Teaching Chinese as a Second Language in a Supportive Student-Centered Environment

Linqi Peng
Utah State University

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TEACHING CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A SUPPORTIVE STUDENT-CENTERED ENVIRONMENT

by

Linqi Peng

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Committee Member                          Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
2021
ABSTRACT

Teaching Chinese as a Second Language in a Supportive Student-centered Environment

by

Linqi Peng: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2021

Major Professor: Dr. Joshua J. Thoms
Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is a compilation that includes the author’s research, thoughts, and opinions while studying in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University (USU). It represents the author’s reflections and perspectives as a MSLT graduate student and as a graduate instructor who taught Chinese as a Second Language courses to undergraduates at beginners’ levels.

Three sections are included in the portfolio. It begins with the author’s teaching perspectives, including professional environment, teaching philosophy statement, and professional development through teaching observations. In the second section, two research papers demonstrate her research interests in the practices of teaching Chinese as a second language. Lastly, an annotated bibliography was discussed for further research.

(112 pages)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chinese language classroom.

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<td>American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages</td>
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<td>ALM</td>
<td>Audiolingual Method</td>
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<tr>
<td>CALL</td>
<td>Computer-Assisted Language Teaching</td>
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<td>CF</td>
<td>Corrective Feedback</td>
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<td>CFL</td>
<td>Chinese as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
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<td>CSL</td>
<td>Chinese as a Second Language</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>Dynamic Assessment</td>
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<td>DLI</td>
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<td>Group Dynamic Assessment</td>
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<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language / Native Language</td>
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<td>Second Language</td>
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<td>LDS</td>
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<td>MSLT</td>
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<td>NCST</td>
<td>Native Chinese-Speaking Teacher</td>
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<td>OPT</td>
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<td>PACE</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a record of my professional development and personal growth while studying in the MSLT program as a graduate student and teaching Chinese as a second language as a graduate instructor. It represents some of my reflections and learning in the second language teaching field over the last two years, especially perspectives in teaching Chinese as a second language.

The portfolio consists of three main sections: teaching perspectives, research perspectives, and an annotated bibliography. The first section, professional environment and teaching philosophy statement (TPS), describes my career goals and beliefs as a second language teacher. It also contains what I have learned from other instructors after observing their classes of different languages and levels. In the research perspectives section, two research papers demonstrate my interests in applying sociocultural theory and investigating students’ perceptions in a Chinese L2 classroom. Lastly, an annotated bibliography about dynamic assessment is highlighted as a potential avenue for further research.

The compilation of the portfolio helps me have a clearer understanding of my career goals in the future and the kind of second language teacher I want to be. It also confirms my belief in the necessity of building a supportive student-centered learning environment for Chinese L2 learners.
TEACHING PERSPECTIVES
PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

From an early age, I have always wanted to be a teacher. Like other aspiring educators, I have devoted myself to different audiences, whereby I have benefited considerably. My teaching experience started with English home tutoring in 2015. I helped my tutee change her attitude from lacking interest to feeling confident in using English. This first teaching experience made me realize that language education is far beyond delivering language itself.

My interest in language teaching continued to develop throughout my college years and after graduation. I spent over a year teaching Chinese to adults in England as a volunteer in the community. I loved teaching and learning with them. They were learning the Chinese language as well as Chinese culture which inspired me to teach the Chinese language along with Chinese culture. After I went back to China, I also taught English for communication purposes to Chinese children ages two to eight. I was surprised by how fast they learned and how beneficial it is to learn a language at an early age.

These experiences propelled me to pursue a graduate degree to develop my teaching knowledge and skills. After I enrolled in the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University, I expanded my teaching philosophy with different second language teaching theories and learned more about the education system in the United States (US). I also taught the beginner levels’ undergraduates in Chinese as a Second Language as a graduate instructor. I found myself learned the most while doing research and applying what I learned in the classroom.
simultaneously. As a result, I desire to fulfill my career goal: to apply the Second Language Acquisition theories to undergraduate classrooms as a teacher. In other words, I aspire to continue conducting the research in my field while teaching students. My research interests and career goal have led me to apply for Ph.D. programs in the US. Through my personal learning and teaching experience, I found myself more active and rewarded when working with young adults. I want to be professionally qualified to achieve this goal.
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Introduction

In my second language learning experience, English teachers have always played a vital role in my learning and have encouraged me to become a language teacher myself. I have experienced different ways to learn English as a second language with different English teachers. Because of their various teaching pedagogies or approaches, I have seen different results in acquiring a second language as I have gone through ups and downs in my English language learning journey. For me, language teachers and their teaching methodologies can have a great impact on language learners. In short, what language teachers do in the classroom matters. While second language learning can be frustrating and challenging at times, it also can be the most valuable and rewarding achievement and skill in life. I learned this from my students while teaching Chinese as a graduate instructor. They taught me to approach second language teaching pedagogies from both a student and an instructor perspective. These various teaching and learning experiences and the courses that I have taken while in the MSLT program, along with the studies I have researched, have all shaped me to become who I am today and how I view second language teaching.

Although there is no one correct methodology in second language teaching, this teaching philosophy statement includes my present beliefs about the most significant components needed in second language classrooms to effectively and efficiently promote language learning. I desire to help my students who are learning
Chinese as a second or foreign language to feel joy in their learning and pride in their achievements. The goals for my students are that they develop proficiency in the Chinese language for communicating purposes, develop their self-confidence and build their linguistic and cultural identities, and gain an understanding of the academic, social, and cultural aspects of the Chinese language through the learning process. To achieve these goals, there are some crucial components that I find essential to implement in my Chinese learning classroom: (1) using student-centered approaches; (2) applying task-based activities; (3) providing a supportive environment; and (4) teaching the language in Chinese cultural context. I will explain how these components benefit Chinese language learners in the sections below.

**Using Student-centered Approaches**

**Communicative Approach**

I am familiar with the traditional teaching approach Audiolingual Method (ALM) from my personal language learning experience. ALM puts the responsibilities on the teachers and focuses on the teacher providing instruction while the students take notes (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). With ALM, students spend time memorizing and repeating without emphasis on meaning. Traditional teacher-centered pedagogy is generally defined as a style in which the teacher assumes primary responsibility for the communication of knowledge to students and is usually understood to involve using the lecture as a primary means of communication in the classroom (Mascolo, 2009). However, a practical approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Ellis, 2012; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 2017)
has been introduced to second language teachers, which has changed language
teaching pedagogy and the students’ roles in the classroom.

In my understanding, CLT is a student-centered approach that shifts the focus
of instruction from the teacher to students focusing on using the target language (i.e.,
Chinese) to communicate within a meaningful context in the classroom. As a teacher,
I provide the students with opportunities to practice Chinese while fostering a
community of trust in which the members interact with each other. I am there to listen
and assist them when needed. Humans use language for three reasons: to establish and
maintain relationships, to express and obtain information, and to learn and do
something (VanPatten, 2017). By applying CLT in my classroom, I want to help
students use the target language more by establishing and maintaining relationships
between teacher-student and their peers through using the target language.

CLT crucially requires the instructor to provide comprehensible input in the
class described as input that L2 learners can understand when they hear or read it
(Krashen, 1982). What is more, for acquisition to occur, students must be required to
do something with the input they comprehend (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Using
comprehensible input inspires students’ learning motivation and promotes their use of
the target language (Viswanathan, 2019). According to Krashen (1987), language
acquisition takes place by understanding “the structure a bit beyond our current level
of competence (i + 1)” (p. 21) and using the “comprehensible input” (p. 33). To make
input more comprehensible for students, I will use more high-frequency vocabulary,
clearer articulation, and shorter sentences, for example. Another way to make input
more comprehensible is to establish an immersive language learning environment in the classroom. An immersion approach to second language learning has been shown to be the most successful school-based language program available (Fortune, 2012). In immersion, students are socialized to adopt the target language for all of the communications in the classroom. I myself benefited from an immersive language learning environment in the classroom which helped me acquire a second language without noticing it. I used English to express my opinions and establish a strong relationship with my English teacher and my peers. In turn, I aim to establish an immersive Chinese language learning environment for my students by using Chinese as much as possible in the class, with an emphasis on acquiring Chinese literacy alongside the spoken language. Such an approach exposes students to a positive Chinese language learning experience, motivating them to learn a second language.

**Sociocultural Approach**

Another valuable approach I want to highlight is Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which has increasingly influenced western language education. It was first introduced by the psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) and was employed by Lantolf and Frawley (1985) to examine second language acquisition in applied linguistics. From an SCT perspective, the concept of mediation is one of the key constructs to discuss. It occurs when language learners interact with the world via physical tools (e.g., books, computers) or psychological tools (e.g., languages, gestures) (Lantolf & Pehner, 2008). Another main concept in SCT is Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is a “collective activity” (Holzman, 2018, p.44). Instead of thinking of it as a place,
ZPD is a continuous process that is used to describe students’ development because it is dynamic, constantly changing, and developing. When the instructor puts two learners in pairs, they “co-construct their learning” and mediate their learning within their ZPDs (Swain et al., 2015, p.16). An SCT perspective also involves the notion that learning leads to development. Internalization emerges from mediation, specifically mediation through psychological tools, which fosters development. However, not all learning activity leads to development. I strive to have properly articulated pedagogical activities that promote both development and learning, for instance, by using a concept-based approach in the activity to help students focus on semantic rules and have mediation through concepts.

Scaffolding is also a key concept in SCT. It happens within the ZPD as other-regulation, which means a more knowledgeable person assists someone with the tasks that he cannot achieve by himself as 'the provision of support' (Swain et al., 2015). Scaffolding is one of the ways to help students in problem-solving within their ZPD. It can occur between the teacher and language learners and between peers, where a more proficient learner helps a less competent learner. Therefore, students can accomplish tasks that are beyond their current ability through scaffolding in the collaborative activity. Most of the scaffolding would occur between the students. Students with different language proficiencies can assist each other in the learning process.

As a language teacher, it is essential to recognize the learning process from peer-scaffolding. When teachers get to know students individually, they know their
strengths and weaknesses as it allows teachers to put them in pairs or groups with other students who can assist them. However, there is no perfect pair or group of students because different students will provide different types of scaffolding activities to different partners. While in a group, students share their ideas, negotiate with others, and solve problems together. As teachers give them time and encourage them to think aloud, scaffolding can be an effective teaching tool in the classroom. As Holzman (2018) shared: “we are able to become who we are not, because we always are who we are not” (p. 45). Teachers need to help students see and build their potential through learning activities via scaffolding. Then, they will be able to develop and function without the scaffolded assistance from instructors and peers.

Although the communicative approach and sociocultural perspectives view second language learning differently, both recognize the significance of having a student-centered, interaction-based second language classroom. Yang (2016) analyzed discourses in CLT from SCT perspectives and called teachers’ attention to focus on cognitive factors more instead of interpreting “student-centered” as only providing more opportunities for students to speak. The activities in the class should assist students’ cognitive development and facilitate the mediation process. For example, Yang (2016) listed out two discourses in reading comprehension and teaching language forms. It is shown that the class used the communicative form in the activity, and the teacher employed various tools (i.e., gestures, text, cultural knowledge) to mediate the students for L2 development from SCT perspectives in the activity simultaneously.
Applying Task-based Activities

When the teacher implements an interesting activity, students learn and use the target language without noticing it. When I look back, I can only remember all of the fun activities I had in the English learning class. I learned the English language through these activities instead of just boring memorizations and recitations. Nunan (2016) defines “task” as “the deployment of grammatical knowledge to express meaning, highlighting the fact that meaning and form are highly interrelated, and that grammar exists to enable the language users to express different communicative meanings” (p. 17). The definition emphasizes that language learners’ attention will be on the meaning of the language instead of just on the form in the communicative tasks (Yuan, 2016). Furthermore, task-based learning is a student-centered approach that attempts to engage students in the interactive context to complete the task. In other words, it helps develop students’ language learning system to fulfill the task (Yuan, 2016). Specifically, task-based activities can provide students with opportunities to set clear goals, involve authentic materials for student-centered language learning, and provide opportunities for input, production, and feedback (Lin, Tsun-Ju, et al., 2014).

One example of task-based activities is using the PACE model, a story-based/guided participatory approach to language instruction. It represents four stages in the teaching process: presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension (PACE). The instructor uses a story as a base to help students co-construct and learn grammatical structures by themselves via a story. In this approach, the target language is used to complete the task. That is, students have opportunities to use the target
language and develop second language skills throughout the tasks of PACE.

Therefore, it not only focuses on the development of communicative competence, which is the communicative form and function such as grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, and phonology (Leung, 2005), but it also facilitates students' L2 learning process (Yuan, 2016).

Moreover, incorporating technology alongside task-based language teaching is also essential in my class. Task-based language learning with technology utilizes learner autonomy in different ways (Lee, 2016). As an instructor, I want to cultivate active language learning and evoke intrinsic motivation from students. Technology can be employed in the class as an effective tool to benefit second language learners and enrich teaching resources. Computer-assisted language learning has been applied in the field of second language learning in multiple ways. When I apply it in my class, I design diverse activities by using computers or smartphones in instructed scenarios. For example, I divide students into groups, and they complete tasks with their peers by using a shared document (e.g., Google Docs, Draft, and Blog) outside of class. They can also communicate with native speakers via technology in their daily lives. I believe that task-based language learning approaches, coupled with the use of technology, will greatly motivate learners in the information age and facilitate language acquisition.

