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Harmonizing Music and Language Acquisition: Learning Language with the Arts

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HARMONIZING MUSIC AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:

LEARNING LANGUAGE WITH THE ARTS

by

Samantha Jay Ontiveros

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

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Committee Member   Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah 2020

DEDICATION

I give all my thanks to Him.

To my handsome boys and husband, you'll never know how much you three inspire me.

ABSTRACT

Harmonizing Music and Language Acquisition:

Learning Language with the Arts

by

Samantha Jay Ontiveros: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2020

Major Professor: Dr. Sarah Gordon

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio consists of select work the author completed during the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University. Throughout the portfolio, the author shares her personal ideas, opinions, teaching observations, and personal teaching examples utilizing song; all these were found to support the research presented in this portfolio. This portfolio contains three main sections: (1) teaching perspectives, (2) research perspectives, and (3) an annotated bibliography. The focus of this portfolio is to find new ways to teach language using artistic and creative outlets, such as multimodality, technology, and most importantly, music. The portfolio contains effective ways to use these resources to help the student and the teacher succeed in the language classroom. Most importantly, the portfolio exemplifies the relationship between language and music, how they are connected, and how they promote language acquisition and cross-cultural understanding.

(101 pages)

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First, I would like to share my deepest thanks to Dr. Sarah Gordon, who was so encouraging and who was always willing to give a helping hand and an empathic ear. I always felt that she truly cared for me as a student. I am thankful that she helped me realize that I can be a great teacher by being creative and unique and to recognize that I don't have to fit in the same box as everyone else.

I am also thankful for Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante, through whose creative ideas and encouragement I discovered my own niche in the program. I know I wouldn't have been able to complete this program without her amazing energy and kindness. She helped me feel more confident and stronger. I am deeply grateful for her honesty and pep talks over the phone.

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I am so very thankful for my mom Susan and my dad Stan who continually support me in any way they can. To my sisters Justina, Anna, and Laura who are always a phone call away. To my little sister Emily, with whom I can no longer talk, but who taught me that life is a gift.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

CALL = Computer-Assisted Language Teaching

DLI = Dual Language Immersion

DS = Digital Story

DST = Digital Storytelling

ELL = English Language Learner

EFL = English as Foreign Language

ESL = English as Second Language

FL = Foreign Language

FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

L1 = First Language / Native Language

L2 = Second Language

MDST = Multilingual Digital Storytelling

MLS = Multiliteracies Pedagogy

MNDA = Multimodal Narrative Discourse Analysis

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Introduction

This portfolio is an accumulation of work that I carried out while pursuing my

master's degree in Second Language Teaching (MSLT). The focus in this portfolio is

teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL, EFL) using methods I believe are

effective. These methods are based on reflections about my research and teaching

practice during my two years of study. In my first year in the program, I was vaguely

aware of what I wanted my teaching philosophy to be. However, over time, as I began to

develop a stronger and more detailed philosophy, it has become something I truly believe

in and can successfully apply to my teaching.

My understanding of teaching with music is continually evolving. As a student

and future educator, I remain on the lookout for more current research, information, and

lesson examples involving music. Thus, I have highlighted my most recent findings

regarding the benefits and the practical applications of music and the creative arts in the

language classroom in this portfolio. In the first section, dealing with teaching

perspectives, my teaching philosophy lays the foundation of my portfolio. It includes

what I have learned during my time as a student and how I applied these methods as a

guest teacher. The second section, research perspectives, consists of two papers. The first

paper is focused on a specific technological activity, called Digital Storytelling (DST),

and its multimodal affordances for second language (L2) learners. The second

concentrates on the use of music and song in the language classroom. Lastly, the

annotated bibliography section delves deeper into DST and the use of multimodality in

the ESL/EFL classroom.

My love for teaching comes from the satisfaction I experience when seeing students learning new material and being engaged at the same time. I am excited by the possibility of expressing my love for language and music in the classroom. Foremost, I am excited to see my students express their individuality in a creative and safe space with their L2. This is my ideal for my future classroom.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

Professional Environment

Before applying to the MSLT program, I knew that I wanted to teach young and adult learners of English. I entered the MSLT program to learn better methods, skills, and practices for teaching ESL/EFL students. The MSLT program helped me to not only achieve my professional teaching goals but has also opened up new possibilities for me to one day teach adults at the college level if the opportunity presents itself.

I also wanted a versatile degree with which I could teach abroad or here in the United States. I hope to spend at least part of my teaching career in Asia and Latin America. Afterward, I see myself using these experiences gained abroad to further strengthen my classroom practice in the United States at the university level.

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Harmonizing Language Acquisition

In my pursuit of learning about effective teaching methods, I have personally found that quality teaching needs to be creative and flexible, particularly when teaching language. Why, after years of formal language study, does a student leave the language classroom armed with nothing but a few words and some simple utterances? This lack of acquisition is a reoccurring theme for many, who, after years of taking a specific language course, can only utter a few sentences or words (Spangler, 2009). For many, the process of learning a foreign language is a difficult journey riddled with anxiety, apprehension, or even boredom. Many believe that their lack of fluency comes down to simply not having the talent for a foreign language (Spangler, 2009). On a personal note, unfortunately I am not an exception to this low proficiency phenomenon; after years of studying French in high school and for one year in college, I am still incapable of holding an in-depth conversation with a French speaker.

Likewise, I witnessed this phenomenon among the EFL students that I taught in South Korea: high anxiety levels, exposure to only boring and contrived input, and insufficient opportunities to use the target language in creative and meaningful ways. During the time I was teaching, one of the first things that I noticed about my students was their high level of anxiety. Secondly, I observed that there was no variation in content or how they were receiving input besides their textbook. These students also had no purposeful nor creative ways to learn the subject material. Lastly, I noticed that they did not have enough opportunities to use the target language in meaningful ways.

I have continued to ponder these observations, and I have researched possible ideas to help ease the stress of the arduous journey of language acquisition. Hence, with the

knowledge I have accumulated thus far, I will introduce my teaching philosophy, rooted in research of multiliteracies, my personal experiences, and built on my belief that language learners deserve an engaging and meaningful classroom.

My teaching philosophy statement consists of three creative teaching principles using the multiliteracy approach. This approach creates cross cultural connections by manipulating and interpreting different modes such as texts, visuals, tactile, auditory, and then using these modes to create linguistic expression and to facilitate language acquisition. The multiliteracy approach enhances not only speaking, writing, and listening skills, but also critical thinking, interpretive and analytical skills, as well as technology skills, problem-solving skills, and creating through all texts. According to Paesani (2016), "The multiliteracies framework views learning as a process of discovery and emphasizes textual interpretation and transformation, the interdependence of language modalities, and interactions among language forms, social context, and communication." (p. 270). It is with this approach that I begin with my first principle: the importance of offering comprehensible and engaging input to learners. Below, I explain how this can be achieved applying a multiliteracy approach using songs. Although many teaching philosophies of communicative language teachers today include comprehensible input, I have chosen to focus particularly on input that utilizes music. Thus, I explain how music and song may benefit the L2 learner. The second principle touches on the importance of responding with empathy to errors, thus reducing anxiety and lowering the affective filter (Krashen, 1982) in the language classroom. The final principle is the design of meaningful and purposeful output activities. I explain what meaningful output is and its significance for students. To conclude with a personal application of the standards outlined in the three sections, I will

discuss a recent experience using the principles that I have touched on in utilizing music as a valuable tool in creating an engaging and meaningful classroom.

<div align="center">Engaging and Comprehensible Input: Songs</div>

I believe that teachers need to be sensitive to the skills their students need to succeed in attaining an L2. For language learners, comprehensible input is essential in creating a strong foundation for the language learning process. (Krashen, 1983; VanPatten, 2017). Input that is both understandable and authentic can be received in the form of feature films, YouTube videos, texting, chatting through online apps, audio recordings, and of course interaction with native speakers, peers, and teachers. Most importantly, in the classroom context, VanPatten (2017) states that the L2 learner receives the best input from a teacher who presents stories in an educational manner or is an active participant in meaningful conversations with their students. Particularly for novice and intermediate students, it is vital to have the input level be appropriate, have a slower pace when speaking, repeat key words, and rephrase sentences within the input (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell 2001; VanPatten, 2017). Nevertheless, even though simplified, the instructor should provide input that has meaning and purpose (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell 2001; VanPatten, 2017). Thus, teachers must be mindful of level, meaning, and content of input.

Several forms of comprehensible input can be identified as beneficial for learners. I have chosen to focus on songs. By implementing song in the classroom, students are provided with comprehensible and engaging input and they can efficiently process and interact with the input that they are receiving (Lems, 2018; VanPatten, 2017). The content is meaningful, provides context, and may motivate students in meaningful L2 interactions

that move beyond listening skills and incorporate speaking, writing, and interpretation skills. Using songs in the foreign language classroom, students will not only encounter engaging comprehensible input, but will also be able to learn grammatical form in a fun, cultural, and meaningful way (Alinte, 2013).

To be sure, listening to and discussing authentic songs can possibly help further students' acquisition. But beyond lyrics, music may help with language acquisition and motivation on other levels. Randolph (2017) describes music as "one of the most natural phenomena that inspires the brain and nervous system to feel, create, and move" (p. 35). To give just one practical example here, listening to music without words could act as a writing exercise in which students are able to use creativity and voice their feelings and responses (Randolph, 2017). Through listening to music, students are less inhibited in class and it becomes easier to write and create, as well as voice their opinions and participate in the musical activities (Arnold & Herrick, 2017). According to Boothe and West (2015), using songs as input strengthens listening, comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and speaking. Naturally, songs introduce new vocabulary, but it also gives more understanding to idioms as well as understanding grammatical concepts (Lems, 2018). As a teacher, I find that using song as comprehensible input for students can activate creative thinking and create an effective learning atmosphere.

<center>Lowering Anxiety and Empathetic Error Correction</center>

A common concern among students in foreign language classrooms is a fear of being called on in class to recite a sentence or a grammar drill. I recall that even I, a relatively outgoing individual, would try to shrink myself into my seat before my French or German professors could call on me to conjugate a verb. Therefore, when teaching

EFL, I feel sympathy for my Korean EFL students, as it is abundantly clear how much anxiety they have when having to speak English in class. Low motivation, debilitating anxiety, and low self-esteem can hinder some students' language learning process by raising their anxiety level—effectively creating a mental block (Krashen, 1982; see also Howritz, 2010; Riasati, 2011). To be able to reduce student anxiety in my language classrooms, I first need to discover what prompts anxiety in my students.

According to Riasati (2012), anxiety can be related to a communication breakdown, such as not understanding the teacher's instructions, negative evaluations from the teacher, the fear of an embarrassing correction, a fear of making mistakes, and lastly a general feeling of anxiety due to a fear of failing the class. As one solution, it is more effective to avoid drills and teacher-centered questioning of students. As another solution to help lower negative anxiety, one can use empathetic error correction. To be effective in correction, one must have empathy for their students when giving feedback.

The more error correction that students receive, the more anxiety or fear of speaking they experience (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). As Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell state (2001), "The fact is that generations of grammar-centered instruction, coupled with extensive attention to error avoidance and correction by students and teachers, have not succeeded in avoiding error…" (p. 4). Moreover, the second language teacher should embrace students' errors as a process that every learner must go through (VanPatten, 2017). This implies that mistakes are not something that learners should try to avoid but to embrace. According to Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), "A student's errors are valuable to the teacher for the information they give about the state of the student's developing grammatical system, and valuable to the

student as a trigger for testing hypotheses about the grammar of the L2" (p. 24).

Therefore, it is important for a teacher to reflect on how students receive feedback

concerning their errors. For example, it is crucial for students to receive feedback that is

direct and clear to fully identify their mistakes and then learn from their errors. Giving

direct error correction is both expected and effective for corrective feedback in some

situations. Although direct feedback is essential in some situations, it must be used in

connection with empathy. Certainly, one must first understand that students will make

many errors in their learning process. If it is understood clearly that errors are a part of the

learning process, a teacher can provide empathetic error correction to their students.

