalent for the word “waterproof.” This level of creativity came easily to me by describing a word I did not know in Spanish, but I was able to create meaning nonetheless from a lack of the TL vocabulary word.

By reading Sternberg, I learned of how creativity can be implemented for students regardless of the type of classroom. Furthermore, it is important to understand that creativity can be used to predict student performance. Although student performance

is more related to research, it is still possible to discover student creativity on any and all levels of learning regardless of subject matter. By understanding creativity is a way of thinking, students can also share their own reasons to how they problem solve in real-time.

Conclusion

As a creative person, it was beneficial to find reasons that explore the question of why we—as educators—should consider the importance of creativity in the classroom. Although these resources deemed themselves useful for understanding creativity from a theoretical perspective, I believe that creativity should be considered and ultimately used in the classroom. Regardless of the type of classroom, creativity shows itself as a versatile tool for any learner. However, using creativity as a tool should be seen in the eyes of the teacher: if the teacher does not wish to let their students use creativity, the creative nature of students will begin to diminish. That being said, there will always be sources that develop the anti-creativity argument. For language learners, creativity should be used as a way of encouraging different learning styles regardless of the student's background or their proficiency level.

LOOKING FORWARD

One of the most valuable aspects of doing a master's in second language teaching is how professional development finds its ways into my ideas for research and teaching goals. With ESOL teaching both in Thailand and here at Utah State University for the Intensive English Language Institute, I continue to find passion within the applied linguistics field.

With my IELI students in the conversation class, I have been able to observe how international students practice their English skills every day with a variety of topics. In addition, I am grateful for the opportunity to do small informal creative writing activities with some L2 students in one of the language classes on-campus. These creative writing activities are quite novel to the SLA field with their focus on L2 fiction writing. Looking forward, I am keen to research more about how domestic and international students can use creative writing as a facet to their L2 learning successes. Therefore, I hope to pursue a PhD program in applied linguistics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Hobbies & Chores lesson plan

Students can: Ask and answer mature questions in English, with varying degrees of hesitation, miscue, self-correction, and circumlocution	Purpose of the Activity: Conversation
Student Level: Variable	Duration of the Lesson: 50 minutes
Activity 1 (Warm-Up): Greetings and conversation	Time Allotment: 5–10 min; variable depending on how many students present
Materials: n/a	
<p>Procedure: Teacher exchanges greetings with each student, asking and answering spontaneous questions about personal events or activities they are currently involved with.</p> <p><i>This is the daily warm-up, conducted at the beginning of every class, as students coming from different places in town or on campus arrive in class at different times.</i></p>	
Activity 2: Introduction to daily routine and hobbies, chores (teacher)	Time Allotment: 5–10 min; variable depending on student questions/comments
Materials: Computer, projector, web browser (optional), presentation software, internet (optional), copy of song lyrics. Could be revised for hard copy presentation.	
<p>Procedure: Teacher presents song “When Will My Life Begin?” from <i>Tangled</i> as an input exercise to show students common household chores and hobbies. Teacher and students discuss the difference between “hobby” and “chore” both in context of the song; teacher draws a table on the board to distinguish Rapunzel’s hobbies and chores in the song.</p>	
Activity 3: Student impromptu discussion about their hobbies and chores via Venn Diagram with a partner.	Time Allotment: 10–20 min; variable depending on how many students present
Materials: Venn Diagram handout, song lyrics (for reference), list of hobbies and chores handout (for reference)	
<p>Procedure: Students will have a partner for this activity. With a Venn Diagram, students will choose between hobby or chore for the VD’s material. In pairs, students will fill out the Venn Diagram between their similarities and differences.</p>	
Activity 4 (Closing): Preview for next class (...)	Time Allotment: 5 min
Materials: n/a	
Procedure: Students can also mini-present their findings from their pair work. Teacher sums up lesson	

and asking students for any final questions or final remarks.

This is the daily closing, conducted at the end of every class.

APPENDIX B:

When Will My Life Begin? from Disney's "Tangled"

7 AM, the usual morning lineup:
Start on the chores and sweep 'til the floor's all clean,
Polish and wax, do laundry, and mop and shine up
Sweep again,
And by then
It's like 7:15.

And so I'll read a book or maybe two or three
I'll add a few new paintings to my gallery
I'll play guitar and knit, and cook and basically
Just wonder when will my life begin?

Then after lunch it's puzzles and darts, and baking
Paper mache, a bit of ballet and chess
Pottery and ventriloquy, candle making
Then I'll stretch,
Maybe sketch,
Take a climb, sew a dress!

And I'll reread the books if I have time to spare
I'll paint the walls some more, I'm sure there's room somewhere.
And then I'll brush and brush, and brush and brush my hair
Stuck in the same place I've always been.

And I'll keep wonderin' and wonderin', and wonderin', and wonderin'
When will my life begin?

Tomorrow night the lights will appear
Just like they do on my birthday each year.
What is it like out there where they glow?
Now that I'm older, mother might just let me go.