Providing A Supportive Learning Environment

Student-centered approaches can be successfully implemented in the classroom when the language learning environment is comfortable for students. The
classroom environment was found to be one of the effective predictors of students’ willingness to communicate (Khajavy et al., 2016, 2018; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). A positive learning environment with supportive instructors, collaborative peers, and meaningful tasks would lower students’ anxiety levels and foster second language communicative opportunities (Khajavy et al., 2018). However, the review from Li and Wen (2015) reveals the lack of a supportive environment for heritage language learning/learners, including the Chinese language in K-12 schools in the United States. Coyle (2017) points out that “creating an empathetic classroom atmosphere is perhaps the most significant investment a teacher can make toward understanding others and building relationships” (p. 42). Making mistakes is a natural and unavoidable step in second language acquisition (VanPatten, 2017). Knowing that making mistakes is acceptable in the classroom brings so much comfort for language learners as students are motivated to communicate in the target language even when they sometimes make mistakes. It can be an excellent opportunity for teachers to scaffold and provide corrective feedback to promote language development. They can also work on the task collaboratively with other students. As they work together, they develop relationships and strong bonds with others, motivating them to use the target language. They support each other in the class. In my class, I make friends with my students outside of the class to understand their feelings in the learning process while keeping professional inside of the class. I recognize their hard work in language learning. Furthermore, I scaffold them academically and support them emotionally in the learning process. They gain confidence and believe in themselves via positive
nonverbal behaviors in the class such as eye contact, friendly facial expressions, and lively gestures. I also express my genuine interests and care for students. My hope is that they notice my passion for helping them achieve their language learning goals in the positive environment that I have created. When I felt the care from my English teachers as a language learner, I performed better in the class and outside of the class. As students feel that they are valued in the class, they decide who they can become (Dörnyei, 2009). When providing a supportive learning environment, where teachers assist students, students collaborate with each other, and tasks are meaningful and comprehensive, students feel less anxious and are more confident in communicating in the target language (Khajavy et al., 2018). They tend to become the best they can be in the Chinese language classroom.

Teaching the Language in Chinese Cultural Context

When students learn a language, a good way to start is to know the culture of the people who speak the target language. Cultural beliefs about learning are important to consider in research on human learning (Li, 2004). It is also essential to be included in language learning. Teaching the Chinese language is not only about the vocabulary and grammatical structures, but also about the Chinese culture. Liu (2013) indicates that there are three principles that guide the application of Chinese cultural content in the class: (1) relevant principle, (2) comparative principle, and (3) appropriate principle. It is easy to understand that the relevant principle demands the content should be introduced related to students for daily communication. For the comparative principle, cultural differences can greatly motivate students’ interest in
learning a second language (i.e., Chinese) (Liu, 2013). In applying the appropriate principle, the content provided to students should be suitable considering students’ ability to accept it. The teacher should also explain it appropriately and help students understand it when they encounter cultural barriers (Liu, 2013).

When second language learners understand primary cultural values in the target culture, they can behave following those values (Zhu, 2008). When the teacher teaches the target language in the Chinese cultural context, it helps learners relate what they learn to do with cultural values (Zhu, 2008). As the students know the culture, they can better understand the communication norms of the target language. Therefore, I will focus on incorporating Chinese cultural information in my classroom, which is beneficial for learners to know the people, culture and language. To achieve this goal, I will introduce authentic materials to the students (e.g., traditional Chinese literacy, Chinese music, Chinese movies, and news reports) to increase students' knowledge of the cultural and linguistic diversity (Boche, 2014) found within Chinese culture. In sum, students can better comprehend the Chinese language by learning Chinese culture (i.e., customs, greetings, eating habits).

**Conclusion**

My teaching philosophy has evolved based on my language learning and teaching experiences. The Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University helps me study the second language teaching theories and concepts and practice what I have learned in the classroom. That said, my teaching philosophy is ever evolving as I continue to learn how to be a more effective teacher.
In summary, I believe the primary role of a second language teacher is to be a guide, introducing language learners to a new language and culture by establishing a motivating and comfortable environment for language learning. I provide students with a student-centered classroom by using communicative approaches informed by sociocultural perspectives, apply task-based activities with technology to use the target language, create a supportive and positive learning environment, and teaching language learning content in Chinese cultural contexts.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Introduction

I am grateful for the opportunities I had to observe the second language classes of other teachers. They are great opportunities that help me to reflect on and centrally form my teaching philosophy. I was afforded the ability to assess my progress as a second language teacher whenever I was carrying out an observation and completing the observation reports. Over time, I shifted my focus gradually from what the teachers did in the classroom to why they did it and what it brought to the students. In short, many benefits come through classroom observations of others. For example, it can be beneficial for us as observers to self-reflect on our teaching practices in our own classrooms and eventually make changes to how we go about teaching our students (Day, 2013). For new teachers who lack experience, it is a great way to help narrow the gap between their imagination and reality.

Observing other second language classes has helped me to better understand what a university-level second language class is like in the United States. For observers, when we treat observations as the opportunity to criticize or show our pride, it cannot be beneficial for the observer nor the teacher. However, if we see it as a chance to learn, we humble ourselves to learn from different aspects of the class as we reflect on what we observed after visiting the class. The teacher can also benefit from the observation as he/she can receive feedback from a peer's observation report. Having communication between the teacher and the observer to clarify the purpose of the observation creates an expectation for the observation. In sum, it is a win-win
activity for both participants.

During my time in the MSLT program, I have observed six language classes from different teachers in various types of language classes. Three of them were beginning-level language classes for university students; two Chinese 1010 classes and one Spanish 1010 class. One of the six language classes was an English reading class from the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) program to help international students quickly adapt to the English learning environment in the United States. Two out of the six language classes that I observed involved a sixth grade Portuguese class and a sixth-grade Chinese class in two different dual language immersion schools. These six observations helped me approach second language teaching from both adult students’ and younger students' perspectives. They also helped me to become familiar with different approaches to second language learners in immersion and non-immersion environments.

The various observations helped me shape my teaching philosophy and one of the primary teaching goals I have for my students: using student-centered approaches in the Chinese as a second language class. What I learned from the teachers I have observed is applying task-based meaningful activities in the class to help the students practice what they have learned in the task. I have learned from the students that they are thoughtful and quick learners who speak the target language and share their opinions with others in a supportive environment. What was confirmed in my mind after having carried out these observations is the importance to teach the Chinese language with the cultural content. I will explain these observations more explicitly
and my overall development below.

**Student-centered Approaches**

One aspect that I noticed to be important during each of the observations was to focus on the students and the benefits of maintaining a student-centered class via different approaches. In the Portuguese dual language immersion class that I have observed for sixth grade students, the communicative approach was used in the class. They had a science class and learned about the topic of “weather” that day. The teacher first asked several questions about the weather to stimulate their interest and curiosity. Then, the students went around and talked with other people about their answers. They switched several times to talk with different peers. During this time, they fixed their answers to make them complete and more comprehensive. In this class, the teacher provided opportunities for students to communicate with each other and try out what they know not only about the science content but also about the Portuguese language at the same time. The students used Portuguese to communicate with their peers with a goal of exchanging answers about the questions.

Teaching in this way is a great way to provide students with opportunities to practice the language in a meaningful context. That is, an immersive language learning environment is a productive way to learn content by using the L2 language as a medium of communication. The students used the target language 100% of the time. The application of the communicative language teaching approach in the dual language immersion classroom therefore becomes natural over time. The teacher’s role therefore is to facilitate student communication with a focus on student-centered
activities.

**Task-based Activities**

Applying task-based activities in the L2 classroom is essential to engage students in an interactive context and develop students’ L2 development during the task-fulfilling process. It is used not only in the dual language immersion class but also in courses for adult learners. A great example of applying task-based activities in the class is the Spanish 1010 class for undergraduate beginners that I observed. The teacher played a Spanish song with lyrics on the screen at the beginning of the class. The students then got a piece of paper with the lyrics on it so they can use it later. They were instructed to work in pairs and use colored pencils to circle the words describing people’s feelings in the lyrics they just learned on the paper. For example, “Frustrar--frustrate, Enojar—to make angry, Entristecer—to make sad, Alegrar—to make happy.” The teacher then provided them with three related activities to work on in groups or pairs in the class with a meaningful goal to achieve in each task.

The task-based activities provided students with the authentic teaching material (i.e., the Spanish song with lyrics) to motivate them to stay active during the whole class while pursuing a goal. The L2 language was used as a tool to complete the task. The teachers and the students shifted their focus from the grammatical problems to the completion of the task. Task-based learning therefore helps to decrease students' anxiety while facilitating their L2 development.

**Supportive Learning Environment**

A critical component in the success of any L2 language classroom is to have a
supportive learning environment. When the language learning environment is supportive for students, they are more willing to interact and share their thoughts with others. Teachers’ responses to students’ actions are key to build a supportive environment in a second language classroom. As an observer, I felt the positive and supportive learning environment especially in the IELI reading class and the Spanish 1010 classes that I observed.

In the reading class, what I noticed was that there was a student who did not talk in pairs and had difficulty speaking English fluently. She did not talk in the class and never participated in pair work. The instructor noticed it, sat down next to the student, and asked her some questions that she had already learned from the last class. Then the instructor guided her to today’s reading. She also led the conversation in pairs by asking questions. The student started to join the conversation in pairs after the leading questions from the teacher. At the end of the class, the student was more open to talking and even asked questions in the class, which was a big improvement that I observed. What stood out to me the most from the instructor is how she guided the students by asking questions. As the instructor guided them step-by-step, they were learning by answering the questions. The instructor was also very good at explaining the meaning of words, which is an important skill for any language teacher. All of the positive and guiding reactions from the instructor according to students’ needs in the class created a supportive and positive environment for the students, which helped them feel safe to freely talk and express their concerns.

Another technique to provide students with such a positive learning
environment that I learned from observing the Spanish 1010 class is through the tone of the teacher. It was obvious that the Spanish teacher had built a good rapport with the students in the class. He was energetic and cheerful when teaching. He also expressed his excitement when the students completed a task. He knew each student by their names which expressed his genuine care for students. The students appeared to feel safe to interact with their peers and the teacher in the class even when they made mistakes or had uncertainty about how to say a particular sentence. They still said the sentence out loud in Spanish with confidence to practice even despite making errors.

In sum, this specific observation confirmed the aspect of my teaching philosophy about the importance of having a supportive learning environment. The learning environment can provide students with support, genuine care, and professional knowledge from the teacher. The students can be comfortable to freely ask questions in this environment. They can also participate in the various activities and are the ones who are the central focus of the class. I want my students to get involved fully in the class by providing them with a similar comfortable environment.

**Chinese Cultural Context**

When teachers teach the Chinese language, it is easier for students to understand the reasons and stories of using the vocabulary, the writing, and the idioms by learning the Chinese culture alongside the Chinese language. During my observations, I especially focused on teaching Chinese culture when I was observing two Chinese 1010 classes for undergraduate beginners and one sixth grade Chinese
dual language immersion class.

The first classroom observation involved an experienced Chinese language teacher in a Chinese 1010 class for novice university-level students. The class was well-organized with reviewing, learning, and practicing with the language and culture. An activity of introducing students’ family members in Chinese was applied to practice with new words they had learned in the class. Due to the Mid-autumn Festival, which was taking place during that time, the whole class went over the lyrics by first focusing on any new words and then practicing the traditional Chinese song together to celebrate the festival. It was impressive for me to see how to teach the Chinese language within a Chinese cultural context. This activity encouraged students to relate what they had learned in the class to the things in their life. In Chinese culture, family is regarded as the most essential part in Chinese people’s lives. The students drew closer to the Chinese language by introducing their family members to other classmates in the L2, which is highly related to their daily lives and helped their daily conversation. By using the traditional Chinese song for celebrating the Mid-autumn Chinese Festival with students, they learned the origin story of the festival and were entertained by singing the Chinese song. The students remembered not only the Chinese song but also the background of the festival, which is an important part of the Chinese language. They also learned some new words with the song, which motivated students in Chinese learning by using various approaches. The students learned by experiencing the words via the song, which appeared to be effective and engaging.
Unlike the Chinese language class for undergraduate students, the Chinese teacher from the dual language immersion class used role-play to review the sentences from a story they had learned in previous classes, which is perfect for the energetic and creative sixth grade students. The teacher first told them a clear goal for the class and wrote it in Chinese on the board. The goal on the day of my observation was “I can perform the story in the book.” So, they reviewed the whole story they had learned before and focused on what had happened in the story and what each of the characters said in the story. They needed to act out the story out loud without reciting every sentence. It was a story which took place in China. The students felt the Chinese culture by acting it out using only Chinese.