   The type of error correction employed is also crucial to a student's anxiety level. A

teacher must create a balance between making errors known to students and correcting

errors without causing embarrassment, feelings of failure, or fear (Almuhimedi &

Alshumaimeri, 2015). As teachers do not want to cause these negative feelings, in these

situations teachers need to employ empathetic error correction; by this I mean teachers

need to have empathy for their students when correcting their language errors, whether in

front of the class or in private. Moreover, to elicit empathy for a student, it is crucial for a

teacher to have an empathetic relationship with the student (Hall & Smotrova, 2013). For

example, this can be done by teachers indicating empathetic comprehension of their

students and give empathetic responses such as, "Oh, I see what you mean" or "Yes, I

could tell that you worked hard on this assignment" (Hall & Smotrova, 2013). As an

illustration, while teaching in South Korea, I recall one of my students who asked me if

she was doing well in class. I assured her that she was, then she handed me her latest

graded quiz and said, "But, *Seonsaengnim,* (teacher) it's all in red." As might be expected,

my student lost confidence in herself because of my lack of knowledge of using empathy in my error correction. Instead of focusing on the certain grammatical concepts we were learning at the time, I corrected every mistake. Beyond question, it is essential that language teachers strike a balance when applying empathetic feedback and creating an empathetic relationship with the student. In fact, empathy according to Chen, (2013) is "… communication as a form of negotiation.... Although empathy originally belongs to the domain of psychology, nowadays, more and more linguists have already realized that empathy plays a significant role in verbal communication." (p. 2268). Empathy in the classroom is overlooked by many instructors but both theory and practice have shown me the value of empathy.

As a future ESL teacher looking forward, and reflecting on my past experiences, my role will involve feeling empathy for my students, thus I will be able to signal that I comprehend what my students are feeling. Empathy entails cooperation, as the speaker and the hearer detect and identify the "immediate affective state of each other and respond in an appropriate manner" (Chen, 2013, p. 2269). As Brown (2014) states, to exercise empathy, there must first be an awareness of one's feelings, and second, "identification" with another person. He states, "… you cannot fully empathize - or know someone else- until you adequately know yourself" (p. 153). To have empathy for their students, teachers must understand how students perceive a situation and consider what the students' emotional state might be (Chen, 2013). In empathy, cooperation and identification are key.

Anxiety is typically seen as a negative feeling that language teachers try to avoid at any cost. However, it is important to note that there are two types of anxiety: debilitative anxiety, in which students' language acquisition is hindered, such as the examples stated

above, and facilitative anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960; see also Brown, 2014 and Scovel,

1978). Facilitative or "helpful" anxiety (Oxford, 1999; see also Brown, 2014) keeps

learners, "… poised, alert, and just slightly unbalanced to the point that one cannot relax

entirely" (Brown, 2014, p.151). Hence, the level and type of anxiety that students

experience plays a major role in the classroom. Not all anxiety is as debilitating as one

would assume. In fact, it is essential to have a good balance of facilitative anxiety in the

L2 classroom. Therefore, it would behoove learners to experience some facilitative

anxiety as this will enhance the learner's overall language performance. As stated by

Brown (2014), "both too much and too little anxiety may hinder the process of successful

second language learning" (p. 151). Therefore, my aim is to lower my students' anxiety,

and to be mindful of and empathetic to their comfort levels in my classroom.

<div align="center">Meaningful Output</div>

Lowering students' anxiety levels can create a sense of community among

students; thus, sharing and discussing among peers can be more valuable to the learner.

Just as comprehensible and engaging input is essential in the classroom, so is the output

or the performance experience (Kwon, 2007). Anecdotally, many of my shy students in

my EFL classes in South Korea did not have enough opportunities for meaningful

conversations with their peers and, sad to say, with their teacher. As an inexperienced

teacher, I was told to follow the textbooks provided and so I rarely ever deviated from

them. I was also afraid of not covering enough material as well as committing

inaccuracies in my teaching. Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), explain that

these situations are quite typical of new FL teachers. My class consisted of repetition of

words, an explanation of vocabulary words, repetition after the teacher using sentence

frames, and the last ten minutes consisting of 'class talk' in which students spoke with their partners about safe topics such as "What do you like, Korean or American food?" or "What is your favorite color?" Students practiced the language, but had no purpose behind the exchanges (VanPatten, 2017). During most of the class, I was talking at, and not with, my students (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; VanPatten, 2017). Consequently, creative thinking was not activated and the atmosphere in the classroom was not conducive to creating a safe environment or an effective classroom.

In my former teacher-centered classroom, I noticed that even though my students were continually receiving input from me, their English fluency stayed at the same level. I realized that my students needed to speak more to develop their fluency, but I did not know how to create a communicative classroom at the time, and I felt disheartened as a teacher and sympathetic toward my students. Without the opportunity to speak in an L2, students cannot attain fluency (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; VanPatten, 2017). With this in mind, I have found that the more opportunities teachers can give their students to speak the target language, the more students will get familiar with the nuances of the language (Kwon, 2007). According to Shrum and Glisan (2016), "Learners cannot simply listen to input, but they must be active conversational participants who interact and negotiate the type of input they receive in order to acquire language" (p. 22). Learners need student-centered opportunities to create with language and express themselves in meaningful ways, with meaningful input as well as output.

VanPatten (2017) states that one way to have meaningful interaction is to have peer-to-peer tasks where there is a negotiation of meaning, wherein there is a communication breakdown and the communicators need to use different methods to get

their point/meaning across. Tasks that involve the negotiation of meaning and interpretation, via activities like information-gap or jigsaw tasks are effective forms of meaningful interaction. Output tasks should also include or have tasks that coincide with the ACTFL standards for foreign language learning. These include the 5 C's: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Below, I will outline an example of how to incorporate a song into a lesson plan that correlates with the 5 C's and the topics I stated earlier, such as: engaging and comprehensible input, empathic error correction, and output opportunities.

<div align="center">Putting it Together in the Classroom</div>

In my most recent teaching experience, I taught a fourth-grade dual language immersion (DLI) Spanish class. I decided to teach a Mexican folk song called *De Colores* (of colors). From this experience, I discovered that the responses and output from the students using song in the lesson were remarkable. First, I presented the lyrics in printed form and drew attention to some of the new vocabulary words to which I wanted students to pay attention during the time they would listen to the song. Then I had the class listen to the song in its entirety twice. Afterward, I drew their attention to individual sentences and again to the new vocabulary words. Next, I had them find these words by themselves in the printed lyrics. Then through the multiliteracies approach, I proceeded to help them interpret the song in which I had them describe what it meant to them personally, how it made them feel, and to describe their feelings to each other using the new vocabulary words. The interpretive exercise was student-centered, communicative, and meaningful.

After that, we began to do an extension activity by singing the verses in individual groups in which I would sing with them once over. I then had them sing the song by

themselves, so the students had to rely on themselves and their peers for pronunciation corrections and rhythm. They were engaged in the lesson, it was enjoyable to them, and they were challenged to think in critical and creative ways. One unique student in the class had a complex anxiety disorder called selective mutism; she couldn't speak or communicate well in social settings (Kovac & Furr, 2018). Typically, children with selective mutism can speak and communicate in settings in which they are most comfortable or relaxed (Kovac & Furr, 2018). This particular student rarely speaks out loud in class and has a difficult time involving herself in any communicative event. However, she became involved during the music lesson and communicated with her peers and teacher(s) in answering questions, forming her own questions, and singing the song. Even though she did all the activities in quiet tones, I look at this as a significant improvement in her language learning development. This is just one example that spotlights how music can be accessible to diverse learners and address different learning styles while also being part of an effective communicative language classroom.

Conclusion

Using music as a source of engaging and comprehensible input, empathetic error correction, and creating meaningful output opportunities, are important in creating a safe and positive place to learn. These are the essential elements of my teaching philosophy. I believe that language is a meaningful and creative learning process, thus creative and meaningful methods needs to be implemented. I continuously strive to improve my teaching, and I will continue throughout my career to develop all three elements. I aim to implement these significant tools in innovative and effective ways, in my future ESL and EFL classrooms. Thus, my classroom can have a positive learning atmosphere with low

anxiety, as I use empathy to disarm the tension so often felt in the L2 classroom. Instilling music in the language classroom can create a more interactive, meaningful, motivating, and engaging class, as well creating a positive rapport between students and teachers. Lastly, practicing the language with song by using peer-to-peer tasks or giving more opportunities for meaningful extension activities are also significant aspects to implement. To truly harmonize song and language acquisition, I use engaging input with music, empathetic error correction, and meaningful opportunities for output. When combined, these are all important components for an engaging and positive language classroom.

Professional Development

Professional Development through Class Observation

In my graduate career thus far, I have observed a variety of classes of all levels and ages. I have watched professors in universities and teachers in elementary schools teach a broad spectrum of languages. These languages include English as a Second Language (ESL), Spanish, French, Chinese, and Japanese. Even though each of these languages has its unique challenges, I have found through my observations that no matter the language, educators must have effective teaching strategies. For example, I believe comprehensible and engaging input, reducing anxiety using empathy, and giving students opportunities for output are effective strategies. Furthermore, I was able to observe different teaching methods and was able to compare differences between them. In this paper, I will address practices that I observed which I believe helped or hindered.

Comprehensible and Engaging Input

To begin, I believe that language classes should have comprehensible and engaging input; thus, the input should be almost entirely in the target language. The teacher must set this standard on the first day of class. Fortunately for me, most of my observations were in the target language 80% to 100% of the time. My first observation was a dual language immersion (DLI) 4th-grade Spanish class, and my second a DLI 1st-grade Chinese class. DLI classes are known to use only the target language and students are not allowed to speak English when they are in the target-language class. An exception, however, was in place for the Chinese DLI class I observed, as it was the students' first quarter, during which students were allowed to answer a few questions in English. However, all of the students' input was delivered entirely in Chinese.

Conversely, I also observed a university French class in which the students were not speaking in the target language at all. I noticed that the professor did try to discuss grammatical concepts in the target language at the beginning of class, however, after time, the professor began to speak mainly in English. This situation could also be attributed to the students' lack of using French when asking questions or answering the professor's questions. The lesson in its entirety was devoted to French grammar but conducted in English. Additionally, no opportunities were provided for the students to participate in communicative activities using French.

<div style="text-align:center">Reducing Anxiety</div>

During my observations, not all classes had an atmosphere in which students felt they could participate. In a university ESL writing class, I found the activities not engaging or helpful for the students in reducing anxiety or in learning new material. The class was very teacher-centered, with minimal interaction by the students. The professor conducted a whole-class activity to fill in the blanks for two short stories. Most of the time, the professor answered the questions herself as students would not raise their hands. I would like to have seen the students at least answering the blanks as groups; however, the professor mainly answered the questions for them, and they wrote in the answers. This was quite a difference to what I was learning in my MSLT classes and the other teaching observations that I conducted.

When I observed the beginning Japanese class, I noticed some anxiety among the students when having to answer the professor in the target language. However, it did not deter them from trying to answer. The few groups of students that I observed also had

some anxiety when having to speak with each other, although slightly less. Yet, the professor expressed empathy towards her students by calmly helping them to find the words to complete sentences that were difficult for them. Additionally, she encouraged students to see what they were struggling with and would help them complete their information-gap activity. The professor also encouraged students to help each other by answering together. Overall, her attitude was very positive, and she encouraged her students to speak more at every opportunity.

<div align="center">Extension Activities and Output</div>

I believe that a language classroom should have engaging activities that have a communicative purpose. Besides the two DLI classes that I mentioned earlier, I also saw two classes that stood out to me as having communicative activities that were engaging for students. I observed an ESL grammar class at the university level in which students participated in drawing pieces of paper out of a bowl and creating past progressive sentences. The students were motivated to participate in the activity because it involved students' names and they enjoyed creating sentences about each other. In addition, the professor told a personal story to the students using the grammatical concepts that they were learning. I felt as though this was a great example of teaching grammar that had students engaged on a personal level and gave them a practical application to the lesson.