Knowing other languages and issues about cultural diversity can expand students’ understanding of people with different values and social customs. It can change their way(s) of viewing the world as well as their understanding of the culture(s) in their own country. It is also socially beneficial to have greater intercultural understanding, tolerance, appreciation, and respect (Cloud et al., 2000). Learning the Chinese language within a Chinese cultural context/environment provides students opportunities to access authentic materials to learn the values and the reasons behind the Chinese language and how it works. It promotes and motivates students’ L2 development.

Conclusion

I have learned from the observations that it is essential to create a student-centered class to encourage students and practice the second language through
different meaningful activities. Moreover, it is essential for teachers to design various task-based activities to help students achieve their learning goals. It is also important to use different approaches that are suitable for students in one's particular second language classroom. I also found it applicable for teachers to teach the second language within a cultural context and connect the course's content with real life issues/experiences. As second language teachers, when we desire to design meaningful and suitable activities for students, they can grasp the most from the activities and make connections with their lives in a comfortable learning environment.

In summary, the various teaching observations have helped me to further develop my teaching philosophy in second language classroom practices. They have also confirmed my goal of focusing on students in Chinese L2 classes. A language teacher’s primary role is to be a guide, introducing language learners to a new language and culture by establishing conditions of language learning, providing them with a student-centered classroom, creating a supportive learning environment, and introducing them to learn via Chinese cultural contexts. After the observations, I learned more about various approaches to teach L2 learners at different age levels. These observations have fostered my teaching philosophy and teaching goals on my path of second language teaching, and they have also reminded me of the kind of teacher I want to be and the kind of classroom I want to create.
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES
LANGUAGE PAPER

The Application of Dynamic Assessment in the Chinese L2 Classroom
Orientation and Reflection

This paper was originally written for the course *Sociocultural Theory* taught by Dr. Jim Rogers in Spring 2020 while studying in the MSLT program. Before writing this project, we were taught several main concepts that are essential in sociocultural theory, such as mediation, zone of proximal development, internalization, and dynamic assessment. We were asked to write the reflections with personal understanding and examples for all of the main sociocultural concepts while taking this course. It helped me build a systematic structure for sociocultural theory. When I tried to think of some examples of using those main sociocultural concepts in the second language classroom, I became interested in applying dynamic assessment in the Chinese as a second language classroom. It helped me have a student-centered classroom and focus on their potentials even in the assessment.

This paper first discusses the use of DA in educational development and distinguished two DA approaches: interventionist DA and interactionist DA. Then, a three-week Chinese class is designed with the emphasis of using both interventionist DA and interactionist DA to combine the instruction and the assessment in the activities. The application of dynamic assessment helps build a student-centered classroom and assist the students to achieve beyond their current abilities. It supports two crucial components that I have addressed in my teaching philosophy statement: building a student-centered language classroom and having a supportive learning environment. Therefore, this research paper is a significant component of my portfolio.
Abstract

This paper focuses on the application of Dynamic Assessment (DA) in a Chinese as a Second Language (L2) classroom for undergraduate students at an intermediate level from sociocultural perspectives by considering Vygotsky’s sociocultural theoretical concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). DA allows the cooperation between the teacher and students with the same goal to complete the task. It also combines the instruction and assessment in the activity to fulfill students’ needs and promote each individual’s L2 development. The use of DA in educational development is first discussed in the paper. Then, two approaches to DA are differentiated between examples to illustrate the differences in application. Finally, a three-week lesson is designed to apply both interventionist DA, and interactionist DA in a Chinese L2 classroom followed by analysis. The paper concludes with a discussion.

Keywords: Dynamic Assessment (DA), sociocultural theory, application, zone of proximal development (ZPD), mediation, L2 classroom
Introduction

Considerations towards second language (L2) assessment from a sociocultural theory (SCT) perspective have been led by a discussion of dynamic assessment (DA) (Swain et al., 2015). DA, which is “the dialectical union of instruction and assessment,” aims to reveal the abilities that have developed along with the potential which is developing (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010, p. 312; Vygotsky, 1978). It was first introduced by Luria (1961), and the educators and researchers kept their focus on using DA with children whom Vygotsky identified as having learning and developmental disabilities (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). Afterwards, DA expanded its scope to general education, including adults in L2 classrooms. DA is rooted in Vygotsky’s SCT united with the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the difference between the actual level of development that students can demonstrate independently and the level of potential development that students can achieve in collaboration with a more competent person or via his/her assistance (Vygotsky, 1980). DA is graduated mediation that takes place within the ZPD. When assessors have static views of assessment, students are required to be silent and complete the tests without receiving help from advisors or peers (Miri et al., 2017). Instead of viewing students’ current level of proficiency as static, as a conventional assessment would, DA allows cooperation between teachers and students and aims to reveal students’ ZPDs and the establishment of continued development during the process which is dynamic. DA diverts the attention from confirming mature
capabilities to nurturing potential abilities gradually (Poehner & van Compernolle, 2011).

In the DA process, instruction and assessment is an activity that identifies and promotes students’ development by providing mediation according to students’ ZPDs (Poehner, 2008a). Although DA is beneficial to apply in an L2 teaching curriculum, it has not been implemented in many L2 classes (van der Veen et al., 2016). One of the critical reasons is that teachers need to take care of the whole class, whereas DA focuses on providing ono-on-one mediation to individuals (van der Veen et al., 2016). Having the misconception of using DA in a large class stops teachers from implementing DA in the classroom. Therefore, the introduction of Group – Dynamic Assessment (G-DA) from Poehner (2009) attempts to apprehend the group’s ZPD, which involves dialogic interactions. Like one-to-one DA, G-DA is mediation within students’ ZPDs to co-construct the knowledge (Miri et al., 2017), which is more applicable to a large classroom. In this paper, DA in educational development is first discussed, followed by different approaches to DA. Next, I will design and explain the application of DA and G-DA in a Chinese as an L2 classroom for intermediate-level university students.

**Dynamic Assessment in Educational Development**

According to Vygotsky, students develop an L2 by participating in social interaction, which mediates mental processing. As educators compare DA to the traditional static assessment that doesn't consider the ZPD, researchers outlined two main differences that showed the benefits of having DA in the L2 classroom. The first
difference is to understand the capabilities of the students in the future, and the second one involves methodological differences (Lantolf & Poehner, 2007). In static assessment, the assessments assume the future and the present are equal, which means future performance is considered to be approximate to the present performance or actual performance. It emphasizes the result of past learning processes. The relationship between the assessor and the students is rigid, and the assessor will not give feedback until the assessment is completed. Unlike static assessment, DA expects that future performance will be different from present performance and leads to students’ potential development within ZPDs in the learning process. DA focuses on individual student’s future development and mediation in the activity. The assessor and the students work collaboratively towards the same goal, and mediated assistance is provided to students during the process of DA. The assessor gets to know the individual students’ interests, motivations, and other valuable information to better scaffold them to develop their potentials by using DA (van der Veen et al., 2016).

When we use DA in a whole-class context and consider it as G-DA, the students not only have teacher-student interactions but also have peer interactions, both of which can lead to mediation and internalization. Guk and Kellogg (2007) conducted a study and established a whole classroom ZPD and stated that “both teacher-led mediation and learner-to-learner interaction may be considered waystages within a single whole classroom ZPD” (p. 287). Hence, it is achievable to use both DA and concurrent G-DA in a large class as long as the teachers clearly understand the reasons for using DA.
and G-DA in the class. To apply them in the class successfully, a well-designed curriculum is also required.

It remains unclear how DA is applied in the L2 classroom most effectively. The study from van der Veen et al. (2016) implemented DA in vocabulary development and revealed teachers’ vital role in DA classroom application. They also highlighted that using different tools in the mediation may affect DA practices (van der Veen et al., 2016). Besides, the applicability of Peer – Dynamic Assessment (Peer-DA) was examined by Khoshsima and Rezaee (2016). Peer – DA was found to be helpful in identifying developing abilities and enhancing it efficiently, which gives us the possibility of applying Peer – DA in our classroom (Khoshsima & Rezaee, 2016). The effectiveness of using DA was also confirmed by Fazlollahi et al. (2015) comparing with conventional static assessment in the L2 learning context. They also suggested that teachers view students’ L2 abilities as in progress, identify the extent of help needed, and scaffold them according to their needs (Fazlollahi et al., 2015).

It is essential to point out that the SCT concepts of mediation and ZPD are important to consider while applying DA in the L2 classroom to offer students the appropriate assistance they need. The appropriate assistance does not aim to help them solve the problem directly but to promote the individual student to be an independent problem solver and become prepared for similar problems in the future (Lantolf & Poehner, 2007). In other words, the mediation which is provided in DA is to support their internalization of conceptual knowledge when they attempt to self-regulate. However, not all learning leads to development. Thus, I want to have properly articulated
pedagogical activities in DA that better promote the development and learning within students’ ZPDs in the L2 classroom.

**Two Approaches to Dynamic Assessment**

Lantolf and Poehner (2007) distinguished two approaches to DA: interventionist dynamic assessment and interactionist dynamic assessment, which differ based on the characteristics of mediation. They also showed the differences in assessors’ preparations, perceptions in students’ ZPDs, and active participation in the DA (Lantolf & Poehner, 2007; Lidz, 1991).

In interventionist DA, the procedures, the forms, and fixed hints are determined in advance. The levels of assistance are standardized and preset in the sequence which they will be offered to students in a test (Li, 2015). This means that the levels of prompts are set from implicit to explicit. In other words, the students who received implicit assistance gained better control of the question than students who received the more explicit form of mediation. For example, in a study from Ai (2017), the author designed an intelligent computer-assisted language learning (iCALL) system to provide graduated assistance for the Chinese language under the guiding principles from Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1980). Different levels of assistance from implicit forms (i.e., Can you please try one more time?) to explicit forms (i.e., Which particle do you think we might need here?) were provided to students according to their answers or depending on the type of errors they made step-by-step. Another study from Köroğlu (2019) also focused on using interventionist DA. The students showed positive attitudes and were pleased to use an
interventionist model to develop L2 speaking abilities (Ahmadi et al., 2015; Köroglu, 2019). They also decreased their levels of anxiety with mediation by using interventionist DA (Köroglu, 2019). The students’ dynamic ability developed during the assessment, and the expectation is that the students require less explicit mediation and fewer prompts during the interventionist DA (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010).

In interactionist DA, the interaction between the mediator and the student is constantly adjusted according to the response and reactions from the students, which means the assistance from the teacher is dynamic instead of pre-selected, and mediation is negotiated with each individual (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). In the interactionist DA approach, focus is on developing an individual student or a group of students with a specific goal (Poehner, 2008a), and both teachers and the students work collaboratively towards the same task. The relationship between teachers and students has changed, which is different from the traditional teacher-student relationship only having a goal of the students’ success (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). Having dialogic interaction between teachers and students, the scaffolding provided by teachers exceedingly depends on students’ ZPDs and classroom ZPDs (Khoshsima & Rezaee, 2016). An example of the interactionist DA is conducted by Poehner (2008b). The advanced L2 French undergraduate students who were enrolled in a French oral communication course tried to construct narratives after watching a video or reading an excerpt from literacy. The teacher, who served as the mediator, supported the students’ efforts to construct their narratives by using collaborative dialogues according to students’ needs. The nature of the assistance was determined
by the interaction between the mediator and the students which depended on the
students’ ZPDs. To apply interactionist DA in a Chinese L2 classroom, Kao (2015)
examined dialogic mediations between teachers and students in developing students' L2 writing skills. The participants who completed the whole study are three Chinese language learners at intermediate level. They participated in tutoring sessions in eight weeks, interacted with the teacher collaboratively, and received feedback according to the interactionist DA guidelines. It was revealed that students’ Chinese language and L2 abilities were developed and promoted by using interactionist DA. Thus, it can be beneficial to apply both interventionist DA and interactionist DA in L2 development for different advantages.

Applying DA in the Chinese L2 Classroom

As discussed above, the purpose of DA is to connect instruction with assessment and offer assistance that is tailored to students’ ability to promote students’ linguistic development. The mediation provided to the students in DA interactions is not just to lead to the solutions to a specific problem, but to support them in internalizing the conceptual knowledge to the knowledge that they can use by themselves in the future (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). I tried to apply what we have discussed about DA to undergraduate students at an intermediate level in the Chinese L2 classroom. In their second year of Chinese learning, they have learned greetings and daily conversations in Chinese. I want to apply DA in their Chinese course at the beginning of their second year. It is not only a way to know their current abilities but also an approach to apply what they have learned in the first year and promote their
development at the beginning of second-year learning. Therefore, I adjusted the study of classroom DA by Davin (2016) to a three-week Chinese L2 class by using both interventionist DA and interactionist DA.

I first designed a three-week class with a goal of welcoming and getting to know a Chinese exchange student who will stay with your family. The task is divided into two parts: the introduction and the questions. The introduction includes anything they want to present such as their family, themselves, the town they are going to stay in, the weather, etc. The question part includes the questions they would like to ask the exchange students, including names, age, family members, or hobbies. During the process, they were encouraged to verbalize their ideas with scaffolded assistance from peers and the teacher (Beck et al., 2020). In the first week, they will be divided into groups and decide the topics they think are the most important ones to introduce and then write down the introduction sentences according to the topics within their group. This approach allows the mediations to happen within the group’s ZPD by using G-DA (Guk & Kellogg, 2007; Khoshsima & Rezaee, 2016). In the second week, the same group will write down several questions they are interested in asking. They will then be divided into pairs to practice, asking the questions they wrote. In the third week, they are going to have a role play, and I will act as the exchange student. In this role-play, they will have introductions based on their chosen topics and ask me the questions they have (see Table 1).

Table 1

The Study Plan of the Three-week Class
To assist the students in the three-week class by using DA, I designed pre-scripted graduated prompts from implicit to explicit as a reference according to Li (2015) and Davin (2016) to draw students’ attention to the accuracy of their introduction in the first two-week group work (see Table 2). Standard interventions, which are not personalized, are simpler to administer to a group of students simultaneously than interventionist DA. I thought about the benefits of training students the pre-scripted graduated prompts from implicit to explicit in the first class, so it can help them to assist others in the group work and also reflect on their work in peer interaction. After getting to know their current abilities and their ZPDs from the group work, I will put them into pairs to scaffold each other in the pair work. They will help each other in the introduction and form a list of questions in the collaboration. It helps students diagnose problems of other students and themselves in the group work (Khoshsima & Rezaee, 2016). In the last week’s one-on-one role-play interaction with the individual student, I will scaffold the individual student according to his/her needs and continually recalibrate his/her mediation (Tabatabaei & Bakhtiarvand, 2014) by using interactionist DA in the interaction. According to the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Configuration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Dynamic Assessment</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1    | In Small Group | Activity 1:  
- Students decide the topics  
- Write down introduction sentences according to the topics | Interventionist DA: using pre-set graduated prompts from implicit to explicit |
| 2    | In Small Group & In Pairs | Activity 2:  
- Students form a list of the questions they want to ask  
- Pair collaboration to practice introduction and questions | Interventionist DA: using pre-set graduated prompts from implicit to explicit |
| 3    | One-on-one | Activity 3:  
- Role play: Students introduce and ask questions with the teacher | Interactionist DA: scaffolding according to student’s needs |
findings from Kao (2015), learners’ L2 development is supported and promoted by having interactionist DA. Interactive discussions among students and between instructors and students support their L2 development. Therefore, having designed a three-week Chinese class as described above aims to support and extend learners’ ability by applying both interventionist DA and interactionist DA in the curriculum.

Table 2

The Pre-scripted Graduated Prompts from Implicit to Explicit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Explicitness</th>
<th>Prompt / Hint</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (least explicit)</td>
<td>The mediator pauses with questioning look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The mediator reads the sentence/phrase with inflection on the mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The mediator indicates that something may be wrong. E.g., Is there any error in this sentence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The mediator indicates the nature of the mistake. E.g., There’s something wrong with the grammatical explanation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The mediator identifies the mistakes. E.g., You can’t put the object before the verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The mediator offered choice option. E.g., Do we use he or she to refer to a female?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The mediator provides the correct structure/ form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (most explicit)</td>
<td>The mediator provides the explanation to use the correct form with the response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I use role play activities in the interaction, I aim to help students complete the task of getting to know each other in the conversation and promoting their personal linguistic development without pre-scripted prompts. The conversations we might have are illustrated in examples (1) and (2). The teacher (T) will play the Chinese exchange student who just arrived at the school and is going to stay with the student and his/ her family for the next three weeks. The student (S) will have an introduction first and then ask some questions to get to know each other. As the teacher, I will scaffold them during the conversation by using interactionist DA according to their needs.
Example (1): Dialogue in Introduction

1. S: 欢迎你来到美国! 我的名字叫 Sam。很开心认识你！
   (Welcome to the United States! My name is Sam. Nice to meet you!)
2. T: 我叫 Lucy。我也很开心认识你！
   (My name is Lucy. Nice to meet you too!)
3. S: 我首先希望向你介绍我和我的家人，因为我们生活在一起。
   (I first want to introduce me and my family, because we live together.)
4. T: 我们生活在一起？
   (We live together?)
5. S: 是的。噢, 我的意思是我们将会在后三周一起生活。
   (Yes. Oh, I mean we will live together in the next three weeks.)
6. S: 家里有爸爸妈妈, 还有哥哥和妹妹。
   (In the family, there are dad and mom, also older brother and younger sister.)
7. T: 真好。你有几个哥哥和妹妹呢？
   (Great. How many older brothers and younger sisters do you have?)
8. S: 我有一个哥哥，一个弟弟，和一个妹妹。…都很友好。
   (I have an older brother, a younger brother and a younger sister. … all are friendly.)
9. T: 你指的是谁很友好呢？
   (Who do you refer to are friendly?)
10. S: 噢, 我意思是我的家人都很友好。所以你不用担心。
    (Oh, I mean all my family members are friendly. So, you don’t need to worry.)

In example (1), we attempted to have a normal conversation in the role play.

When the student made mistakes in the introduction sentences, I tried to use various ways to help him identify the mistake and lead to self-correction. I first used repetition, which is implicit in line 4, then in line 7, a question to get a more specific explanation, and a direct question to ask the subject of the sentence in line 9. It showed different approaches to mediate the student to promote his development within his ZPD by using interactionist DA.

In example (2), we try to negotiate with the formation of the question. I first try to use a questioning look to make him realize the existence of the mistake, which makes it hard to represent in line 4. And then, in line 6, I used a question to confirm
the meaning of what he said. He focused on a specific part of the sentence and explained what exactly he wants to ask in a different order in line 7. At last, I encouraged him to put what he just explained, which is in right back to the original sentence he tried to ask in line 8. Receiving the courage with the prompt, he asked in the right order at last in line 9.

Example (2): Dialogue in Questions

1. S: 我希望我可以问你一些问题来更了解你。
   (I wish I can ask you some questions to get to know you more.)
2. T: 没问题，请问。
   (No problem, please ask.)
3. S: 你喜欢运动最什么？
   (Your sports favorite what?)
4. T: 什么？（带有疑问的表情）
   (What?) (with a questioning look)
5. S: 我想问你的是，你最喜欢运动什么？
   (What I want to ask you is that, your favorite sports what?)
6. T: 你意思是，我最喜欢运动的什么吗？
   (You mean, what do I like the sports the most?)
7. S: 不是，我想问什么具体运动。
   (No, I want to ask what specific sports.)
8. T: 你对了。可以请你重新问一遍问题吗？
   (You are right. Could you please try to re-ask the same question again?)
9. S: 嗯…你最喜欢什么运动？
   (Hum… What is your favorite sports?)
10. T: 很棒！我最喜欢的运动是……,
    (Perfect! My favorite sports is……)

After the three-week course applying DA in the Chinese L2 classroom, it first helps the students review what they have learned in the first year of Chinese learning. It also assesses their Chinese proficiency and promotes their linguistic development in the learning process simultaneously. The activities help them use the conceptual knowledge they have internalized to solve the problem in the task. Having group work in the activity, it provided each student with more speaking opportunities to verbalize
their thoughts while completing the task as a group. The pair work furthered their development in other-regulation with more specific assistance provided to each individual in the pair work. At last, the one-on-one interaction with the teacher scaffolded the individual student according to his/her needs within their ZPDs with the same goal of completing the task.

Having both interventionist DA and interactionist DA in the activity supported students’ development not only when there are a lot of students but also focused on individual development. It reduced the challenge of lacking mediation to specific needs of individuals by using interventionist DA and the challenge of making time for all of the many students by using interactionist DA.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this paper, DA is first introduced from SCT perspectives and relates to the other SCT concepts of ZPD, mediation, and scaffolding. The ZPD represents a powerful framework for the application of DA in the L2 classroom. Thinking of the obstacles in applying DA in a large class, G-DA and peer-DA was introduced to facilitate L2 development practices. Two approaches of DA are also distinguished: interventionist DA and interactionist DA. The main focus of the paper is to seek the opportunity to apply DA in the Chinese L2 classroom. DA changes the relationship between the examiner and examinee and the relationship between teacher and student. Students can benefit from implicit and explicit mediation which is adjusted to their dynamic abilities (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). By using DA in the classroom, the approach overcomes the gap between instruction and assessment in the traditional
teaching-learning-assessing process. It connects the instruction and assessment with the focus of maximally assisting students to develop their L2 abilities.

As a teacher, what I do in the class really matters. Teachers and students collaborate in learning activities. In the learning process, students interact with others and scaffold each other in the ZPD they have created. Teachers are there to arrange a task that can foster students’ development in collaboration with others. I will be there to assist them by providing prompts and hints in their learning to help them gradually internalize the concepts and master the concepts on their own. Therefore, they can use the concepts in other situations. Instead of viewing their abilities as static, they are constantly developing and are dynamic in nature. As teachers, applying DA and G-DA in the L2 classroom is beneficial for promoting students’ development in learning. DA is a practical tool to use and can modify teacher’s instruction and assessment practices, which helps to fulfill students' needs to be proficient in the L2 and promote their overall L2 development. In sum, applying DA in the classroom helps to mediate students' learning/developing in the L2.
CULTURE PAPER

An Analysis of University Students’ Perceptions of Native and Non-Native Chinese-Speaking Teachers in the Utah Context
Orientation and Reflection

The topic of analyzing university students’ perceptions of native and non-native Chinese-speaking teachers was originally written for the course Research in L2 Learning taught by Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini in Fall 2019. He taught me how to write a research paper in the SLA field. I only wrote a research proposal and designed the study for the course at that time, but that process planted a seed in me, and I wanted to conduct the small research project to get the results. With the encouragement from Dr. Ko-Yin Sung, I got the opportunity to collect quantitative data with my classmates Mikey Henderson and Hayden Baxter while taking Dr. Sung’s course in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in Fall 2020. In this class, one of the groups presented a study on returned missionaries’ Chinese language learning outcomes. It inspired me to focus my study on the Utah context and determine whether the results would be different, having many students with such a unique language learning background. Therefore, I conducted interviews, collected qualitative data for the analysis, and summarized the findings in this study. What follows was written on my own and I do not plan to submit this paper for publication in the future. It’s also important to note that given the nature of this classroom-based research activity, no Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was necessary.

This paper discusses university students’ perceptions of native and non-native Chinese teachers, focusing on undergraduate students in Utah. The study attempts to answer two research questions, including perceived performance differences between NCSTs and NNSTs and university students’ preference for these two types of teachers.
The study aims to help both NCSTs and NNSTs develop a supportive language learning environment for the university students in Utah after knowing their perceptions and better assist them in the Chinese language learning process.
Abstract

Previous research has analyzed the challenges that native Chinese-speaking teachers (NCSTs) and non-native Chinese-speaking teachers (NNCSTs) face when they teach in the U.S. (Chen, 2015; Yue, 2017) as well as the differences between NCSTs and NNCSTs because of their various educational and cultural backgrounds (Sung & Poole, 2016). However, the state of Utah, different from other states, is the global headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also known as the LDS or Mormons) and has sent thousands of young adults abroad to serve a mission in a second language. The unique living abroad experiences of these young men and women may impact their perceptions of second language teachers in Utah. Hence, it is significant to analyze students’ perceptions towards NCSTs and NNCSTs in the Utah context. This analysis can promote the development of Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) teaching from students’ perspectives. The involved participants are university students who have enrolled in Chinese language classes in Utah. Participants first completed a survey questionnaire, including background information (e.g., age, gender, whether they had been taught by NCSTs and NNCSTs) and a Likert scale to measure their levels of agreement with a series of statements. Then, a few participants were interviewed to describe their Chinese learning experience and their perceptions towards NCSTs and NNCSTs with examples. The results show the students perceived the major difference between NCSTs and NNCSTs is related to Chinese cultural understanding. Students showed a preference for NCSTs in the interview. The perception of NCSTs’ western cultural understanding
and NNCSTs’ Chinese pronunciation was found to be diverse in the Utah context.

Possible explanations are discussed.

*Keywords*: native and non-native Chinese teachers, perceptions, Utah context
Introduction

English has spread dramatically throughout the world as a major lingua franca (Marr & English, 2019). There is a great deal of research on English as a second language in different contexts. Much attention has been paid to the global spread of English; however, the popularity of the Chinese language is also growing worldwide (Omondi, 2019). China spent about $10 billion a year developing ‘soft power’, which is vital for a country to become a world force (The Economist, 2019). One of the most notable strategies has been to build global Confucius Institutes, which are public organizations on foreign university campuses dedicated to teaching Chinese language and culture abroad under the purview of the Ministry of Education of China. The Institutes have become platforms to facilitate cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. With the development of language programs via the aid of the Institutes (Lindholm-Leary, 2013), both native and non-native Chinese-speaking teachers (NCSTs/NNCSTs) have started to teach the Chinese language in universities and also in K-12 schools in the United States. As more Chinese as a second language (CSL) teachers have started to teach outside China, they have received more attention from researchers (i.e., regarding teacher beliefs, motivations, and challenges) in recent years than they did a decade ago in the second language teaching realm (Yue, 2017; Zhang et al., 2020; Zhang & Luo, 2018).