In addition to activities that encourage output, the 1st-grade Chinese DLI and 4th-grade Spanish DLI classes had group-oriented tasks that had the students' communicating in the target language. In the 4th-grade class, the students held many group discussions and held a mini "voting" session for a new president. I found this to be enriching for the

student's new vocabulary that they were learning and applying it in a practical and engaging context. Furthermore, I found the Chinese class very inspiring as this teacher used a lot of songs to instill vocabulary, such as fruits and vegetables and numbers. The songs seemed easy and repetitive in melody; thus, the students did not have difficulty in singing along and dancing to the music. Besides the students thoroughly enjoying themselves singing along with the music, they would also participate in little dances or body gestures in synchronization to the new words they were learning. This assisted the students in recalling the new vocabulary and other concepts that they are learning.

Additionally, a Japanese class I observed had an excellent information-gap activity on prepositions. Students were put in pairs, and each had one picture: student A had a picture of a chair with objects shown on, under, next to, etc., while student B had a picture of just a chair. Student A would tell student B where an item was, and student B had to draw the object on their piece of paper. Student B would ask for clarification on how many objects she had to draw on the paper. I found this activity to be practical for 'real life' application, and the students seemed to enjoy working with each other in pairs.

Conclusion

It is my belief that teachers who do not have enough comprehensible and engaging input, empathy, and communicative activities to increase output in the classroom, are missing essential elements in creating a successful class. From my observations, I noticed that the truly effective language classrooms featured the target language use 80% to 100% of the time, teachers that focused on the students with empathy, and included engaging activities that created opportunities for students to use

the language in a practical context. The teachers who had effective teaching strategies

seemed to have a grounded framework and clear goals of what they wanted their

classroom to look and sound like. I believe this is because these teachers have a solid

understanding of their teaching goals.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Language and Literacy Paper

Digital Storytelling:

Oral Language Fluency and Multimodal Learning

Orientation and Reflection

In my first semester of the MSLT program, I took Dr. Joshua Thoms's Linguistics 6500 class, Second Language Acquisition: Theory and Practice. While taking this course we read, discussed, and learned how to analyze published research articles on theories and methods in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field. We discussed the beginnings of SLA theory, including behaviorism, Chomsky's universal grammar, Krashen's comprehensible input theory, and Swain's output hypothesis, to name but a few. We also discussed Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory, Krashen's affective filter, as well as more recent multiliteracies approaches. From exploring the different theories of SLA research, I have been able to compare the perspectives and teaching methods and have been able to use parts of the multiliteracies approach as one component of my Teaching Philosophy and this paper on Digital Story Telling (DST).

My Teaching Philosophy centering on music and lowering anxiety is rooted in the multiliteracy approach and Krashen's ideas on input. Under this framework, learners can enhance their language acquisition by using creative and meaningful approaches without being hindered by anxiety. They can learn how to communicate and make significant connections with others in their L2.

I was inspired to explore the effects of creating digital stories (DSs) had on language learners. As a frequent stage performer, I know that I am a storyteller, which means that I find storytelling and reader's theater in L2 classes fascinating. I also understand that storytelling has a very important impact on language fluency, critical thinking, and willingness to communicate thoughts and feelings. Initially, I was curious about traditional storytelling, (i.e., via a face-to-face format); however, when I found

published articles on DST, I wanted to know whether and how technology could help or hinder language acquisition.

This paper highlights the benefits of implementing and using DST in the L2 classroom. This part of the portfolio provides a general overview of the topic in conjunction with a literature review on improving oral fluency for ESL learners and how DST fits in the context of multiliteracies via multimodality.

Digital Storytelling:

Oral Language Fluency and Multimodal Learning

Storytelling in the foreign language classroom is not a new concept. To be sure, implementing storytelling in the language classroom benefits learners' various skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, grammar, and creative thinking (Shrum & Glisan, 2016). However, the concept of storytelling through digital media is relatively new and is being quickly integrated into L2 classrooms. This paper focuses on the use of DST as a pedagogical tool for enhancing oral fluency and examines the use of multiliteracies pedagogy (MLS) or a multimodal approach to enhance proficiency among ESL learners.

First, the paper presents the effects on L2 oral fluency due to digital DST through the medium of web-based or computer-based technology in the L2 classroom. The emphasis will be on adult learners who are chiefly in ESL and EFL classrooms, and on whether DST is associated with an increase in learners' oral fluency, especially pronunciation and syntax. Secondly, it will address how DST fits within the multiliteracy and multimodal approaches to learning an L2 as well as the benefits of approaching DST through multiliteracy and multimodal pedagogy.

Understanding the DST Creative Process

To understand how DST can improve language fluency, the process of creating a digital story (DS) must be understood. According to Ribeiro (2015), a DS is typically a personal story that involves electronic pictures, audio, video, and text. These can be added to support and express the story to produce a compelling emotional and in-depth story (Castañeda, 2013). The DS should also contain seven elements: the main idea,

dramatic question(s), emotional content, voice, soundtrack, time limit, and pacing of speech and story. Besides DST using various modes of technology, most importantly, DST incorporates writing, reading, and dramatic speech (Castañeda, 2013).

In a classroom, the development of a DS can take several days or longer, if needed. On the first day, the learners have a brainstorming session called "story circle" (Ribeiro, 2015, p. 45). The purpose of the story circle is for students to share ideas, listen intently to classmates' ideas, and comment on them (Ribeiro, 2015). Story circle is an integral part in DST in that, according to Castañeda (2013), it engages students in "real-world communication" while creating their DST. Even though each DS is a personal endeavor, the foundational process of story circle is the key to a successful DS; it is the peer-to-peer collaborative and communicative event that happens at the beginning of the DS process (Ribeiro, 2015).

Once a storyline is created, the second phase of the DS process is writing the script. Because of the time limit, which is typically 3 to 5 minutes (Castañeda, 2013), each story needs to be carefully planned and organized (Ribeiro, 2015). In this second step, teachers assist students with grammatical structures and the fluidity of their script. When teachers assist the students, it helps students notice gaps in their L2, thus helping them develop proficiency (Robin, 2015). The third day is dedicated to the production of the DS, wherein the students compile all of the elements of their DS. Observing the seven criteria helps students create a meaningful and concise personal narrative (Castañeda, 2013; Ribeiro, 2015).
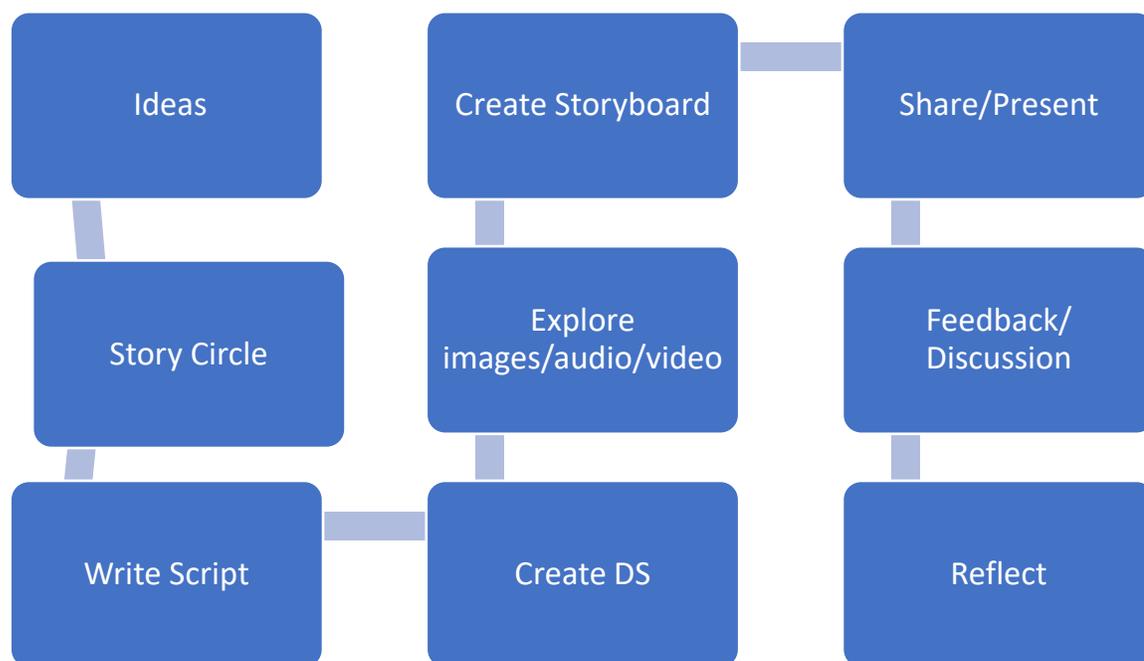
Figure 1. The process of DST.

Improving Oral Fluency

An essential component of DST is the students' awareness of their rhythm, or pacing of the language, which is part of their oral fluency. When creating a DS, the students' output or speech pacing of their spoken language is essential (VanPatten, 2017). Additionally, awareness of one's inflections is essential because the students must be able to convey feelings appropriately to create the mood for their story and to make it a genuinely communicative event (Ribeiro, 2015). Through DST, students are able to practice and improve their language proficiency level in a communicative context.

To gain more fluency in a foreign language, students must practice their speaking skills. DS can improve various areas of L2 fluency, including expression, vocabulary, and syntax because they are interacting with the language (Hwang et al., 2016). According to Shrum and Glisan (2016), "Learners cannot simply listen to input, but… they must be

active conversational participants who interact and negotiate… in order to acquire language" (p. 159). In addition, recent research shows that DST can improve oral proficiency and is perceived by learners as effective and useful. A study by Castañeda (2013) explored the benefits of DST and its effects on oral fluency. The study was conducted on twelve high school students studying in their third year of Spanish. Students participated in creating their first DS about a memorable high school event. Afterward, in a follow-up survey, students stated that because they listened to a recording of themselves, they noticed what needed to be improved, such as their pronunciation and syntax, which according to Castañeda (2013), enhanced their oral fluency.

Even though DST combines various factors of storytelling, the focus of this paper is on its effect on oral fluency. Razmia, Pouralib, and Nozad (2014) researched two groups of Intermediate-level EFL students in college. The experimental group used DST in the curriculum and was asked to present their stories using DST. The control group was asked to present their stories traditionally. Before taking the course, all participants completed a Michigan English Test and were evaluated on their oral fluency by EFL teachers. At the end of this study, all students, the control and experimental, participated in an interview in which they were asked to read and present their selected short story. The data collected from the EFL teachers, showed that students in the DST group developed their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills to a higher degree compared to their counterparts in the control group. It is important to note that they were also motivated to speak out loud and that they outperformed the control group in this regard. The students in the DST group reported being satisfied with the learning experience because it was personal, enjoyable, and creative. Razmia, Pouralib, and Nozad

(2014) had students take a separate speaking assessment, and found that after this study, the students' oral fluency increased.

According to Oskoz and Elola's (2016) study, students stated that they found the DST experience to be enriching and motivating, and that they felt that their language acquisition was pushed in creative and engaging ways. Since language is too abstract and too implicit to teach explicitly (VanPatten, 2017) DST is one way to help learners to enhance their language fluency. Furthermore, DS can have students practicing their speaking skills in a creative way. This was evident in a study by Oskoz and Elola (2016). Their study included Spanish-speaking college students who were learning ESL and who shared their DS online with each other using a web 2.0 interface. In surveys conducted after the project, the students said that having to share their DS with their classmates caused them to be more motivated to extend their vocabulary and to be mindful of grammar. Writing their scripts and recording their voice caused students to become more aware of their oral fluency and to pay greater attention to their grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Students use their oral skills not only in their DS, but also when asking questions to their teacher and collaborating with peers throughout the DS project (Castañeda, 2013). For example, they can use their oral skills when asking how to use the software or when asking the teacher how to make their ideas clearer to the viewers (Robin, 2015). In some studies, involving DST, students stated that they were pleased to be "actually" using their L2 in "real life situations" (Castañeda, 2013, p. 54). At the beginning of the study by Castañeda (2013), students were concerned about not being understood and using incorrect syntax. However, the students became more confident in speaking and

using new vocabulary during the DST process. Moreover, the students became more aware of their pronunciation, grammar, and pace of speech (Castañeda, 2013). They had resources to achieve meaningful goals in their classroom, using different skills and enabling them to practice the language expressively in a real-world context.