Under the administration of former U.S. president George W. Bush, a comprehensive national plan with new programs and resources was developed to expand U.S. foreign language education from kindergarten programs to formal school
grades and even into the workplace, especially in "critical-need" foreign languages
such as Chinese (National Security Language Initiative, 2006). The Chinese language
has since become one of the most popular second languages to learn after Spanish by
English learners in the U.S. (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2019; U.S.
Department of Education, 2015). Like Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs in
general, Chinese educational efforts are fast-growing and have developed throughout
various parts of the U.S. For example, there is substantial growth in Utah, North
Carolina, Delaware, and New York City (Steele et al., 2017). Through advocates’
efforts, DLI programs gradually establish support from municipal, state, and federal
levels (Christian, 2018). Over the past five decades, DLI programs have grown from
just one program in Miami, Florida, to hundreds of programs nationwide (Lindholm-
Leary, 2013). Utah started to develop DLI programs in 2008 after passing the S.B.41
International Education Initiative - Critical Languages Program (Utah State
Legislature, 2008; The Senate Site, 2016). The need for qualified Chinese language
teachers has therefore increased sharply in the K-16 setting.

The topic of native and non-native English-speaking teachers has been
investigated in TESOL since the 1990s (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Garcia Merino,
1997; Kim, 2009; Llurda, 2006; Medgyes, 1992, 2011; Ramila Diaz, 2009; Rao &
Liu, 2020; Sakurai, 2012). However, this aspect of language teaching has been
principally limited to the field of English as a second language teaching (ESL) and
English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Researchers usually see native language
teachers and non-native language teachers as two different groups. Native language
teachers have been perceived to have better pronunciation and language use, whereas non-native language teachers are good at explaining grammar and being role models to learn the second language (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Nevertheless, Utah ranked second in terms of the percentage increase in the number of those speaking a foreign language other than English at home between 2010 to 2018 (Davidson, 2017). Because of the rich multilingual and multicultural experience most young Utah residents have, it is essential to investigate Utah students’ perceptions of native and non-native teachers.

There is limited research on Chinese language teachers in the United States, especially comparing perceptions of NCSTs and NNCSTs in the Utah context. There is also a considerable gap of comparing these perceptions to attitudes about English teachers in the field of ESL. Students’ perceptions are essential in language study because it influences their learning behaviors and learning motivation on a daily basis. Students’ perceptions of teachers (i.e., CSL teachers) affect their academic growth (Sandilos et al., 2017). They can also influence students’ motivation, attitudes, and achievement (Bečirović & Hurić-Bečirović, 2017; Fatmawati & Supra, 2018; Gardener et al., 1977; Sparks et al., 2009). The significance of comparing the two groups of Chinese language teachers based on students’ perceptions was identified to help better understand Chinese language learning and teaching experiences in Utah. This study will fill these gaps by investigating Utah students’ perceptions towards some common beliefs of NCSTs and NNCSTs, which can significantly influence students' Chinese language learning.
Literature Review

I first want to define the terms “native” and "non-native” Chinese language teachers. Some researchers point out that it is problematic to differentiate the two groups of teachers based solely on their native language (Braine, 2012; Ghanem, 2015). In this study, I define “native” Chinese teachers as “teachers who speak Chinese (i.e., Mandarin and other dialects spoken by the Han ethnic group) as a first language, regardless of their background of Chinese heritage or bilingualism” (Yang, 2019, p. 74). Regarding "non-native" Chinese teachers, I define those as any Chinese teacher whose first language is any language other than Chinese. The word "perception” was defined as “a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment” (Robbins, 2005, p. 134). It is shaped by features such as personal characteristics, attitudes, expectations, and experiences (Bernstein, 2018; Robbins, 2005).

In the field of ESL and EFL, differences between native and non-native English-speaking teachers have been well researched related to English proficiency, teaching performance, and attitudes toward English teaching (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Moussu, 2002). Matsumoto (2017) examined EFL learners’ perceptions of their native and non-native teachers, which was shown to affect their motivation. The 374 students, who were either in Japanese high schools or at Japanese universities, self-reported their motivation levels along with their perceptions of their teachers’ motivational levels via a questionnaire survey. It was revealed in the study that both advantages and disadvantages were found in having native or non-native English
teachers in terms of motivation. Although some students preferred having native English teachers, their motivation to study English was not shown to be correlated with the type of English teacher they had (Matsumoto, 2017). Almudibry (2018) also investigated EFL undergraduates’ perceptions of native and non-native English teachers, focusing on the students’ gender differences. Fifty-six females and fifty-nine males studying in Saudi Arabia completed a questionnaire, and five students were interviewed. The author found that the university EFL learners’ perceptions were mostly positive in terms of native English teachers over non-native ones. The non-native English teachers were perceived as being better at understanding the students’ culture. But a significant difference between genders was not found in the study. The study from Karakas et al. (2016) confirmed the finding that students showed a positive perception towards native English teachers in a university in Turkey.

However, the research in the field of teaching Chinese as a second language is still limited. A study by Sung and Poole (2016) identified the differences between NCSTs and NNCSTs perceived by overseas students who study Chinese in China. They investigated forty-one international students who were learning Chinese in China and gathered quantitative data from their survey questionnaire, comparing the teaching style of NCSTs and NNCSTs. They found that both types of Chinese language teachers have some pros and cons in teaching Chinese as a second language. Their findings are presented in the table below.

**Table 3**

*Summary of Pros and Cons of Being Taught by NCSTs and NNCSTs*
Students reported their perceptions of native and non-native teachers, focusing on pronunciation, teaching methodology, teaching style, and cultural knowledge (Sung & Poole, 2016). The students perceived NCSTs as experts in pronunciation and Chinese culture and NNCSTs as supportive instructors in their first languages with rich teaching approaches. The study indicated a critical factor that caused the differences: teacher background. CSL teachers’ teaching methodology and teaching style may be diverse because of their different backgrounds. NCSTs are influenced by Confucian principles and tend to use traditional language teaching approaches, which tend not to emphasize interaction in the target language. NNCSTs are more flexible to choose a wide variety of teaching approaches. Sung and Poole’s findings inspired me to focus on the NCSTs and NNCSTs in Utah according to their unique teaching environment.

In sum, the aforementioned studies presented a preference for native English teachers in ESL or EFL classes. However, in CSL classes, students showed that they acknowledge the advantages and disadvantages of having NCSTs and NNCSTs. However, students’ perceptions may be different according to teacher background and students’ learning experience. This paper is intended to fill the gap and focus on university students’ perceptions of their NCSTs/NNCSTs in the Utah context.

**CSL in Utah**

As the headquarters of the LDS church, the state of Utah stands out from other
states in the U.S. given that the majority of the residents are LDS church members. According to the LDS Newsroom (2021a) data, the number of church members in Utah totals 2,126,216, which accounts for 68.55% of Utah’s population. Having the positive encouragement from the Church, tens of thousands of young men and women under the age of twenty-five are assigned, on average, to serve for one and a half to two years as missionaries each year. There are 54,000 missionaries in 399 missions throughout the world, which requires them to learn a second or even a third language (LDS Newsroom, 2021b). Before going to their assigned location, they spend three to nine weeks in one of the missionary training centers (MTC) to intensively learn a second language and prepare for their mission. The largest MTC is in Provo, Utah, teaching 55 languages to over 600,000 missionaries (Provo Missionary Training Center, n.d). They spend at least one hour each day studying the target language. These young volunteers usually come back home with an intermediate level to advanced level in a second language and often continue their academic development at a university or college.

Because of the energetic practice of missionary work, second language learning becomes common and beneficial for church members in Utah. In terms of LDS missionary language learning experience, Hansen (2012) collected a series of studies focusing on second language acquisition by LDS missionaries abroad. Their abroad experience helps them become competent second language speakers, but it is worthwhile to recognize the potential for language loss after returning home from their missions (Hansen, 2012). A wide range of missionaries return home with second
language abilities and eventually desire their children to learn a second language at a young age. This unique cultural environment could be a factor that has helped promote the fast-paced development of DLI programs and other second language learning programs in Utah (Sung & Tsai, 2019). Utah stands in a leading position for promoting bilingual education (i.e., Dual Language Immersion programs) in the K-16 educational system (Gándara, 2016) in the US.

Students, who learned the Chinese language on their mission or learned it in a Chinese DLI programs, usually acquire higher communicative competence (i.e., vocabulary and grammar knowledge) than students in a traditional Chinese language class and are therefore able to better interact with native speakers in an immersive environment (Lo & Murphy, 2010; Zhou & Li, 2017). Utah implemented the DLI program as a “long-term investment in the viability and vitality of Utah’s future economic competitiveness” (Roberts & Wade, 2012). The current number of Chinese DLI programs offered in Utah in the 2020-2021 academic year is seventy-six, including 32 one-way programs (where most of the students are English-speaking monolinguals) and 44 secondary programs (Utah State Board of Education, 2021). Also, there are three Confucius Institutes that offer Chinese language lessons at the university level in the state. The majority of the CSL teachers are native speakers. But there are also non-native teachers teaching in the programs. Some non-native teachers learned the Chinese language from their mission and became competent learners themselves. The ambitious promotion of L2 learning in Utah has stimulated the rapid growth of L2 programs, such as CSL programs. Comparing university students’
perceptions towards NCSTs and NNCSTs could further develop CSL teaching and learning approaches in Utah.

**Research Questions**

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Do NCSTs and NNCSTs perform differently according to university students’ perceptions?

2. Do university students express a preference for being taught by NCSTs or NNCSTs?

**Method**

There were 22 participants with various lengths of Chinese learning experience, ranging from one to more than eight years. The first language of all 22 participants was English, and two of the students were Mandarin as a heritage language learners. The students' Chinese learning experiences varied from in-school learning to outside-school learning. Eight of them had been learning the Chinese language in the university for one to two years. But most of them learned Chinese on their mission and continued their learning at the university. Nine of the participants have only had NCSTs, while the other thirteen participants had both NCSTs and NNCSTs. Participants reported three major motivations for learning Chinese, including future career preparation (45.4%), communication needs (36.4%), and entertainment purposes (18.2%). In this study, nine participants with experience in NCSTs' and NNCSTs' classes will be focused on, and their perceptions towards both NCSTs and NNCSTs will be examined.
In phase one, background information with their Chinese learning experience was gathered via a questionnaire survey. It also included three separate kinds of questions based on the types of teachers each individual had. The 16 statements were adapted from the results of Sung and Poole (2016). It is important to note that they were originally from Medgyes (1999) and were modified to fit the Utah context in this study. Depending on whether the participants had only previously taken classes from only non-native Chinese teachers, only native Chinese teachers, or both, they were asked to rate the level of agreement to the statement on a five-point Likert scale. In phase two, three participants who had taken the survey and had both types of teachers were interviewed for further information. The interviews were conducted in English, their first language, to enable them to better express themselves accurately via Zoom. It was a quick and straight-forward way to receive high-quality and detailed information regarding individuals from different backgrounds. The interviews were helpful to gather more clear and in-depth information.

**Results and Discussion**

The results of students’ views on NCSTs and NNCSTs from the questionnaire survey did not show a significant difference in students’ perceptions of teachers’ performance other than the cultural aspect. While NCSTs are perceived experts in Chinese culture, NNCSTs are regarded as having a need to improve their understanding of Chinese culture. Unlike the survey data, the qualitative data from the interviews showed the learners’ preference for NCSTs in the CSL classes.

NCSTs
Table 4 summarizes the participants’ levels of agreement to the statement about NCSTs. In the listed statements, students either strongly disagree or disagree with five of the eight statements. The majority of the students (88.9%) agree that NCSTs supply more authentic cultural information in the class. Six out of nine participants do not believe that NCSTs have difficulty managing the class, and the students are afraid of not understanding because of the large amount of Chinese input in the class. These results were to be expected. Although the number of students who agree that NCSTs have teacher-centered classes and lead the class mostly is a bit more than the number students who disagreed, I argue the results due to the small number of participants. From students’ point of view, NCSTs are not perceived to lack U.S cultural understanding, nor are they considered difficult to relate to the students, which is different from other studies’ findings (Yang, 2019; Yue, 2017). The students do not see cultural barrier as a problem or a weakness in the classroom. One student in particular noted in her interview the following:

“I think the native speaking Chinese teachers I’ve had in university understand American culture really well. Definitely well enough to teach that class. It's never a problem. They understand my concerns at least, and offer me the help I need, and relate to me personally.”

According to the NCSTs’ background information and their teaching experience information from the interviews, it might be because the NCSTs in the university have lived in the U.S. for years, so they are Americanized. In other words, they are accustomed to North American ways. They know the American culture and have adjusted their teaching styles for the students in the U.S. One student shared that one of his NCSTs has been lived in the U.S more than ten years. The statement of lacking
cultural understanding might be true for teachers who just came to the U.S. in the first three years. For example, a Chinese teacher from Hanban was reported to have a hard time doing classroom management due to cultural barriers (Sung & Tsai, 2019). Recently arrived instructors still need more time to become familiar with the western cultural environment and adjust their teaching methodology to students in the U.S. However, it is not suitable for the NCSTs in this particular context. It might be because of embracing the capability and greater acceptance the learners have after seeing the cultural diversity from their missions abroad (Maharaja, 2018).

Table 4

Students’ Perceptions towards NCSTs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree or Disagree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Strongly agree or agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My native speaking teacher assigns more homework.</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My native speaking teacher has a difficult time controlling/managing a class of students.</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My native speaking teacher uses more Chinese in class and I have fear that I will not understand it sometimes</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My native speaking teacher lacks cultural understanding and has a hard time relating to students.</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My native speaking teacher has teacher-centered classes, in other words the teacher leads the class most of the time.</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My native speaking teacher assigns more homework.</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
teacher is inadequate at explaining grammar.

7. My native speaking teacher is more cautious in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. My native speaking teacher supplies more Chinese cultural information in the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NNCSTs**

Students’ perceptions towards NNCSTs are shown in Table 5. NNCSTs are perceived as successful role models by CSL students. The learners also indicate that they develop their confidence and are encouraged to have a great example of achievement. Over half of the students agree that the NNCSTs understand Chinese grammar well and explain it to the students clearly in the class. However, participants perceived NNCSTs’ understanding of Chinese culture to be less deep than NCSTs’, which confirmed the cons of NNCSTs reported by Sung and Poole’s (2016). One student who has taken classes from both types of teachers confirmed the results in the questionnaire and explained in the interview:

“Yes, one of my (non-native Chinese) teachers (is the role model for me). He had lots of cool experiences … He’s understanding in Chinese culture is not as deep as my wife (who is a native speaker) but is good enough to be a Chinese teacher….and he likes to take parts of his Chinese accents from different parts of China… but from hearing other teachers speak about him, his Chinese was very good. He was also excellent in explaining Chinese (grammar) as well.”

Unlike other studies, two-thirds of the participants disagreed that NNCSTs have tones or pronunciation problems in the CSL classes. The accents NNCSTs have are acceptable for the students. This perception might be due in part to the fact that the NNCSTs have previously lived in an immersive environment (e.g., returned missionaries, study abroad experience) or have close family members who are native
speakers. Therefore, they have high levels of oral proficiency in Chinese. However, the perceptions towards NNCSTs’ writing ability were unclear. According to their responses, there are about the same percentage of students who agree and disagree with that NNCSTs have limits in their writing abilities. It might be true that some NNCSTs who served as missionaries are less competent in Chinese writing than Chinese speaking because of the emphasis on communication skills in the mission. But this does not rule out that they diligently study Chinese writing after they return home and when they are preparing to become a CSL teacher. A student shared his experience with a NNCST when he started learning Chinese in the interview and mentioned the following:

“You know…… that was very at the very start, I didn't know exactly what was correct and what not. I'm emulating them (i.e., NNCSTs). It was quite different speaking with a native speaker…But definitely from other people, their accents were very imperceptible, they're really, really well speakers.”

**Table 5**

*Students’ Perceptions towards NNCSTs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree or Disagree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Strongly agree or agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My non-native speaking teacher’s tones and pronunciation are not very good.</td>
<td>66.7% 6</td>
<td>66.7% 0</td>
<td>33.3% 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My non-native speaking teacher had limits on their writing abilities.</td>
<td>44.5% 4</td>
<td>22.2% 2</td>
<td>33.3% 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My non-native speaking teacher’s understanding of the culture is not as deep as native speaking teachers.</td>
<td>11.1% 1</td>
<td>11.1% 1</td>
<td>77.8% 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My non-native speaking teacher understands grammar points more</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>44.5% 4</td>
<td>55.5% 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
clearly and can explain them to students well.
5. My non-native speaking teacher has student-centered classes more, in other words it encourages students’ participation.
   11.1% 1 33.3 3 55.5 5
6. My non-native speaking teacher is strict in correcting mistakes.
   33.3% 3 55.5 5 11.1 1
7. My non-native speaking teacher is a successful role model for me.
   0.0% 0 22.2 2 77.8 7
8. My non-native speaking teacher focuses on fluency, meaning, language in use, and oral skills.
   0.0% 0 55.5 5 44.5 4

**NCSTs and NNCSTs**

Comparing the responses of the questionnaire survey and interview data from students who had both NCSTs and NNCSTs does not reveal major differences between the perceived performance of these two types of teachers, other than the aspect of teachers' Chinese cultural knowledge. The students disagreed with the notion that native teachers struggle to control the class and have a hard time relating to students culturally. They also did not seem to think native teachers give out more homework than non-native teachers. These students see their teachers as role models in this setting. Giving them a sense of optimism in their Chinese learning experience, they generally agreed that non-native teachers have a more student-centered classroom. Both of the advantages and disadvantages were recognized by the students.

Students did not show a strong preference for a specific type of CSL teacher from the questionnaire survey. However, most of the participants showed a preference for NCSTs in the interview. One of the students compared two of his CSL teachers in
the interview and shared that he learned more from NCSTs:

“So, my first non-native (Chinese) teacher he was white. He did a good job of like ‘hey you said this wrong. You can't really say that’ … And then my second teacher he was native. He also did a lot to help me learn later on … The first one taught me mostly words, in terms of like what they meant, but I couldn't learn how to pronounce things from him, but like with my native teacher I've learned, mostly from his pronunciation, … and they would use certain grammatical patterns that were different than nonnative would use and more natural. So, I would say I learned more from my second teacher.”

Another student showed a strong preference for having NCSTs in learning Chinese.

His communicative Chinese is at a near-native and he also served a mission in the Chinese language and continued learning it at the university after he returned. When he contemplated his Chinese learning experience, he shared:

“The biggest pro and the place where I've learned the most Chinese, is because they (i.e., NCSTs) gave me a chance to practice speaking with native speakers in the university. Yeah, because the teacher is a native speaker. So, I think I learned more by talking to the teacher than I do by doing the homework. And that's why I don't think I can learn anything from a non-native because they can't speak either I don't think I wouldn't trust them. They weren't a native speaker... but if I were a beginner, it might be a little different. But still, (when) I was in the MTC, I didn't trust them (i.e., NNCSTs) very much, because I was like, this isn't even your native language, so you probably don't know that well.”

In sum, students’ preference towards NCSTs and NNSCTs may vary due to their second language learning experience and background. However, it is significant to improve both types of CSL teachers’ teaching abilities and become professional and trustworthy in supporting learners’ CSL learning.

Summary

The study investigated students’ perceptions of two groups of Chinese language teachers (NCSTs and NNSCTs) in Utah. Questionnaire data revealed that students’ views are that NCSTs deliver more authentic Chinese culture in the class and are viewed as having no difficulty in classroom management and Chinese grammar
explanations. It is worth noting that students disagree with the lack of U.S. cultural understanding by NCSTs in the Utah context. This might be because of the Americanization of the NCSTs and their adaption to western culture. Compared to NCSTs, NNCSTs were perceived as role models and capable of teaching Chinese grammar clearly. Their tones and pronunciation in Chinese were acceptable to the students. However, they were considered to be less knowledgeable in Chinese cultural topics than NCSTs. Except for the cultural aspects, the survey results did not considerably differ regarding the performance between NCSTs and NNCSTs. In addition, the interview data showed students' preference for having NCSTs in CSL classes. The students reported that they could learn more from the NCSTs and also trust NCSTs more than NNCSTs. However, they do perceive NNCSTs as capable enough to teach the Chinese language in the classroom.

The findings of this small-scale study seem to mainly agree with others’ conclusions regarding the differences of native and non-native teachers and the preference of native language teachers (Almudibry, 2018; Karakas et al., 2016; Matsumoto, 2017; Sung & Poole, 2016). However, some results seem to be different in the Utah context. The students perceive the level of Chinese cultural understanding as the major difference between NCSTs and NNCSTs. They also believe NCSTs have no difficulty managing the class and explaining grammar. Furthermore, they perceive the pronunciation of NNCSTs’ Chinese language to be not good enough. The results mentioned above can be attributed to NCSTs’ and NNCSTs’ backgrounds in Utah and students’ rich second language learning experiences. For example, many NNCSTs in
Utah were returned missionaries who learned Chinese during their missions. They spent almost two years abroad using it as a daily communication tool which highly developed their Chinese oral skills. Their Chinese learning paths were different from other NNCSTs who learned the Chinese language in the classroom. Moreover, many NCSTs at the university in Utah are experienced teachers who have taught the Chinese language in the U.S. for several years. They may have set up a family and have their children as Chinese heritage learners. In addition, they have adapted to western culture and are competent English language learners themselves. Therefore, they can provide students with first language and cultural support.

Most students’ perceptions are positive according to the data. Both NCSTs and NNCSTs can use this to their advantage. For example, the teachers can emphasize one of their strengths in assisting the students. Another suggestion is that teachers can issue a survey at the beginning of the semester to identify students’ perceptions of CSL teachers. This can provide an opportunity for better teacher-student communication.

Limitations

This study has various limitations, key among which is its sample size. The study involved only 22 participants with a focus on nine students who were taught by both groups of teachers, which severely limits drawing generalizable conclusions from the results. Due to the small number of participants, it is also hard to analyze the reliability and validity of the study. However, the study contributes to the CSL teaching realm, focusing on the CSL teachers and learning environment in Utah. It
also calls for further investigation into the development of CSL learning in the Utah context. Being a Chinese native speaker does not mean that one is qualified to be a Chinese language teacher. One needs long-term and systematic teacher education.
Orientation and Reflection

In the Spring of 2020, I took the course *Second Language Acquisition: Theories and Practices* taught by Dr. Joshua Thoms and another course on *Sociocultural Theory* offered by Dr. Jim Rogers while studying in the MSLT program. Dr. Thoms introduced a timeline of major developments in applied linguistics, language teaching, and SLA, from Structuralism in the early 1900s to Behaviorism in the 1950s, and from Generativist views to Interactionist perspectives. All of the various theories and approaches to language learning helped me build an understanding of SLA while also informing my teaching beliefs by helping me see how they can be applied in my classroom. I also learned more about sociocultural theoretical views of SLA from Dr. Rogers’s class. It opened my mind and taught me to focus on students’ potentials in the class. After learning from both courses, I recognized the importance of providing feedback in SLA. I therefore became interested in approaching corrective feedback in SLA from sociocultural perspectives. This paper was first co-written by my classmate Laura Medina and me. However, since its original version, I have included more sources and added what I learned from each source.

This paper discusses two types of corrective feedback (i.e., written corrective feedback and oral corrective feedback) from sociocultural perspectives and the findings from various researchers' work. It provides support to create a student-centered CSL classroom from sociocultural perspectives, which coincides with my teaching philosophy. It also provides theoretical support for my first research paper in
applying dynamic assessment in a CSL classroom. Therefore, this paper is an important component of my portfolio.
Oral and Written Corrective Feedback in SLA: Sociocultural Theoretical Perspectives

Introduction

The theoretical perspectives used to investigate written and oral corrective feedback (CF) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have varied over the years. Some theories argue the importance of correcting errors which can better facilitate L2 learners' development of linguistic knowledge thereby allowing them to produce more accurate utterances (Amara, 2015; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). On the other hand, other researchers take the position of viewing the correction of errors as something not crucial or necessary for acquisition of a target language (Crosthwaite, 2017; Truscott, 2004). From cognitivist/interactionist theoretical perspectives, I have seen that oral or written error correction has been treated differently but with the same emphasis on input processing even through output. In the cognitive/interactionist approach, CF, which includes explicit and implicit CF, is defined as a transfer of linguistic knowledge from teacher to student (Ortega, 2014). Many scholars have tried to discover a more beneficial way for learners to be corrected and have compared the effectiveness of explicit vs. implicit CF. Overall, they find that both types can be helpful. Thus, there is no standard answer among scholars. However, many researchers have started to approach and value the effects of CF from a sociocultural theoretical perspective. In this paper, I focus on CF which is characterized in much of the SLA literature as negative evidence (Krashen, 1982; Lee, 2019; Truscott, 1999). Controversies within CF studies have called attention to how much, how, and when it
should be given.

In this annotated bibliography, I analyze oral and written CF from the dynamic lens of Sociocultural Theory (SCT). Via an SCT approach, CF is seen as a process that is co-constructed between experts and novices (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) and therefore focuses on the interaction between them. Through gradual CF, the less competent student gradually becomes more independent in solving the linguistic problem. Previous studies of CF were mainly researched from a cognitive/interactionist perspective. I am interested in approaching oral and written CF and its effectiveness within the framework of Vygotsky’s SCT, which is based on learning as a collaborative process. As stated by Storch (2018), “SCT, associated with the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1981), views human cognitive development as occurring in mediated social interaction” (p. 263). Language development occurs within language learners’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is a state between learners’ current competence level and learners’ potential competence level. From SCT perspectives on L2 acquisition, learners can be self-regulated, which means that they can use the L2 autonomously and also grow with the support of other-regulation within their ZPD (i.e., CF or scaffolding) (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

**Theoretical Framework of Written and Oral Corrective Feedback**

In recent studies, many researchers have discussed and proposed different approaches to feedback (e.g., whether feedback should be explicit or not) to facilitate L2 learning. However, based on the conclusions of the studies that I review below that adopt an SCT theoretical perspective, CF techniques can be viewed as tools that can
be tailored to learners' abilities and ultimately present them with affordances for self-correction. Through this annotated bibliography, I expose some of the main concepts of SCT within written and oral CF.