It is notable that DST is suitable for a constructive approach to learning in which the students can take charge of their language learning process (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014). When creating a DS in the language classroom, the levels of cooperation and collaboration between peers increase (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014). Therefore, with this extra speaking practice in the L2, language fluency increases. When an instructor is collaborating with students who are creating a DS, communication occurs between teacher and student. According to Smeda, Dakich, and Sharda (2014), students improved in their interpersonal skills while working on a DS. Furthermore, oral fluency can be improved because interpersonal skills are enhanced. This is because of the many opportunities' students' have when speaking and collaborating with each other and their instructor. This implies that with improved interpersonal skills, oral fluency will increase.

Digital storytelling is a unique tool to incorporate in a language curriculum because it enables students to communicate by expressing their thoughts and ideas in unique ways (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014), thus improving oral reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary (Kimura, 2012). According to Kimura (2012), "DST is an academic tool for exploring content and communicating what is understood, and it improves speaking and listening skills while it helps learners acquire the context of literacy" (p. 2). To summarize, DST is an effective multiliteracy tool for language learners because it is so multifaceted.

Multiliteracies & Multimodality

As stated earlier, the use of DST is an essential tool to develop skills such as oral fluency. However, the use of DST as a multimodal pedagogy can influence students' learning on a much deeper level as well. To successfully use multimodality in the classroom, students need opportunities to apply, assess, and employ the subjects they are learning during their education (Kortegast & Davis, 2017).

Because of the various modalities that DST employs, it can be used as a pedagogical tool that enhances student learning, specifically language and culture comprehension. While creating and eventually sharing their DS, students engage in "self-reflexivity, demonstrate the ability to apply theory to practice, and utilize multimodal communication and learning strategies" (Kortegast & Davis, 2017, p.106). In addition, students use multimodal communication, semiotics, understanding sociocultural perspectives, and meaning making during the process of DST (Burke & Hardware, 2015; Towndrow & Pereira, 2018; Yang, 2012). Accordingly, it is no surprise that the resources used to create DSs promote students' overall communication skills.

Multimodality: Multiliteracy

Multiliteracy can be described as metalanguage (Burke & Hardware, 2015), in which students can be aware and discuss the intricacies of the language they are learning. Multiliteracy includes other forms of literacies, including oral, audio, spatial, information literacy, and visual literacies (Burke & Hardware, 2015; Kucer, 2014). Using multiliteracies helps students who may have a difficult time learning language and culture (Burke & Hardware, 2015). According to Kucer (2014), multiliteracy uses four different

cognitive learning components. First, it makes use of linguistic and other sign systems, which focus on text and communication systems such as language, art, music, and math through which meaning can be conveyed. Second is cognitive processing, in which one makes meaning and focuses on "mental strategies" that are used to make meaning. The third is a sociocultural component that focuses on group and "social identities" and how groups use literacy to interact with and critique others. Lastly, the cognitive developmental process which focuses on growth and understanding on all the cognitive learning components that was stated before, the "linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimension of literacy…" (Kucer, 2014, p. 7). With new technologies developing, multimodality offers new ways to integrate multiliteracy pedagogy.

<div align="center">Multimodality</div>

Multimodality in DST includes still and moving images, gestures, speech, music, writing, animations and the use of space (Jewitt, 2005, see also Forceville, 2010; Towndrow & Pereira, 2018). In addition, the multimodality in DST caters to different learning styles so that more students succeed; this includes visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing-based styles. It also brings awareness to cultural knowledge for learners and their audiences. Although the Multimodal Approaches method does have its critics, most teachers agree that it is useful for teachers to design lessons with authentic multimedia materials and different learning styles in mind. According to Oskoz and Elola (2017), "Multimodality, then, refers to the use of different modes in an integrated fashion to communicate meaning (e.g., text and visual combined in a blog)" (p. 53). To further illustrate the concept of modality, Burke and Hardware (2015) state that, "The use of

visual texts encapsulates images, screen formats, colors, foregrounding, perspectives and vectors. Spatial modes include architectural, environmental, and geographical meanings. Auditory meanings constitute sound effects, music and voice-overs" (p. 145). Therefore, the multimodality not only increases learning by catering to multiple learning styles, it also helps learners make meaning and better express themselves in their L2.

Working in more than one mode frees language learners to express and interpret meaning beyond the use of written text. Modality gives them the freedom to use different ways of learning besides reading print. As stated before, using DST, students can assimilate the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile needs for the different learning styles typically found in a classroom (Jewitt, 2005). Thus, this multimodal approach addresses the different needs of students and learning styles and provides a powerful way to engage students in their learning (Davis & Kortegast, 2017). It can be made more accessible, too. Thus, every student may benefit rather than just a few individual students.

Multimodality uses significant semiotic resources. Semiotic resources are the materials that are used to make meaning. One can use semiotic resources for communication and representation of knowledge (Towndrow & Pereira, 2018), Multiliteracies pedagogy makes use of multimodalities in communication and linguistic diversity, whereas the multimodality approach is centered on how individuals make meaning with different kinds of modes (Burke & Hardware, 2018). Therefore, as Burke and Hardware state, "multiliteracies is the pedagogy that affords us the tools for promoting multimodality" (p. 146). Using different modalities and media, students are able to interpret and analyze information and thus create and make meaning using the different modes, as well as being able to increase interpretative and analytical skills.

Multimodal Methodology

Multilingual and multimodal digital communication has become commonplace. The use of monolingual, print-based understandings of literacy has expanded to a much more extensive range of semiotic possibilities. DST captures the essence of multimodality by creating a multidimensional, multi-layered, multi-stage construction process that involves the creation of texts and understanding (Anderson, Chung, & Macleroy, 2018). Furthermore, web 2.0 and software activities such as blogging, podcasting, collaborative writing using wikis, and DST have become increasingly common in the language classroom (Yang, 2012; Oskoz & Elola, 2017).

To illustrate, the use of digital media and the internet can facilitate partnerships with schools and individuals abroad for valuable learning opportunities for intercultural communication and collaboration (Anderson, Chung, & Macleroy, 2018). According to Yang (2012), "New literacy narratives, through stories in association with multimodal literacy practices, reported or reflected by L2 learners, are often used as powerful tools to understand how L2 learners carry out and participate in multimodal literacy practices" (p. 221). These new possibilities and perspectives are being made possible by the advances in digital media that have wide-ranging tools that are beneficial for students to work with.

Burke and Hardware (2018) investigated ESL learners' experiences outside of the school classroom. They studied the use of DST in an 8th-grade classroom to explore whether the students understood the DS narratives and if they could enhance the authenticity of their DS to reflect their real life. The use of visuals allows students to insert their perspectives and make connections between their worlds and those discussed

in school learning. The primary goal for the researchers was to engage the students in critical discussions about the importance of the different modes as forms of communication. In addition, the teacher in the experimental group also wanted to address her provincial governments' concerns on low literacy rates for the English learner.

Their study was situated in an urban school with a population of 30% ESL learners. The teacher had been an ESL teacher for eight years, whose teaching method included using a multiliteracy approach. The researchers observed 25 hours of language arts class instruction, interviewed the teacher and 8 of her students, conducted two focus group discussions, took field notes on each visitation, and collected four videos which represented the digital storytelling assignment.

Burke and Hardware (2018) report that students were able to critically analyze stories by drawing upon their experiences and their understanding of their cultural practices. Because they used several modes while creating their DS, their use of multimodalities led to changing their more traditional language practices in teaching ESL. For example, the students created a DS that further showed their comprehension, and in addition displayed their cultural perspectives and their belief systems on the central ideas of the novel that they read together. It is important to note that while creating their DS, students had opportunities to become meaning makers by reconstructing and engaging in the text that they were studying. According to Burke and Hardware (2018), the finding, "…attests to how a multiliteracies pedagogy in a classroom enriches the participants' learning experiences beyond that of the text" (p. 154). The data on the learning outcomes demonstrates that using a multimodal approach helped the

students not only learn by critically analyzing the stories but also by making meaningful connections with the text by using their personal backgrounds and unique cultures.

By tapping into personal backgrounds and unique cultures in their DS, students are also able to relate to others and understand cultural differences. A study was done on a multilingual DST (MDST) project by Anderson, Chung, and Macleroy, (2018), whose study had over 500 students and 16 lead teachers across various settings. For this study, students could tell stories not only in English but in various languages, including Arabic and French. The authors examined the ecological, collaborative, and multimodal perspectives in the MDST. Concerning this, they decided to add a collaborative element into their research methodology. However, the focus for the MDST project also drew on multimodal analysis of the composition process and examined how students were creating and 'balancing' (p.200) the full range of available semiotic resources.

The authors stated that "in framing the multimodal dimension of the project, we were very aware of the need to look at how DST could develop and support personal efficacy and expertise and the place of critical, social and special understanding within such a framework" (p. 200). The authors collected data by video recordings, and photographs of students creating the MDST and their presentations. In addition, the authors would collect: video/audio recordings of team meetings and training workshops; documentaries of school policies; outlines of work, teaching and materials; students' work-notes and final versions; student co-researchers' data and analysis, and lastly field notes. They also interviewed students, teachers, parents, and community members. In one interview, the lead teacher, on the subject of scriptwriting in Arabic and the drafting process, stated: "thinking skills have just gone up, everything is just analyzed over,

everything is thought through better…they are really thinking in depth…If they weren't doing digital storytelling, they wouldn't have that skill to think outside the box with the language" (Teacher, PS p. 204). According to this lead teacher, it seems to be clear that students are able to use the language in a creative context more so than when not using MDS. Students can increase not only in their critical thinking skills, but also in their social skills in which students are able to explore and understand different cultures and be able work together cohesively on their DS or MDS.

Moreover, the significant choices that students make during the multimodal configuration process improves students' critical thinking and decision making. For example, deciding what type of DS to be produced and the languages to be used. These findings may have a substantial impact on the way students learn using multimodality in their DS. It seems evident that the teachers were also seeing the improvement in their students' critical thinking skills and their creativity output. By analyzing this MSDT project by Anderson, Chung, and Macleroy (2018), one may see that the students and the teachers exhibited how multimodal composing encourages collaborative creativity amongst themselves and deeper thinking skills in which to make meaning. It may be that DST and MDST could be an important addition to any language classroom. As Anderson, Chung, and Macleory (2018) state, "With its emphasis on learner agency and voice, its grounding in individual lifeworlds and narrative forms, it translingual and transcultural affordances and its creative but critical stance towards the digital media may be seen to offer a rich context for fostering multiliteracies" (p. 197).

As stated above, MDST can encourage students to discover different cultures and in addition understand individual identities. Like most DST projects, the students were engaged with the process of writing and critiquing their DS. However, adding the multilingual aspect allowed students to see their classmates' cultures and develop an understanding of their lives. In conjunction with these findings, multimodal composing can give insight into the development of the learners' creative and dialogic thinking and how skilled with language learners can become with digital technology.

<div align="center">Multimodality and DST</div>

The previous studies concluded that the use of multimodality in DST in second and foreign language learning have reported benefits that increase the oral proficiency and vocabulary development. Moreover, the addition of multiliteracy skills, especially multimodal composition process (Oskoz & Elola, 2017; Yang, 2012), creative and critical thinking (Kortegast & Davis, 2017; Yang, 2012), and collaborative learning (Anderson, Chung, & Macleory, 2018) enhance the learning process. However, the effectiveness of multimodality in DST goes deeper than just the learning process of the student. DST provides students an opportunity to apply many different modes and situate difficult materials into personal experiences. This process can encourage students to "consider, state, and restate" their understanding of course material (Kortegast & Davis, 2017, p. 113). In doing so, students can communicate more purposefully and use their critical thinking skills in more profound ways.

While reinforcing course content, creating a DS also challenges learners to apply the content, utilize new technologies, and use multimodal communication (Kortegast &

Davis, 2017). Moreover, students and teachers can become more aware of how to use semiotics in the context of DST. They are able to interpret words with deeper insight and their worlds are more meaningful as a result. For example, the text becomes more than just empty words on a page, the text becomes words with meaning, thus providing them a greater understanding of not only the language, but the world around them.

Using multimodalities with DST promotes more in-depth learning, as well as stronger connections between students' semiotic resources and language. Yang (2012) noticed that when participants created a DS, they developed an "awareness and understanding about the … relationship between multimodal resources" (p. 234). Furthermore, they assigned meaning to the semiotic resources in their digital story through imagination and reimagination throughout the composition process. Students make connections to self as they become storytellers and enact their unique identities and their viewpoints. Critical connections in language are being made with semiotics. These connections can be made with the arts, such as theater, music, visual arts, and technology, that all help develop student's metalinguistic and metacognitive skills. For students to improve in their critical thinking skills and to have a more productive and positive language learning experience, it is crucial for these connections to be made. As evidence suggests, students can become more aware of not only semiotics but are able to use critical thinking skills to create and re-create meaning and become storytellers in which they can use language and their imagination in a combined effort.

Conclusion

Indeed, it may be that the use of stories is essential to human communication,

learning, and thinking. DST is a unique and an important tool in creating a learning

environment for which students use language to create meaning not only with words, but

about the world around them. Moreover, DST can be an integral part of teaching for

knowledge construction and, as stated previously, speaking proficiency. Because of the

dynamic process and modality of DST, it assists the students and audiences with

understanding spoken and written language by connecting semiotics with text and overall

meaning-making skills. For students and teachers alike, DST can play an important part

for the L2 learner. DST is a multi-layered tool that increases the overall growth and

proficiency use in the L2 classroom. In summary, teachers can create lessons that have

meaning for the students in which they can tell stories about "real life" and be able to

communicate using their unique voice.

With its attractive outcomes thus far, teachers may find this an excellent

alternative to teaching language and in particular the English language. According to

Burke and Hardware (2015), "wider applications of multiliteracies pedagogy will

ultimately create more avenues of the culture and lived experiences of all students,

especially students who are struggling with English, to be used as conduits for learning in

literacy class" (p. 154). The many multimodalities from DST that benefit learners are not

only limited to increasing cultural knowledge, critical thinking skills, and making

meaning from text and semiotic resources, it is also an important tool to enhance L2 oral

fluency. Furthermore, the benefits explored above of increasing language proficiency and

enhancing critical thinking, interpretative, and analytic skills may be only small examples

of what teachers and students can accomplish with language using DST.

Language, Literacy, and Culture Paper

The Effects of Song in Literacy, Language, and Culture in the L2 Classroom

Orientation and Reflection

In my second semester, the spring of 2019, I took Linguistics 6800: Teaching Literature in the L2 Classroom with Dr. Sarah Gordon. In class we focused on teaching with literature and culture in the L2 classroom. We read and discussed peer-reviewed publications on theories and practices of teaching with literature including using multimodal texts and technology. We discussed contemporary concepts in literary and critical theories and the concept of using culturally authentic texts in the L2 classroom. Most importantly, we were also able to create our own lesson plan and utilize it in teaching our classmates. Moreover, by discussing our readings on theories we were able to see and discuss how to apply them in a 'real' context. I found this to be the most helpful exercise; applying the knowledge from the articles that we read made the experiences much more meaningful, practical, and enjoyable.

As stated previously, my Teaching Philosophy is grounded in teaching with multiliteracies mainly by using music as a tool for L2 acquisition. Music has much to offer the language learner, which I will further explain in the paper, and it also gives attention to cultural knowledge and sensitivity to intercultural interactions (Griffiths, 2013). I believe that it is helpful to understand and know how to teach using creative methods that students will connect with and understand.

I was fascinated with the concept of using a multi-faceted tool such as music to acquire a second language. From my personal experience of being a vocal performer, I know and understand that music gives more in-depth understanding of the words, nuances of the language, and culture. Moreover, I knew that music could not only teach

language skills, grammar, and vocabulary, along with interpretive skills, but could also motivate students to learn more about other cultures.

In this section on music, I discuss how music benefits the language learner in the L2 classroom. This includes pronunciation, vocabulary building, speech fluency, anxiety, motivation, and incorporating the musical method. This paper ends with some ideas on how to implement songs in the language classroom.

The Effects of Song in Literacy, Language, and Culture in the L2 Classroom

In my pursuit of teaching with comprehensible input, opportunities for output, and empathetic error correction, I have found that students will flourish in their second language classroom using the methods above through the incorporation of music. For thousands of years, humans have intertwined music and language for reasons ranging from enjoyment to teaching. A wide variety of genres developed for people of all ages and social hierarchies: from the epic ballad to great poetry, from bawdy bar songs to children's nursery rhymes, songs played an essential role in the human experience throughout history. Songs and singing provide an array of benefits for the language learner. Personally, I benefit from singing songs in French, German, Italian, and Spanish because even after ten years of no formal instruction, I can still recall lines, words, and pronunciation of words I learned in those songs. I believe I developed a deeper understanding of culture from singing and reading the prose from these songs as well. Incorporating music in an L2 classroom can encompass a variety of essential aspects needed for second language acquisition.

Young and old alike can use songs to develop the necessary skills for language acquisition and cultural awareness. Songs have a myriad of benefits, including reading, writing, listening, vocabulary building, cultural knowledge, idioms, grammatical awareness, and phonemic awareness (Griffiths, 2013; Lems, 2001, 2018; Pérez Niño, 2010). Moreover, using songs in the classroom also benefits the student's psychological learning development. For example, songs can lower anxiety, motivate students, and engage multiple areas of the brain while learning (Dalton & Lewes, 2015; Lems, 2018).

All these skills and the psychological benefits are essential for language development. However, this paper will specifically focus on improving phonetic skills, building vocabulary, and motivating the ESL learner. Questions addressed include:

- How and to what extent can songs help L2 learners with pronunciation, and how can they help with vocabulary development?

- How and to what extent can songs lower learners' anxiety and boost motivation and engagement?

<div align="center">Pronunciation Skills</div>

Listening to and singing songs are significant components in improving the phonetic skills of students. In addition, the use of songs can develop a sensitivity and awareness of phonology essential for near-native-like communication (Ashtiani & Zafarghandi, 2015). When listening to a song, students become aware of supra-segmentals, which include the rhythm, stress, and intonation within the song. Songs contextually introduce these features that are part of a language's pronunciation (Lems, 2001, 2018). Students from many different language backgrounds can benefit from choral singing or reading the lyrics individually. For example, Lems (2001) points out that by listening to, reading, and also singing the lyrics, students can become aware of the natural reductions that can frequently occur in spoken English (i.e., the final /t/ + word-initial /y/ to [č] / in *don't you*). Also, Pérez Niño (2010) states that "Through songs, students discover the natural stretching and compacting of the stream of English" (p. 144). By noticing these supra-segmentals implicitly, learners can enhance their listening skills, thus improving their pronunciation on words that may have produced difficulty before.

Singing the lyrics or performing karaoke can enhance pronunciation because students become more aware of their pronunciation. The concept of singing karaoke is not altogether uncommon, and it doesn't necessarily fill every student with dread and anxiety, as one may assume. For example, Dalton and Lewes (2015) found that singing in the classroom produces the opposite effect: it lowers their anxiety. Likewise, students eagerly join in because they see singing as a fun activity, and students are 'okay' if they make mistakes such as mispronouncing a word or singing off-key (Dalton & Lewes, 2015). Some students are concerned about pronunciation, that they will not be understood. However, singing can help students with their pronunciation and help with eliminating "heavy" accents while speaking English. According to Erten (2015), "…as songs often represent different genres and dialects/accents of a language, karaoke singing can prove to be a useful tool for accent training" (p. 592). Besides, as stated earlier, singing the songs in class gives students a chance to let go of certain inhibitions and feel 'okay' to make some mistakes (Dalton & Lewes, 2015). I believe that karaoke creates the ideal atmosphere in a classroom; students participate without the feelings of inadequacy.

Besides creating an engaging learning atmosphere, karaoke can enhance articulation. It is one of the many objectives for using karaoke in the classroom. It gives the students opportunities to improve their language fluency through meaningful practice through singing (Erten, 2015). Song gives meaningful practice because of its practicality-- the focus on real-life and feelings that all people generally feel, and the way that songs can enhance open discussions. This method is key to attaining improved pronunciation and fluency; singing becomes more than just repetition of words, it becomes something meaningful, and thus, more easily remembered. Singing karaoke can develop learners'

pronunciation (Erten, 2015). By actively participating in singing the lyrics of a song, and discussing the songs in-depth, students practice pronouncing high-frequency words, thus developing their oral language proficiency (Dalton & Lews, 2015). The discussions centered on the songs become more than just practice, and the tasks become meaningful to the students and motivate them to keep trying to speak in their L2.

Furthermore, having students engage with the music playfully, such as acting out a scene with the words from the song or even singing poetry to music, can work as meaningful practice (Erten, 2015; Heinz, 2010; Lems, 2012). Heinz (2010) used German opera to spur language development in his German university classes. Heinz had students act and sing small scenes from the opera. Sometimes, students invented new conversations (often unrelated to the story) between the opera characters. By participating in this kind of creative and interpretive activity, students are not only working on their pronunciation but also building their vocabulary. This activity is very similar to what Erten (2015) describes as using karaoke to act out the parts of a song, which enhances the learning experience. Furthermore, Heinz (2010) states that students' communicative proficiency becomes "the focus and that it simulates real-world language" (p. 53). Learners do not have to feel the pressure of sticking to a contextualized script; instead, they can produce their script and use their creativity in using the language.

Vocabulary Building Skills

Learners are not only using creative thinking in the learning process but also activating prior knowledge using songs. For example, songs contain high-frequency words with emotional content, thus making them perfect for vocabulary comprehension and reviewing words (Lems, 2001). Students will begin to remember and recognize

words; therefore, less processing time is committed for learners to retain the correct word to use in "real-life." In addition, recognizing high-frequency words by sight rather than through decoding increases learners' reading fluency (Dalton & Lews, 2015). Pop songs, in particular, are very helpful in building and retaining new vocabulary. For instance, lyrics cover considerable lexical and grammatical repetitions (Erten, 2015; Lems, 2018). This type of repetitiveness can provide students "… with opportunities to get meaningful and frequent exposure to linguistic input necessary for language learning, through which new lexical and grammatical foundations may emerge in our developmental grammar" (Erten, 2015; p. 591). Pop songs cover a wide range of high-frequency words, idioms, and new vocabulary that can challenge the learner. It is also a popular and familiar genre of music for most learners.

Music, like a flood, inundates every aspect of most people's everyday lives. Many of us listen to music while in the car, eating out, shopping, studying, and even while we work. Therefore, the significant influence of music on people's lives offers a strong incentive to incorporate music in the language classroom. Singing songs in the classroom gives the language practice more meaning, a real-life application to life, and it makes the lesson much more engaging for the student. According to Alinte (2013), music can provide students with skills to understand "authentic communication" (p. 24). For example, Alinte explains that "music can give the students a real communicative advantage, as a song tells a story set to music. Therefore, songs have examples of authentic speech that is slowed, rhythmic, and repetitious – a useful tool to improve the students' learning of English" (p. 24). Teachers must be sensitive to language learners'

needs. Typically, most language learners need to listen to comprehensible input that is slow, repetitious, and rhythmic, as stated before.