According to Vygotsky, human cognitive development occurs via mediated social interaction (Storch, 2018). As I went through the following studies, I examined that CF could have more efficacy when knowledge is co-constructed in a social context through collaboration and peer interaction. This co-constructed knowledge is possible through the use of tools that can be physical or symbolic. In the example of written and oral CF-constructed language, a symbolic tool permits interaction where learners assist each other, like in the case of giving feedback. However, not all assistance can be seen as a way to development.

ZPD is another important component that I was able to investigate through written and oral CF. In order for development to happen, the scaffolding between a novice and an expert need not only be graduated but also contingent and dynamic where the student’s needs and potential development are taken into consideration. This is where written and oral CF can be viewed as an opportunity to assist the learner within his or her ZPD to facilitate his or her L2 development.

Scaffolding happens within a learner's ZPD via other-regulation or mediation, which means a more knowledgeable person assists someone with the tasks that the student cannot achieve by himself. Scaffolding is one of the ways to help students problem-solve within their ZPD. When implementing this approach in a class, a teacher scaffolds and assists the students according to their needs, and a more
proficient student helps a less competent student to complete tasks. As teachers incorporate more collaborative activities in their class, students are able to complete assignments that are beyond their current ability through scaffolding.

The SCT concept of dynamic assessment (DA), which is “the dialectical unity of instruction and assessment” (p.312), aims to show the capabilities that learners have established with the potentials which are developing (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). Instead of viewing a student's current level of proficiency as static via conventional assessment approaches, DA allows cooperation between teachers and students and intends to reveal students’ ZPDs and the establishment of continued development during a dynamic process. As teachers provide feedback in DA according to the student's needs, students continually develop, and students’ ability levels constantly change. To better discuss how CF is implemented in the classroom from a SCT perspective, I will discuss two types of CF in detail: written CF and oral CF.

**Written Corrective Feedback**

To discuss CF from an SCT perspective, I want to first focus on work that involves written CF. Panahi (2013) pointed out the importance of having good feedback in improving learning processes and outcomes. A DA approach in an L2 writing classroom is discussed in the article. The author clearly discusses why we use DA according to Vygotsky’s SCT perspectives in that DA modifies the nature of CF in L2 writing. Specifically, the author focuses on integrating DA into the revision step in the writing process. Giving effective CF is recognized as a highly skilled process. It is pointed out that feedback in DA is timely according to students’ current understanding...
and ability level. Feedback in DA is also scaffolded and indirect which makes the task more achievable to students and leads to self-correction after indirect assistance. It may include revision prompts, hints, possible solutions, cues, text types, models, etc., in scaffolded CF in DA (Hartman, 2002). Teachers need more help with developing strategies and materials to acquire the skills of effective feedback. It is concluded that feedback in DA is a mediational approach to support students within their ZPDs.

Furthermore, DA also promotes teachers’ CF in reforming the negotiation and conveyance of feedback in L2 writing classes. This article helps me recognize that CF is connected to DA within an SCT perspective and that it is essential to provide support for teachers to acquire skills to give effective feedback. DA also appears to be a successful intervention in facilitating improved student performance (Panahi, 2013).

Different from the other articles, Fithriani (2019) approaches the advantages of written CF from learners’ perceptions and investigates how the process of feedback in second language writing is relevant to the concept of ZPD from Vygotsky. The author first recognizes the significance and benefits of providing effective feedback in the development of L2 writing. The participants had various first languages and pursued L2 writing skills via coursework within the major of English education. They attended an after class writing course after writing three drafts that had been peer-reviewed and received written feedback with different foci and along with additional final draft receiving the teacher’s written feedback. Part of the data in the study was analyzed quantitatively by indicating the amount of feedback from the instructors and peers along with feedback’s frequency incorporated in the revisions. Qualitative data
sources included interview transcripts, reflective essays, and written CF questionnaires. The results indicate that written CF improves students’ writing quality and the activities of social interaction and helps learners achieve higher psychological functions within their ZPDs via collaboration with their peers and instructors. It is revealed from the study that there are three benefits that come from participating in written feedback activities: (1) generating improvement in essay quality or language skills, (2) encouraging critical reasoning, and (3) promoting learning autonomy (Fithriani, 2019). The article helps me see the design of the research to approach CF from an SCT perspective, and the benefits of having students receive written feedback as a valuable step to help them enhance their writing abilities.

When students see written CF as a valuable step in the writing process, they show improvement and understand how to provide effective CF in L2 writing classes. There are different kinds of CF—from explicit to implicit—to offer to the students, such as explicit correction, recast, elicitation, repetition and clarification request. In the article from Kartal (2019), the author focuses on investigating two types of CF effects (e.g., explicit and graduated feedback) on writing in an EFL context. They first define what CF means from both a cognitive/interactionist approach and via a sociocultural approach. They conducted the study in a university in Turkey, with eleven Turkish EFL students (5 students in the Explicit Feedback Group and 6 students in the Graduated Feedback Group).

The participants of the study were given two topics in order to write an opinion paragraph which consisted of 200 words. After writing, they received two
different types of feedback according to their group; one was graduated correction while the other was explicit correction. The researchers tried to make a contribution to CF by addressing the extent of learners’ self-correction from graduated feedback and explicit feedback. They found that the students in the Graduated Feedback Group corrected their mistakes on their own more successfully than the Explicit Feedback Group. The result showed that in the Graduated Feedback Group (i.e., a sociocultural approach), students were more effective and more successful in self-correction in writing. In other words, teachers who provide the sociocultural approach of CF in the class can be more helpful in assisting students in an L2 writing class to self-correct their mistakes. The author compared two types of feedback and indicated the effectiveness of two different approaches. By using the CF from an SCT perspective in the class, teachers can enable L2 learners to find their own mistakes effectively in L2 writing (Kartal, 2019). As I learned about the efficacy of graduated feedback to students from this study, I wanted to know whether or not something can be emulated in a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) environment, which is also used in the field of SLA.

Many researchers have focused on the efficacy of CF in L2 development in the SLA realm. However, the study from Ai (2017) focuses on adjusting the explicitness and specificity of graduated feedback according to learners’ responses in an intelligent computer-assisted language learning (iCALL) environment. The author designed an iCALL system providing graduated CF for the Chinese language under the guiding principles from Vygotskian SCT perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978). Different
levels of CF were provided to students according to their answers or depending on the type of errors they made. The study explored how a ZPD can be formed between the learner and the iCALL system that provides graduated feedback to create L2 learning opportunities. The author tried to find out (1) the effect of graduated CF in an iCALL environment on acquiring L2, and (2) participants’ perceptions of the particular kind of CF. It is introduced how the graduated feedback is implemented in the iCALL environment and how CF supports L2 learning in it.

The analysis showed that the graduated CF that is provided in the iCALL environment proved to be an efficient tool in mediating the learners in SLA (Ai, 2017). It was found that the learners seemed to identify the errors and self-correct more when CF became more specific. It also revealed a preference towards implicit CF by some learners from the interview data. The article helped me approach CF from a dynamic view rather than from a static feedback viewpoint by using a computerized system. But there is still a need for having an on-site mentor to provide assistance when the iCALL system fails in identifying the errors.

Based on the previous findings in written CF from SCT perspectives, I see what has already been done and what the future direction of research is. In the article written by Storch (2018) regarding written CF in adult English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) environments, she explores how feedback leads to language learning. She argues that longitudinal studies and qualitative cases are needed in the classroom settings.

In this article, she posed three questions where, in the answers, concrete
examples of investigative studies that can be conducted on written CF via SCT perspectives are offered. Such investigations also help with further research in written CF, which can provide better insight into written CF from an SCT perspective. With this article, Storch wanted to approach another direction for written CF where the students’ context-related beliefs, goals, and needs are also taken into consideration. She assigned a number of tasks to be completed during the investigation. The tasks included: (a) discover the nature of written CF offered to students in their writing, (b) confirm if the provided CF is responsive to students’ developing needs, (c) verify the evidence of students’ L2 development in responding to the written CF, (d) show the impact of tools on the provision of written CF and on learners’ responses to the written CF and on language development, and (e) investigate the contextual factors form instructors’ CF practices. She pointed out the invaluable need for having cooperation with experts in digital technology (i.e., those working with iCALL tools and environments) and applied linguists with an aim to carry out a systematic analysis of written CF from an SCT perspective. As the experts from both sides work together, they might find new tools to provide written CF and combine both quantitative and qualitative analyses to determine the engagement of the students when they are provided specific written CF. Ultimately, Storch believes that SCT can possibly provide a better way to conceptualize written CF and what makes up L2 development. That being said, the issues and topics touched on in this article provide a good steppingstone for further investigation.

Previous studies have offered evidence of the benefits of using written CF in
L2 teaching in various contexts. **Moradian, Miri, and Nasab (2017)** examined the impact of written languaging on the accuracy in L2 grammar. Swain (2006) refers to languaging as “the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language” (p. 95). The function of using languages was emphasized in the SLA processes in this study. Two EFL classes from Iran with 38 students in total participated in the study. One class with 19 students received direct written CF on their writing drafts. The other class, with 19 students, received direct written CF and they needed to write down the reasons for their mistakes, which included written languaging. Written CF was provided to both of the groups' writing tasks in the four sessions. Results revealed that the students from both groups improved their L2 writing abilities and became more accurate in their L2 grammar (i.e., compositions). However, the class that received direct written CF and produced written languaging outperformed the group who only received written CF. It showed that written languaging could be an effective tool to use when providing written CF which could raise students’ awareness and in-depth understanding of causing the written errors.

When most of the researchers studied written CF in varied contexts, the study from **Lee (2019)** stood out to me. She argued about the amount of written CF provided to the L2 student and argued that “less is more” (p. 524). Comprehensive written CF is compared with focused written CF, which treats written errors “in a selective, focused manner” (p. 524). She first discusses the problem for teachers and students of implementing comprehensive written CF. For teachers, written CF takes
up an unbalanced amount of time to grade all errors and distracts teachers from providing CF on other significant parts of L2 writing (i.e., organization, content, and genre). For students, written CF can discourage students’ writing motivation by receiving the paper full of red ink. Then, the benefits of having focused written CF were introduced. For teachers, they can re-adjust the purpose of providing written CF and save time to focus on grammar and also other important issues (i.e., organization and content). For students, they can receive feedback from different perspectives in L2 written CF and develop their L2 writing competence without just focusing on L2 grammar accuracy. The study from Lee (2019) helped me approach written CF from a different perspective. The significance of implementing CF practices was revealed clearly. In the following articles, oral CF is also treated from different SCT concepts contributing to L2 development.

**Oral Corrective Feedback**

When I reviewed more studies of CF from an SCT perspective, I found that providing graduated feedback in the class is not only beneficial via written corrective feedback activities but doing so via oral corrective feedback work can be equally helpful. In a study based on examining the effects of dynamic and non-dynamic oral CF, Rassaei (2019) observed the development of intermediate-level EFL learners’ ability with Wh-questions during a three-treatment session. The researcher tried to find out whether CF, which is associated to a learner’s ZPD (i.e., dynamic CF), promotes L2 development and if the learner's L2 development differentiates according to the types of CF they received. This experiment was designed to study sixty-eight
students who participated in two experimental groups (i.e., one group of twenty-four students receiving dynamic feedback and a group of twenty-three students receiving non-dynamic feedback) and a control group (i.e., twenty-one students). Dynamic feedback would consist of prompts given via hints that would decrease in difficulty until the students received enough help to correct their answers. Non-dynamic feedback consisted of fixed correction without concern for the learners’ ZPD. It also included a pre-test (two days before the experiment), post-test (three days after it ended), and delayed post-test (three weeks after it ended) for data collection.

This testing consisted of a picture description task (PDT) where students questioned each other to locate differences in a series of pictures, and a question writing task (QWT) where students wrote questions about local tourist attractions. The results of the combined post-test and the delayed post-test scores for PDT. QWT tests showed that the group receiving dynamic feedback scored significantly higher than both the non-dynamic and the control groups. The result reveals that dynamic feedback promotes further L2 development than the other two groups and the interactions in dynamic groups further illustrated the benefits of offering dynamic feedback in the L2 learning process. Even though the group receiving non-dynamic feedback, which did not take into consideration the learners’ ZPD, showed significant improvement over the control group, dynamic feedback, which helped students self-regulate through the mediation they received which was tailored to their ZPDs, had a greater effect on L2 development. When the learners’ ZPD is take into consideration in providing dynamic feedback like in the previous research, it can promote students’
L2 development and the efficacy of providing CF. This can also be seen in this next article.