Teaching with music can promote a successful learning atmosphere for all levels of learners. Music is culturally rich and contains emotionally relevant stories for learners that promote L2 development. Furthermore, because of these meaningful experiences, students are more likely to use and retain the vocabulary words presented in the song (Erten, 2015). According to Pérez Niño (2010), "Songs are a good way for teaching children not only theoretical concepts related to music but also vocabulary we use daily" (p. 149). I believe that teaching language with songs supports adult learners in their language development as well. Adults can comprehend and identify with more intricate lyrics, thus stimulating other areas of cognitive development, such as prior knowledge (memory and recall), critical thinking (analyzing), creative thinking (understanding from a new perspective). Moreover, the use of songs in games and other reading and writing activities, along with visual aids, create a more extensive vocabulary bank (Pérez Niño, 2010). Using music as the driving force, congruent with other aids, such as games and visual aids, are effective strategies for children and adult learners of all ages.

<div align="center">Speech Fluency</div>

Learners flourish when using music, because it is a playful method that creates a relaxing and low-stress atmosphere. Moreover, the concept of teaching with music in the foreign language classroom is beginning to gain traction. An article by authors Ashtiani and Zafarghandi (2015) found that young adults' speech production using music enhances speaking proficiency. Their article reviews research with many pre-tests and post-tests that exemplified the concept of teaching songs in the EFL classroom.

To begin, Ashtiani and Zafarghandi (2015) researched a class of Iranian EFL learners. Their study focused on discovering what kind of impact English songs had on adult English language learners' speech production. They found that songs can work better than traditional materials for and methods of teaching pronunciation and that songs help with overall speech production. They began their research by taking forty intermediate male students with ages ranging from 18 to 25. All students belonged to an English conversation class and were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The students were also given a speaking pre-test and post-test, in which they were recorded reading a passage according to their level.

The "intervention" phase (p. 215) had the students attend seven weeks of class, three days a week, with each session lasting 90 minutes. The experimental group worked on nine songs altogether, and aspects of phonology were addressed as well as listening, speaking, meaning of vocabulary or lines, and awareness of grammatical structure. The findings for connected speech were positive for the experimental group. Conversely, the scores on the post-tests for reading aloud showed no significant difference between the control and the experimental.

The authors conclude that the rhythm and sound helped the students attain more words (vocabulary) and helped them achieve a more fluent or 'natural' way of speaking. The experimental group outperformed the control group on many of the tests, and the experimental learners had "…create[ed] a cooperative ambiance and unison among the learners" (p. 221). The authors state that songs are a promising replacement for the traditional ways of teaching pronunciation and listening to words in isolation. According to Ashtiani and Zafarghandi (2015), "singing songs could generally have significant

impacts on the connected speech aspect of the second language learners' speech production" (p. 221). To be specific, I believe that vocabulary words learned in isolation will not benefit the learner, however, if learned in a specific and meaningful context, such as a song, the language learner will be able to recall and perform the word learned. Therefore, it is more beneficial for the learner to have the meaningful context of a song.

Along the same lines, Perez Niño (2010) also found evidence of improved oral production in EFL classes by using musical lyrics as a teaching method. Participants of Pérez Niño's study were students ranging from 10–15 years old, taking three English courses that involved two classes with their regular teachers and the third with their specialized music teacher. During a six-month English language course, Pérez Niño kept detailed field notes, diaries, video recordings, and interviews. Pérez Niño categorized, codified, and interpreted the data collected and described several trends he identified. First, there was vocabulary, listening, and a speaking emphasis in the class. Lastly, he added perception and motivation from the learners. The instructor would use specific songs such as popular rock and pop songs for the listening activities, during which he would have students fill in the blanks on a worksheet and discuss the meaning of the songs and any unknown vocabulary. In addition, the instructor taught basic music theory and the names of the musical instruments to the students. They became acquainted with the musical world, and students who played an instrument outside of class used this knowledge for their improvement.

Essential tools such as songs help the students recall vocabulary and the various musical instruments. For instance, the instructor was able to evaluate the student's oral production and correct any errors that students made while doing this activity. When

interviewing the students, they responded that they felt that their English improved by the end of the course, and their pronunciation and intonation advanced (Pérez Niño, 2010). Most importantly, the students responded that it was a fun way to learn English and would practice more at home than they usually did. Pérez Niño (2010) ultimately found that students perceived using music in the English classroom as a "funny way to learn," "an alternative to know more about music," and "a motivator to progress" (p. 147). By the conclusion of the study, Pérez Niño found that the presence of musical activities triggered vocabulary and that it was a tool to "grasp key concepts" (p. 147).

Additionally, it triggered listening and was the "steering force for speaking" (p. 147). Lastly, the complementary activities enforced said "speaking skills" (p. 147). Teachers can integrate a broader range of vocabulary words and cultural contexts than a teacher can in a traditional classroom. As noted from previous studies, the students were more relaxed and were able to attain a broad range of vocabulary words and were motivated each day to practice.

Music and Anxiety

Music is a relaxing and playful tool. Learners can focus on improving their L2 speaking skills, listening skills, and writing skills without the added pressure of a "perfect performance." The auditory skills and rhythmic patterns in songs also "stimulate brain activity and encourage imagination" (Boothe & West, 2015; p. 300). The overall atmosphere in the classroom is an essential factor, as well. The potentially harmful anxiety that may be present in the classroom is important to consider, as well as the motivation and engagement levels of the students.

When using a pedagogical tool such as music, teachers must have a specific goal in mind and be aware of the levels and needs of the students. Ludke (2009) states, "To ensure positive learning outcomes, pedagogical methods must efficiently introduce and reinforce new material, while at the same time capturing students' attention and increasing their motivation to learn" (p. 10). A positive outcome in the classroom requires material that not only captures the students' attention but also increases motivation. The latter is especially important in light of the countless studies linking high anxiety levels to poor performance in foreign language classrooms (Dolean & Dolean, 2014; Horwitz, 2010; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Music is an essential tool to relax students in learning their L2. According to Boothe and West (2015), music and song are "instrumental" in lowering affective filters that interfere with language learning (p. 249). Krashen (1983) suggests in his affective filter hypothesis that emotional states such as fear, anxiety, and boredom can hinder ideal learning. A raised affective filter blocks the input the student receives, preventing information about the second language from making the much-needed connection in the brain (Boothe & West, 2015). However, with the incorporation of music, a lowered affective filter in the students will increase positive attitudes towards learning, their classmates, and their teacher (Dolean & Dolean, 2014). In conjunction with this, music creates expanded and creative opportunities while fostering a relaxed atmosphere for learners to develop skills. According to Boothe and West (2015), "Along with this environment, language acquisition is also achieved, often, without concrete lesson objectives, but through self-directed learning that leads to exponential growth" (p. 249). Internal motivation, in which a student is excited to learn more about the language, will

increase. Inspired students will use more cognitive processing, such as questioning, and the students can thrive in their classrooms.

Lowering anxiety and increasing internal motivation are key to an effective language classroom. There are different types of anxiety when learning a language; for example, students may experience communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz, 2010; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). For instance, Dolean and Dolean (2014) inspected the effect of music on foreign language students' anxiety. Their research began with a simple question: Can music lower the level of classroom anxiety? Their participants included 60 Romanian middle school students who took English classes since 1st grade. At this point, in 7th grade, they were taking English classes three times per week. The students' anxiety levels were assessed using a foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) to measure three different classes. Their program, called "English through Music," was a 12-week course. The goal of the class was to enhance students' "vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading fluency through songs" (p. 514).

The students were told that they would also be tested and graded once every two weeks on their vocabulary and expressions. The teacher would also randomly ask each of the students 1 question in each session to describe the meaning of vocabulary words. When each session would begin, there would be 10 minutes of repeating the songs the students had learned in the previous courses. The repeated sessions were accompanied by guitar, and overall, they would learn 1 to 1.5 songs, dependent upon the difficulty of the song in each session. Out of the 12-week course, students learned 15 songs in total, and most were not known to the students. To counteract students easily downloading the

songs off the web, they picked songs that the teacher created and others that were not widely available. All the songs were in a major key (upbeat key), and the songs were either medium or fast-paced, all no slower than 120 beats per minute.

The results showed a definite connection between music and anxiety in the experimental groups. After they tested the students with another FLCAS at the end of the 12-week experiment, results showed a significant decrease in anxiety. The control groups (those who did not want extra credit) did not have any marked anxiety level decrease, whereas the experimental groups had significant drops in anxiety levels. Dolean and Dolean calculated the anxiety levels dropped to 23.55%, whereas the control groups dropped only 3.27%. These results reflect a small number of students and may not be used to generalize that all students will have the same results completely. In the future, conducting further research studies on classroom anxiety with music in different contexts will yield more data on lowering debilitating anxiety in the language classroom.

It is not always easy to incorporate a creative method into a language classroom; however, with practice, teachers can create an engaging and effective classroom for learning. Viladot and Cslovjecsek (2014) found that language teachers integrating music in their classrooms thought it to be challenging in some ways, but overall fun and engaging for everyone. For two years, they created a continuous professional development course for European teachers to learn how to use music and a foreign language together. Teachers in Switzerland and Spain used the training models, and in-depth interviews took place in which they gained a deeper insight into the challenges and the highlights of integrating language learning with music. The teachers accessed hands-on learning experiences; they also reflected together and encouraged each other through

collaboration. They were able to study the activities on their specific website and apply

them in their classrooms. The website included spaces for recording new ideas,

explaining music language activities, solution, and ideas that the teachers could share (p.

11).

The teachers used this methodology to raise motivation and improve relationships

in the classroom. Moreover, the approach was more serious and in-depth than their

traditional curriculum and language textbooks. After their courses were finished, the

teachers found that they were able to delve deeper into both their understanding of the

integration of music and their reflection of their teaching. For instance, what their

expectations were in implementing music and the constraints of what they experienced in

the classroom. Viladot and Cslovjecsek found that apart from personal enrichment for the

teachers, by using different approaches and developing new strategies, teachers were able

to use the latest teaching strategies with ease. Viladot and Cslovjecsek state, "They seem

to think music integration is a useful tool for encouraging language learning. In their own

words, "(integration) is the natural way children learn," "(music) makes for a good

atmosphere," and "builds a good relationship," and "singing and moving is fun" (p. 11).

Using music integration improves not only students' motivation but also the teachers'

personal and professional development.

Song and Motivation

Motivation is what most teachers want from their students, but it is hard to find

how to motivate students when teaching a time-limited, required curriculum, or from a

textbook that may be lacking. Making the lessons enjoyable for the students may be quite

challenging; however, the integration of music may be the key that teachers are looking

for to motivate their students. According to Kirschner and Tomasello (2010), music-making groups can offer an opportunity to have "fun and successful collaboration in the classroom and may even enhance young children's engagement in positive social interaction and cooperative behavior" (Akhtar, Ludke, & Moran, 2013). Social development plays an important role when integrating music. However, if anxiety levels are high, students are worried about their peers' judgment, and cannot focus on their language learning, it is difficult to acquire the new skills needed.

With song-based activities, students are more likely to be engaged and motivated, thus helping students to have a lowered anxiety levels. Music creates a positive atmosphere and reduces the anxieties that students tend to feel. For example, Dalton and Lewes (2015) state that because of the fun nature of song-based activities, their students became "more energized, less reserved, and more self-confident" (p. 33). Students tend to worry less about making mistakes in front of their professor and their peers, and the students are eager to collaborate (Dalton & Lewes, 2015). As stated by Akhtar, Ludke, and Moran (2013), music is a naturally engaging medium, especially among children. Akhtar, Ludke, and Moran conducted a research study with elementary school students in EFL classes in Albania; they were very enthusiastic learners when it came to lessons that involved music. The younger children found it to be very 'fun' and 'enjoyable,' and the older children commented that their vocabulary increased, and they were able to remember more. Their teachers remarked that it improved their language skills (particularly pronunciation and vocabulary), created a classroom that was animated, and promoted their students' motivation and engagement with the learning activities. Integration of music also reduced the number of discipline issues in the classroom,

making it a more "manageable and rewarding" environment for the teacher (p. 24). Students are motivated and want to participate as music is a social activity, thus improving their social and linguistic development.