The purpose of this study by Saeb, Mahabadi, & Khazaei (2016) was to investigate the comparative efficacy of two types of CF in EFL elementary students: scaffolded feedback and recasts. The researchers selected the use of the third person singular “s” morpheme for verbs as the subject to be looked at through CF. Forty-five beginner EFL students were chosen for the study. Sixteen of those forty-five students were designated as a control group. The remainder of these students were broken up into two separate experimental groups; sixteen for scaffolding and thirteen for recasts. Note that the scaffolded feedback was operationalized within an SCT perspective whereas the recasts were operationalized as repaired utterances through reformulations.

The participants were requested to complete a pre-test before the activity and a following test immediately afterwards. The tests completed were an untimed grammaticality judgment test (UGJT) and an oral production task (OPT). The UGJT test had seventeen sentences with a focus on using the third person ‘-s’. The OPT had students describe what was happening in a series of pictures or articulate a story by using present simple tense.

Based on the UGJT and the OPT posttest scores, both the scaffolding and recast experimental groups scored higher than the control group. It is essential to know that the students who were in the scaffolded experimental group initially scored lower on the pretest than the ones who were in the recast group. The final results
showed that the students in the scaffolding group scored higher than those in the recast group on the posttest. The results confirmed that there was a better understanding of the target structure through the scaffolded activities. It's important to remember that this study only focused on one grammatical structure. Varied results may occur if the same study is performed using a different structure. However, greater benefit might be achieved by utilizing more than one type of CF based on learners’ needs. Overall improvement could be increased by using multiple types of feedback in correction.

The study compared the effects of scaffolded feedback and recasts, which are two kinds of CF on second language development based on a Vygotskian SCT perspective. CF is adjusted to learners’ needs via a learner’s ZPD, which makes it different from conventional CF. Rassaei (2014) also conducted a study comparing scaffolded feedback and recasts in a similar but different way. The 78 participants were divided into three groups: a control group receiving no feedback, an experiment group receiving scaffolded feedback, and an experimental group receiving recasts as feedback. The study involved a pretest, treatment, and posttest. Scaffolded feedback tends to present various corrective mediations (i.e., prompts) to adjust interventions until participants receive the assistance they needed. There were eight dialogic examples that were shown from the conversation between the interlocutor and the learner in the study. It was found that scaffolded feedback contributes greater benefits and efficacy for students than recasts. The scaffolded feedback with interactions provided learners with mediation and assistance within their ZPDs instead of having
difficulty in identifying recasts as CF. It showed that it involves the negotiation of meaning and provides feedback within the students’ ZPDs, which allows for more beneficial effects for students. From an SCT perspective, it is focused on collaborative and scaffolded performance in L2 development, and it is important to develop students’ production of their learning via interaction. By using scaffolded feedback, students can receive assistance from the interlocutor to identify their errors and try to correct them on their own through the interaction (Rassaei, 2014). It showed that while it is important to understand learners’ intrapersonal L2 development, it is also essential to pay attention to interpersonal communication. The researchers note this through the idea of collaboration and peer interaction in the next study.

The concept of peer interaction is also essential to take into consideration when discussing oral CF in the class. Peer interaction is an integral part of the classroom from an SCT perspective. Based on an SCT framework, Xu, Fan, & Xu (2019) indicate that the interactions between the teacher and the student and between peers are essential to prompt students’ L2 development. When group work or pair work is generally encouraged in the L2 classroom, the authors tried to promote the benefits of interactional features during peer interactions. The decision-making from the students at the time of interaction is also focused on in the study to promote more interactional opportunities. The study examined the responses to the errors of their peers and how they make CF decisions in a moment-to-moment setting. The participants are 40 EFL learners from two university classes, having the same teacher and curriculum. Peer interactions were established between these two classes by
having task-based activities in pairs every week. They received training on the various types of CF and the importance of interaction with some practices before having peer interactive activities. The study addressed three research questions and I want to focus on the first two questions as they are most pertinent to this annotated bibliography: “1. To what extent do learners provide CF to peers’ errors and what are the types of CF provided? 2. What types of learner errors lead to peer CF?” (Xu et al., p. 333).

Students were divided into groups and tried to create a story that happened in the past by using the past tense with three pictures each. The result showed that it is infrequent for peers to provide CF. Additionally, when they did provide CF, they used both implicit and explicit CF with a preference for recasts versus other types of CF. They also found that the grammatical errors were identified and followed by CF which revealed that the students were concerned about their partners’ grammatical problems in the communication. The results helped me see that as L2 teachers instruct peer interactions in the class, we need to match the different levels of students to provide the beneficial peer CF to each other. We can also teach them with the types of CF that they can provide and the various types of errors in the task. I got further insight into peer interaction through the following study conducted in 2010.

Another two studies about peer interaction were reported. **Sato and Ballinger (2012)** explored the educational opportunities in peer interactions. L2 students’ awareness was raised in terms of language awareness and peer interaction awareness. In the first study, out of three university-level required English classes in Japan, two were conducted to proceed through three stages: modelling, practice, and use in
context. The authors modeled meaning-focused role-play scenario activities that contained utterances with mistakes and showed the students how to give CF to each other. The types of CF the authors taught the two classes were prompts and recasts. According to their different characteristics, prompts are considered as keeping the correct forms while providing students with opportunities for self-correction. Recasts are when a teacher provides the right form by re-writing the mistakes. The third class used peer-only activities where CF wasn't presented or practiced through the three stages. The interaction data and L2 development data was collected in different week. Pre-tests and post-tests were conducted, and frequency changes of CF and self-initiated modified output (SMO) were analyzed.

In the second study, Canadian French immersion 3rd and 4th-grade students from two elementary schools were provided strategy instructions to work on issues in tasks and languages. Strategy instruction involved of role-plays, games, and negotiations. Through these activities, students were taught how to interact for L2 learning and were put into practice when they were involved in these activities. The strategies that students were encouraged to use the most to enhance language awareness were to notice when a partner needed language help and to give CF to each other. Students’ interactions were audio-recorded and were qualitatively analyzed to see how contextual factors affect peer CF.

The results in the first study showed that the CF frequencies significantly increased in the Peer-prompt group as well as the Peer-recast in weeks 1 and 6, and the same was seen in weeks 1 and 10. In week six, the Peer-recast group outperformed
the Peer-only group, and in week 10 both the Peer-prompt and Peer-recast groups outperformed the Peer-only group. In the second study, the results revealed that the first pair of students showed the highest percentage (79%) of task-and partner focused interaction and pair four had the lowest percentage. However, the study also showed that even if the first pair demonstrated the highest percentage, pair two showed the most balanced collaborative interaction that included balanced CF (74% and 72% for the two partners respectively).

Based on both study findings, it showed in study 1, since students were taught how to correct peers and focus on form, the frequency of CF, and SMO increased, showing that the students improved their language awareness. Although some evidence of language awareness was seen in these studies, the focus wasn’t on if language awareness leads to L2 development. However, collaborative behavior may influence the frequency and effectiveness of CF and therefore the development of the L2. I think while it is important to understand learners’ intrapersonal language development, it is also essential to aware of how interpersonal communication can detect errors like what was shown in the second study.

Unlike the studies discussed above, many researchers tried to find out how to assist students in L2 writing while providing CF. Britton and Austin (2020) first discussed the limitations of written CF: (a) the concept “error” in written CF does not necessarily mean that it is wrong, (b) the SCT concept “scaffolding” assumes the instructor as the expert, but both teachers and students could develop new knowledge via interaction, and (c) the negotiation process remains essential. They conducted the
research in an English writing course with a focus on four L2 students. They gathered
data through classroom activities, written journals, interviews from both students’ and
teachers’ perspectives. The students received both written CF and negotiated oral CF
and had recorded their responses towards different CF strategies. It was revealed that
having face-to-face negotiation in assisting issues in L2 writing is important in that it
gives students more opportunities to develop their L2 writing skills and their writer
identities by having negotiated oral CF.

Alfalagg (2020) also focused on providing oral CF on written errors but in a
writing conferences context, which occurred face-to-face between teachers and
students. The writing conferences encourage social interactions between the instructor
and the students. It also gives students more opportunities to identify their weaknesses
in L2 writing and enables self-correction (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). The study
examined the influences of having writing conferences on using cohesive devices.
Twenty-three intermediate-level EFL students participated in the study. The students
received clear instruction and in-class writing activities as input before writing a 150
to a 180-word paragraph in the class. After writing the first drafts, each of them
scheduled a writing conference with the professionally trained instructor. The oral
feedback strategies were classified from self-regulation, implicit CF, other-regulation,
to explicit CF, which encourages negotiation of meaning and social interactions. The
teacher scaffolded the students to allow for self-correction following the guiding scale
in the writing conference. After conducting the individual writing conferences, it
confirmed the significant impact of oral CF on EFL students’ writing conferences,
especially in the accuracy and frequency of using formal linguistic features. The
students’ writing became more cohesive than before, and they improved their writing
abilities after receiving the scaffolded oral CF in the writing conferences. The findings
in this study confirmed the positive results of implementing writing conferences to
assist EFL learners’ writing practices from other studies (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994;
Cepni, 2016; Erlam et al., 2013). One of the benefits of having the same
professionally trained instructor in the writing conferences is the conformity in
following the regulatory scale.

However, the study from Han and Hyland (2016) investigated two teacher-
student writing conferences from two different teachers. They focused on the extent
the teachers use and adjust their oral CF strategies in the writing conference. They
collected students’ written texts, verbal reports, classroom observations, and
conducted interviews with both teachers and students before and after the writing
conferences. The interview with both teachers explored their teaching beliefs about
EFL writing, their views on providing CF in L2 writing, and reflections on their
scaffoldings in the writing conferences. The researchers analyzed the two writing
conferences carefully with transcripts, recorded gestures and long pauses. The oral CF
strategies they used in the writing conferences were coded based on a regulatory scale
from Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and Erlam et al. (2013). In Conference A, they
found teacher A used most CF strategies from implicit ones to explicit ones in
sequence. She assisted the student to maximize the opportunities in the negotiation of
meaning which led to self-correction. Compared with Conference A, the other
conference also gradually transferred from implicit CF to explicit CF mostly. But the provided oral CF in Conference B was less adjusted to student’s needs than Conference A. The teacher provided more implicit CF in the discussion and even offered prepared corrections at the end of the conference. The student lacked opportunities to negotiate and self-correct the mistakes in Conference B. The researchers revealed the differences in using varied CF approaches and also the similarities in the sequence of providing CF strategies. They suggested that one of the possibilities of how teachers choose varied CF strategies in the negotiation is their different teaching beliefs about providing oral CF and their purposes of conducting the writing conferences. These reasons could impact how teachers assist students in writing conferences even after receiving professional training.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these articles examined and noted the efficacy of written and oral CF viewed from SCT. The investigations made in these articles provide a link to further research on how SCT can lead to L2 development in the classroom context. Concepts like collaborative dialog or behavior can positively influence the effectiveness of CF. Some of the studies discussed that learners could benefit from different types of CF. However, the benefit could be greater if the learners’ needs and ZPDs are taken into consideration when giving the feedback. It is worth pointing out that most of these articles agreed that learners can ameliorate their language awareness through different types of written or oral CF. However, what is more salient in these studies is that when this feedback is done in a dynamic environment, learners
can co-construct their knowledge of the L2 through scaffolding that is tailored to their ZPDs. When learners were presented with tasks where they had to be involved through mediation, guiding prompts, or work in collaboration while having the opportunity to regulate their L2 knowledge, they showed more growth.

As I read more research in both written and oral CF from SCT perspectives, I realize that students’ level of proficiency is dynamic and developing even within the assessment activity itself. With a goal of stimulating students within their ZPDs, teachers should cooperate with students to assist them when needed by providing graduated feedback to help them self-correct in the second language learning process. As I integrate instruction and assessment in the L2 classroom, the students value feedback as an important step to learn in the class. It also motivates them in collaborative dialogues with the teacher and peers where scaffolding happens within their ZPDs. Students are in charge of their second language learning processes when teachers are there to assist them, instruct appropriate collaborative activities within their ZPDs and provide effective graduated feedback when needed.
LOOKING FORWARD

Learning in the MSLT program at USU and teaching CHIN 1010 and CHIN 1020 as a graduate instructor at the same time was the most rewarding experience I have had. I was able to apply the second language teaching theories I was learning and adapt the activities I had observed from other instructors to my Chinese language classes. Although I developed my professional skills while studying and teaching at USU, I still have much to learn.

One area that I would like to improve is my ability to conduct studies that I am interested in. When I conducted the study on students’ perceptions, I struggled with analyzing the quantitative data and figuring out its reliability. I cannot let this weakness limit me in my future study. I would like to enhance my research skills and conduct more meaningful research in the SLA field. I also want to improve my teaching skills and use various approaches to make my class lively, entertaining, and supportive. I plan on improving in these areas and further developing other skills.

As I look ahead, I aspire to continue conducting research in the SLA field while teaching students. My career goal is to apply SLA theories to undergraduate courses that I teach. My research interests and career goals have led me to apply to Ph.D. programs in the U.S. My ultimate goal is to make contributions to the Chinese as a second language field, promote language and cultural exchanges between the U.S. and China, and develop mutual understanding.
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