Motivating students requires creating a relaxed atmosphere in which students can let go of certain anxieties, which will help them persist in their language learning. According to Alinte's (2013) research on teaching English grammar with music, participants became relaxed when songs were used in the curriculum. Alinte's students were reportedly smiling, engaged, and actively participating by answering and asking questions. Parents also reported that their children were practicing at home, singing the lyrics and revising vocabulary and the grammatical items taught in class, thus improving their language skills.

Employing music and song provides a way for language teachers to motivate and teach crucial skills in language communication. Regularly introducing song allows a language teacher to benefit students' use of language by improving syntax and their speaking fluency and listening skills. According to Alinte (2013), teachers should "…. try using music and songs to complement their lesson plans benefitting the learners by establishing a relaxing and positive learning atmosphere in the English class…" (p. 25). Even though other non-musical tools, strategies, and methods work well, language teachers are not limited to using only these. Through the efforts of the teacher, combining song and language enhances lessons that improve not only the motivation of the students but also create an engaging lesson.

Integrating Song in the Classroom

Naturally, integrating songs into the language classroom requires preparation, such as choosing the right material and linking the content to other curricula. However, after some thoughtful consideration, teachers, even those who may have no musical background, can integrate music into their lesson plans. There are numerous ways to incorporate songs into the language classroom, as shown by many authors (e.g., Arnold & Herrick, 2017; Dalton & Lewes 2015; Lems, 2001, 2018; Ludke, 2009). Songs can be integrated into a lesson plan to fulfill a specific section in the curriculum, complete a thematic unit, or compliment a topic of students' interest (Alinte, 2013). Teachers can use songs to teach critical skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, listening comprehension, speaking skills, pronunciation, reading skills, writing skills, and culture (Arnold & Herrick, 2017; Lems, 2018; Ludke, 2009). For these reasons, integrating songs in the ESL/EFL classroom is an excellent venture for teachers to explore and to enhance language learning.

An example of incorporating song in an intermediate class can be introduced by re-enacting the song in which students can use the words learned from the song and create a script in which each student writes lines. As a group, they can assign characters, generate plot, and act their play in front of their classmates. According to Dalton and Lewes (2015), this activity "…provides students working in groups, the opportunity to develop a script based on a text read in class" (p. 34). This particular lesson capitalizes on the many facets of language learning, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. According to Bridges (2006) this specific type of lesson, "…addresses these important skills. The combination of accuracy and fluency helps to define a skillful reader" (p. 3).

The author then goes on to state that, "…to portray characters effectively, readers…strive to have voice flexibility, good articulation, proper pronunciation, and voice projection" (p. 2). This combination is advantageous for learners in not only engaging them but in furthering their language learning in speaking and pronunciation, as well as in reading, listening, writing, grammar, and interpretive skills.

Conclusion

From very young learners to mature adults, using songs in the classroom helps develop the necessary skills for language acquisition and cultural awareness. Again, song provides a nearly unlimited range of benefits, including skills, vocabulary building, cultural knowledge, grammatical awareness, and pronunciation practice (Griffiths, 2013; Lems, 2001, 2012; Pérez Niño, 2010). These benefits encompass more than merely a "fun activity."

It is evident that using songs in the classroom also benefits students' cognitive learning development, including lowering anxiety, motivating students, and engaging multiple areas of the brain while learning (Dalton & Lewes, 2015; Lems, 2018). Numerous learning opportunities and widespread benefits are available to English learners and teachers when using songs. Not only are songs a valuable motivator for students it also causes students to use higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. According to Boothe and West (2015), "By adding variety and creative thought to the learning experience, the capacity for language development is expanded, and the brain is stimulated with unique and enhanced learning" (p. 248). Learners are motivated to understand more about the language, the culture, and in

addition, themselves as language learners. These musical/language experiences will affect the learner's linguistic journey for a lifetime.

In conclusion, working songs into the language classroom creates meaning and purpose while developing much-needed skills. Additionally, Boothe and West (2015) state that music "… provides a stimulating and learning platform that encourages them to excel and provides a change from traditional classroom routines" (p. 248). Integrating this art form into the L2 classroom can improve language skills, simultaneously lower anxiety in the students, and create an engaging curriculum that has students motivated and excited to learn more.

Annotated Bibliography

Storytelling through Digital Media

Storytelling through Digital Media

Globally, all groups of people use storytelling to preserve their culture, to educate, to instill moral values, and to pass down wisdom to their children. From generation to generation, stories have been passed down and are the very backbone of cultures. However, in this digital age, storytelling has become enhanced, with sound effects, intricate graphics, music, and animations; storytelling can reach people around the world in a matter of minutes, even seconds. In order to teach literacy and oral skills, and to motivate students, language classrooms need to perform at a higher level for the students of this technological age. Therefore, using a multimodal tool such as Digital Storytelling (DST) will not only enhance literacy learning for students, but also their speaking skills, and will enhance their global cultural knowledge.

Personally, I have always enjoyed learning from stories told orally and from reading in class. I believe that the stories I read and heard helped me acquire new vocabulary and pronunciation, to critically analyze literature, and to become more acquainted with the morals and cultural values of the societies that these stories came from. Because of the impact stories had on me, I am eager to incorporate storytelling into my future classrooms. When I began exploring the concept of traditional storytelling in the second language classroom for one of my classes, I encountered the idea of storytelling through digital media, which intrigued me. Another course, Teaching with Technology with Dr. Joshua Thoms, inspired me to investigate digital storytelling (DS) further. I wanted to know if implementing this multimodal tool in my classroom would benefit the ESL/EFL learner and teacher.

What I find the most interesting is that DST connects the creator to their audience in ways that may not be entirely possible when first learning a language. For example, the learner can create and tell a personal story about their immigration in their L2. With traditional storytelling, language learners tend to be limited by their small vocabulary and could possibly misunderstand social cues. Therefore, meaning may not be communicated effectively. However, with the rapid use of technology in the classrooms, learners can convey their thoughts, ideas, and stories to a broader audience using more accessible resources than ever before, such as visuals, sounds, music, and text. Learners are also able to collaborate with peers invoking a real-world context while simultaneously communicating meaning and attaining more language skills needed for acquisition.

I began to write this annotated bibliography after reading scholarly articles on DST. I also viewed examples of DSs that were created and uploaded online. In addition, I had personal experience in volunteer teaching with my husband, a 5th-grade Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Spanish instructor, by implementing a few small-scale DS creations for his students. I was able to see firsthand the struggles that he had in helping his students develop their stories, but also the numerous benefits the students gained from such experiences. For example, the learners practiced public speaking in their second language (L2), they learned how to write using correct syntax, their understanding of vocabulary increased, and the learners understood their classmates on a more personal level. These factors created a more close-knit community in the classroom. Additionally, the teacher was able to understand the various backgrounds of his students, thus attaining more empathy, and he learned of their interests, which drove his future curriculum.

Consequently, I found an article by **Razmia, Pouralib, and Nozad (2014),** who investigated two groups of EFL learners using DST. The authors focused on students' learning and motivation by analyzing the construction of meaningful narratives and the level of students' involvement in the DST process. Each group was asked to present two stories of their choosing during the semester. The stories were chosen from Perrine's literature coursebook. The DST group was trained on how to use Microsoft PowerPoint while the control group was not. After this study, the students participated in an interview in which they were asked to read and present their selected short stories. The data showed that students in the DST group developed their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills to a higher degree compared to their counterparts in the control group. These results could be helpful in my future classrooms because the participants in the DST group were motivated to use oral production and outperformed the control group in motivation and presentation. The students in the DST group expressed satisfaction with the learning experience because it was personal, enjoyable, and creative. They also learned tech skills.

At the beginning of my research, I focused on the use of DST concerning student's oral proficiency skills; however, I found that since it also improved their writing, reading, and listening skills, it could be an excellent multiliteracy tool to use in the classroom. I believe that by using this digital format in an ESL/EFL classroom, the students can express their opinions and construct their digital narratives for an audience purposefully and communicatively.

I also learned that with DST, specific language aspects such as vocabulary are used more frequently and can be recalled more easily. **Hwang, Shadiev, Hsu, Huang, Hsu, and Lin (2016)** describe how DST facilitated second language acquisition (SLA)

for EFL speakers in Taiwan. They explain how this approach benefited the students in several areas of L2 acquisition, including expression, vocabulary, and syntax. This study was done on elementary students in Taiwan, who were divided into a control group and an experimental group. Both groups had the same EFL teachers. All students were able to interact with classmates to create stories individually or in pairs, and they shared their personal stories with their peers.

It was confirmed that the DST software that the researchers created could support learning through storytelling effectively. The students in the experimental group were able to create their own stories and had ample opportunities to practice the second language. This also increased student's motivation, imagination, and creativity. Additionally, the results demonstrated that the students who used the system regularly scored significantly higher than their peers in the control group. Secondly, the program's animations, such as the interactive avatars, also enhanced their speaking performance. When interviewed, the students replied that the animation helped them to remember vocabulary and to practice their speaking skills when creating their individual stories. Third, in correlation to the students' test scores, the authors report that the student's speaking performance on individual storytelling in the DST group was indicative of the students' higher test scores. In the interviews, the DST students stated that they were able to focus and were less distracted by other students. Lastly, the majority of the students responded positively toward the system: they perceived it as fun and felt it was easy to do.

This research will help inform my future teaching experience as it gives clear and thorough information on some of the positive benefits for students using digital media for

storytelling in the L2 classroom. While this study was conducted with young EFL learners, the effects of DST could be similar for adults. The learners in the DST group gained more experience in speaking in their L2, compared to the control group. These findings motivate me to create a positive learning environment using a multiliteracy approach and the methods of DST.

      Oskoz and Elola (2016) noticed that even though DST software programs for instructional purposes are becoming more available, little is known of the learner's perceptions of software use. Since I am interested in using this digital format to use in my own future classroom, I wanted to see what Oskoz and Elola had found.

      They conducted the study with six college-level Spanish-speaking advanced ESL students. The students created stories using text, images, and sounds, then shared them online. They wrote and recorded scripts which they integrated into their stories. They also used pictures and music to convey their message further. The researchers used questionnaires, reflections, and online journals to investigate the students' DST experience.

      The students found DST enriching and motivating; they reported feeling pushed positively and engagingly with the use of the software tools and cultural materials to enhance their stories. The students also noted that they were able to make their stories more personal and that they used the knowledge that they gained for their long-term goals. Lastly, because of the nature of their stories, most said that it helped them enrich their vocabulary, become more aware of their grammar, and improve their overall speaking level. While this study had a limited N of only six participants, I nevertheless believe it offers excellent points to consider in the practical application of DST.

Although my primary interest is in ESL/EFL students, the following study on English speakers learning Spanish has similar findings. It has clear examples of how to integrate DST into an ESL/EFL classroom.

Castañeda (2013) relates high school students' experiences with creating their own stories using DST. The study involved twelve high school students, six female and six males, who were in their fourth year of Spanish study. Ten of them were native English speakers, while two were Spanish heritage speakers. A writing prompt directed students to begin writing a personal story about a high school experience. During the process, the students started to use known as well as new vocabulary and grammar in their stories. They also recorded their dialogue to hear their speech and correct their pronunciation, grammar, and pace of speech. The students reported that they were soon feeling comfortable and that they were using their Spanish in a real-life situation. The students were at first concerned with learning the technology and uploading pictures and music. However, later in the process, they became aware of the primary goal of writing their personal story. Students became conscious of their speech in Spanish and began to be more confident in speaking in class. They had viable means to achieve meaningful goals in their classroom and were able to practice the language in a powerful way in which they were engaged in real-world communication.

As a future educator, I want my students to reflect during the writing process and have students create a meaningful communicative project that encourages them to use their L2 in real-life situations. I want my students to become active participants in the classroom by telling their unique stories to each other with confidence.

Smeda, Dakich, and Sharda (2014) describe the overall effectiveness of DST in a variety of school subjects. The participants included five teachers from subjects such as science, art, English, library, and social studies in primary and secondary schools in Australia. The researchers had the teachers attend a workshop to understand how to teach and use the storytelling software themselves.

The authors noticed that students were engaged in the classroom with fluctuations from moderate to high. The levels of cooperation and collaboration between peers increased. According to the authors, the teacher's perceptions were positive as they noticed that their students were able to rely on their cognitive skills, and they noted that there was an improvement in the students' interpersonal skills as well. The teachers also stated that they found the research study very beneficial to them as they were able to improve their technological expertise, and it gave them an engaging educational curriculum for their students. I believe I can help students use DST to enhance their critical thinking skills, oral proficiency, and even interpersonal skills.

It is common to have various forms of technology in everyday life. According to **Kortegast and Davis (2017),** technology should be used more in educational settings. In this article, the authors described DST as a pedagogical tool and a strategy in teaching new material and theories. In addition, I found information on the use of multimodal tools for DST by Kortegast and Davis pertinent in describing multiliteracy pedagogy. They state that by incorporating DST into the classroom, the diverse learning styles of the students are accommodated because they will have access to the many different

modalities associated with DST. It is also engaging for the students and provides them a way to strengthen their learning by re-packaging the information they learn.

The authors applied DST in a college student development course of 16 first- and second-year master's students. The purpose of the DS was to promote self-reflexivity by having students incorporate theories and connect to topics discussed in class. One student stated that the classroom "transformed" in that it was changed into a learning place where communication and connection happened. The instructor noted that her students were able to communicate compelling stories that contributed to their learning developments. She also saw students grapple with theories covered in class and embed the new learning material in their stories. After students shared their stories in class, lively discussions ensued, enabling students to connect. The assignment allowed for new ways to check for understanding; it had students show their knowledge and explain the theories taught in class.

By incorporating DST in my future classroom, I will help students reflect on and evaluate the material that we are learning. They can participate in meaning-making activities, engage in self-reflexivity, and demonstrate their knowledge and their development through their personal experiences using a multimodal platform. As a future educator, one of my goals is that students will understand the why behind school subjects and course topics. This article demonstrates that DST can assist students in making meaning out of the material by making connections with the content and with each other.

In my attempt to understand multiliteracy and the role that DST plays in teaching ESL, I found the **Towndrow and Pereira (2018)** treatment of multimodal composition valuable. Semiotic resources such as an image or text are used in a multimodal form such

as DST. They state that while textbooks for students have a picture to accompany the text, "tasks set for students characteristically do not use students' semiotic understanding or capabilities of designing inter-semiotic relationships" (p. 181). Therefore, with no resources available for the students, it can be challenging and make understanding the meaning more difficult.

Towndrow and Pereira offer three reasons for multimodal use in ESL classrooms and beyond: first, English learners will have a more extensive range of resources to use for expression instead of relying exclusively on written language. This gives them the freedom to interpret texts and state new and complex meanings. Second, practices such as DST will have learners communicating and negotiating meanings through various media. Lastly, students can discuss in class and challenge the "taken-for-granted views about 'their' worlds" (p.191). The authors noticed that teachers and students become more semiotically aware; for example, they now can understand the meaning behind the words, their interpretation of subjects deepens, and their "worlds become more meaningful as a result" (p.191).

Being able to communicate with others in class is essential. However, to communicate successfully, students need to make connections with the new concepts and information that they are learning. By using semiotic resources for multimodal composition, L2 learners can critically analyze the knowledge that they are gaining and apply it. With multimodality, my future ESL students can explore concepts and investigate ways to convey personal identity. They will be able to incorporate their culture and history as they strategically apply the knowledge they have acquired.

With the use of technology in the classrooms, students can apply real-world knowledge that they have acquired from the classes, as seen in a study by **Burke and Hardware (2015).** The authors conducted a study that used technology in the classroom and investigated whether it was challenging to use, compared to the more traditional learning tools and methods of teaching. The authors examined an ESL teacher who used a multiliteracies pedagogy and used a multimodal approach to the tasks she assigned. The students used Digital Photo to create their DSs, and the topic was learning about life and death. The teacher focused on situated practice and explicit instruction, as outlined in the multiliteracies pedagogy. The students organized the content used in the creation of their digital photo story project and also critically evaluated their production. Moreover, the students were able to have a learning experience that changed the way they typically approached tasks.

Typically, ESL classes enroll students from many different cultural backgrounds and languages. As an ESL instructor, I will no doubt have various languages and cultures in one classroom. In that context, the use of multimodality will be a helpful tool to support communication and manage linguistic diversity in my class. Multimodality will help L2 learners make meaning with the various modes introduced to them. Using a multimodal approach, such as DST, will honor the students' diverse cultural and linguistic diversities and will be effective in promoting their acquisition of the English language.

Thus far, I have reviewed articles on DST in a language classroom and a social studies classroom. **Anderson, Chung, and Macleroy (2018)** extended the concept of DST by introducing multilingual digital storytelling. They launched a global literacy

project that provided a way to nurture and a way to reflect on a multiliteracies pedagogy in practice. The authors wanted to recognize the importance of self-representation and engagement with others using DST. They note that DST can become a collaborative way of working and sharing across the borders of school and community.

The multilingual approach to DST is designed to support multilingual repertoires. Every language is distinct in its expressive resources, such as its unique sounds and rhythms, history and culture, values, and beliefs. In addition to arguing that more attention needs to be given to the multilingual dimension within multiliteracies research, the authors offer an example of how they are doing this. Again, I believe that students can gain understanding and knowledge of themselves and others in a communicative project such as multimodal DST.

Typically, studies conducted on DST have investigated the effects the method has on students; however, **Yang (2012)** studied two EFL teachers who were L2 speakers of English. The author analyzed their DST projects and their written narratives while creating their projects. According to Yang, the teachers' approach to multimodal DS composing caused them to construct hybrid texts in which they used informational text and narrative to communicate their stories. In addition, they also assigned semiotic resources such as emoji to create meaning and a more profound understanding of their narratives. Her participants approached the development of multimodal DST by using text and oral recordings and arranged them to be cohesive. Secondly, the participants were able to critically frame and orchestrate the use of multimodal resources to fully show their stories' intent. And lastly, participants' DS design and re-design created a more in-depth meaning with semiotic resources such as emoji. Yang illustrates the

intricate process the learners used to compose their multimodal DS. The two ESL teachers' DS creations offer an example of the benefits in writing fluency, cultural affordance, independent learning, and socio-cultural connections using semiotic resources.

Using previous research on narrative and speech styles, **Liang (2018)** uses digital media and multimodal communication to carry out a multimodal narrative discourse analysis (MNDA). The author uses pedagogical and analytical procedures to teach the use of multimodal storytelling. In the study, college-level EFL learners first created a multimodal narrative simulation in the game world of Second Life. Afterward, the students presented, assessed, and revised their stories, both face-to-face and in digital contexts, through multiple conversational opportunities. Liang's research shows that by using more multimodal tasks, students learn more of their target language, including new vocabulary words presented in and needed for the use of the gaming software that the students used to create their DS.

Liang stated that the use of the "narrative elements, discourse structures, and stylistic devices, as well as bodily, visual, and video resources, assisted the students in developing multimodal designs and storytelling styles" (p.56). For example, in Liang's article the L2 students not only had a transformative experience with the target language but also learned more about the technological platform and the software's vocabulary.

After examining modalities of DS, **Jewitt (2016)**, explains how different modes with written text can be interpreted differently by each person. For example, he describes a game in which different modes could translate a character as "ghostly." The character uses high and low inflections in her voice; in addition, the picture on the screen fades in

and out on the screen. Moreover, Jewitt describes that writing and speech can be used to give expression to characters in games, which is similar in creating a DS. By using the semiotic resources the and analytical or problem-solving skills of multiliteracies, one can gain clues of how to finish a game or, in this case, to make meaning from a DS.

According to Jewitt, writing today is very different from what it was in the past. Writing and reading roles in schools are changing. The way students see writing on the screen has changed from what it was in the past. Words on the computer screen now involve image, sound, and movement; they can disappear and reappear as well. With this article, I became more aware of what literacy means to me and that it may mean something entirely different for my future students and how my students interpret multimodal texts.

Besides using DST for simply learning a foreign language, it is also applicable to learning English for the workforce. **Kimura (2012)** studied Japanese learners of English using Photo Story 3 to create a DS. The learners in her study were Japanese nursing students who created their DSs out of nursing episodes from their textbooks. To complete the project successfully, the students needed to read the text deeply, imagine the story, and discuss their interpretations with others.

In most Photo Story applications, the students could record and revise narration if needed, which, according to Kimura, is essential to improving oral reading. Kimura found that the students in her study had a difficult time reading deeply and visualizing the stories because most students are taught to read and translate only. Because of its multimodal possibilities, DST can foster language comprehension and meaningful communication.

The use of semiotics enables students to fully understand and more accurately describe their world around them as well. **Honeyford (2013)** describes how learners can become independent storytellers using multimodal resources. Honeyford characterizes the use of multimodality as a way to combine different modes, real-life artefacts, and literary principles for students to characterize their lives, whether real or imagined. Honeyford studied immigrant middle school students who were studying writing in their second language, English. In the article, Honeyford focused on the theory of artifactual literacies, narrative theory, magical realism, and cultural studies, specifically the study of cultural identity. A particular story was highlighted and evaluated; Gabriel's 'My Name Is' narrative that has elements of magical realism and also tells the story of his immigrant youth. His story shows how students' cultural identities can be interpreted through "fantastical" narratives developed to share their story and "create new realities" (p. 17).

Honeyford's example of Gabriel's DS demonstrates that students can create their realities using their imagination in a different language. I find that this tactic would be beneficial as it is using the student's interpretation of self and their creativity to produce a story in which the students can use their culture from their first country and create a new identity in their new country. As a future educator, I believe that while using a multimodal composition method, such as using semiotics, written language, the visual arts, and other various modes, the students can create an identity, which is important when learning and living in a new country.

A poignant article by **Johnson and Kenderick (2017)** presents DSs from immigrant and refugee adolescents in a school district's transition program. One student, in particular, shared aspects of his world and his new identity. Johnson and Kenderick

outlined some of the issues facing the students and teachers for immigrant and refugee children. Many refugee students have their learning disrupted in which their language is incomplete, making it quite difficult for them to communicate on a deeper level. In addition to significant gaps in literacy learning and social and oral communication, many come with mental health issues from trauma, making the student's life and the teachers' job more challenging. Through his DS, the refugee student was able to engage others with his limited linguistic abilities through the different modes. The student found that the music was most helpful to him in creating his story. He stated that he would write his script, but when music was added, he would find different words to add or change to be more in synch with the feelings from the music. He stated that the music in his DS made a significant impact on his understanding and in connecting to his story. The images were equally crucial to the student. He chose pictures of a person alone with their face covered. He wanted these pictures to convey what he was feeling while he and his family were waiting in Syria, with no jobs, and no word from Canada about their immigration status. DS thus creates meaning on so many levels.

Conclusion

Using a multimodal approach gives students abundant opportunities for communication in which they can be understood more clearly and express their identities despite language barriers. For teachers, it creates a unique educational environment that values diversity and engages classroom relationships that go beyond the typical stereotypes of culture and immigration. It gives everyone a voice. It delves deeper into each student's personal experiences and creates enhanced opportunities for students to explore and understand the complex facets of a learner's past life, identity, and future.

LOOKING FORWARD

Looking Forward

As I contemplate the next step in my journey, my thoughts are consumed with teaching abroad, whether in secondary schools or at the collegiate level. With the encouragement of Dr. Maria Spicer-Escalante and Dr. Sarah Gordon, plus the research I have conducted here at USU, I began to envision myself creating my own school. A school in which English Language Learners could learn the language in their classrooms and then perform and demonstrate their knowledge on the stage.

My vision of an English learning performing arts school is still in its formative stages. However, I am confident that I will be able to apply the theories and ideas presented in my research and coursework. I believe that it can be an effective pedagogy for the acquisition process. My professors at Utah State have prepared me sufficiently to begin my teaching career. I believe with a little more time and teaching practice; my vision can become a reality. My time spent here with my professors and classmates at Utah State University has not only shaped me into a more skilled and knowledgeable teacher, but also a more confident and educated individual.

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