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Teaching in the Digital Age: Creating a Student-Centered Classroom

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TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL AGE: CREATING A STUDENT-CENTERED

CLASSROOM

by

Becca Huber-Jackson

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

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ABSTRACT

Teaching in the Digital Age: Creating a Student-Centered Classroom

by

Becca Huber-Jackson: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2021

Major Professor: Dr. Sarah Gordon

Department: World Languages and Cultures

This portfolio compiles the work of the author during her time as a student in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University (USU). It highlights her personal pedagogy as well as provides supporting research. The different components of this portfolio are separated into two sections: teaching perspectives and research perspectives.

In the teaching perspectives section, she introduces her desired professional environment, outlines her teaching philosophy statement, and provides an analysis based on teaching observations. Research perspectives consist of two research papers and an annotated bibliography written throughout the course of the program that support the teaching philosophy statement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

ELC = English Language Center

ELL = English Language Learner

ESL = English as a Second Language

L1 = First Language / Native Language

L2 = Second Language

MSLT = Master of Second Language Teaching

SCT = Sociocultural Theory

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

TPS = Teaching Philosophy Statement

USU = Utah State University

ZPD= Zone of Proximal Development

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is the culmination of several years of study and work. Each of the components represent key areas of professional and personal growth. The development of my personal pedagogy is a dynamic process that has evolved with my education and experiences in this program.

The portfolio consists of two key areas: teaching perspectives and research perspectives. Teaching perspectives centers around my Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS). Within the TPS, I outline key constructs of my personal pedagogical philosophy that can be implemented when creating a student-centered classroom.

In the research perspectives and annotated bibliography sections, I provide detailed analysis as well as cite recent research about key topics related to the main points of my TPS. This includes the use of Sociocultural theory in the online classroom, a constructivist approach in creating a student-centered learning experience, and the use of a multiliteracies perspective to help students find motivation, preserve cultural identity, and become meaning designers in their own learning.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

My experience as a second language educator has been varied, teaching both in the US and in India. I began my career in second language teaching through various volunteer opportunities. Several years ago, I spent time in southern India working at a school for children in the leprosy colonies. Later, I taught volunteer ESL classes to Hispanic immigrants in Alabama. I have also worked in the human resources side of education, for Kelly Education, helping recruit and match substitute teachers and their skills with the schools that needed them. More recently, I have volunteered at the English Language Center of Cache Valley, in Logan, Utah. I have also taught remotely, teaching English to children in China through the online language program VIPKID. These experiences have been rewarding learning experiences for me and have given me a desire to work with diverse groups of people around the world, both face-to-face and online.

Upon completion of the Master of Second Language Teaching program, I plan to work in the field of educational technology and instructional design to assist second language learning companies in designing effective curriculum. With these career goals in mind, I have designed my portfolio around the teacher's role in the second language (L2) learning classroom and improving online teaching practices.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I will learn.

- often attributed to Benjamin Franklin, 1750

I have not always wanted to be a teacher, but I have always loved being a learner. I enjoy discovering knowledge for myself and coming to understand more about the world around me. Although my undergraduate degree was science-based, I rejoiced in finding time in my schedule for humanities and arts electives that were not related to my core STEM classes. I dove headfirst into the history of jazz music and discovered a new passion along the way. I pondered the imagery and poetics of *Dante's Inferno*, and spent extra hours writing my own lines of verse for an English class, thinking about poetry and language rather than spending those hours studying chemistry. This love of language and learning has evolved to include a nearly parallel joy that I experience through teaching.

My second-language teaching journey began in Bessemer, Alabama, where I volunteered as an English teacher for new immigrants, all of them adults. We gathered in a small room in a church at 8 p.m. once a week. This was the only time that worked for the students in their busy lives, as it was after their long work day and their families had been fed dinner and children were headed to bed or doing homework. The hunger for language acquisition that I saw in them impacted me in a profound way. Learning English was a means to a better job and a brighter future for them and their families.

Since then, I have taught students from K-8 in China through an online platform and volunteered to teach English face-to-face to children in Chennai, India, as well as to adult refugees and immigrants at the English Language Center in Logan, Utah. I also completed a practicum, teaching English reading and conversation to Utah State University students on a completely digital platform, in a world where virtual was the only option due to the global

COVID-19 pandemic.

All these experiences have served to strengthen my interest in teaching English, as well as help me hone my skills and shape my teaching philosophy. Basic principles of second language acquisition, such as the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, are universal. My teaching is always informed by the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards, including focusing on the ACTFL 5 C's: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (ACTFL, n.d.). Because students come to English language learning with diverse needs and circumstances, the ways in which these goals are accomplished vary. In addition, I recognize that students have different learning styles (learning styles theory was first outlined by Kolb (1976), with much subsequent research and additional styles later). I value inclusivity in my classroom, so as a teacher I need to be flexible and willing to continually adapt my pedagogies and methods to help my students succeed.

I have studied many theoretical approaches to second-language acquisition and selected three as a foundation to my pedagogical approach: Constructivist Theory, Sociocultural Theory, and the Multiliteracy Approach. Each of these three theories offers a useful perspective that contributes to my overall philosophy of teaching and will help me create a program that is intentionally student-centric and inclusive, can be delivered in an online setting, and utilizes literature and authentic texts in a variety of ways.

Creating a Student-Centric Classroom

All genuine learning is active, not passive. It involves the use of the mind, not just the memory. It is a process of discovery, in which the student is the main agent, not the teacher.

-Mortimer Adler (1998, p. 48)

Whether it has been teaching ESL classes to adults or rising long before dawn to

teach English online to children across the world, I have found fulfillment in watching someone's world expand as they learn a second language. I enjoy creating an environment that involves students in the learning process and offers them a sense of responsibility, accountability, and agency.

Teaching practices continue to grow and develop in a society that is transformed daily by new technologies and is evolving faster than ever. In recent decades there has been a shift away from the rote memorization and repetition that existed in past eras of second language acquisition (Warner & Dupuy, 2017). That type of learning is not meaningful or engaging for students. Instead, there has been an increased awareness of the need for more involved teaching practices (VanPatten, 2017). This active, rather than passive, discovery is a better learning experience than memorization, repetition, or formal classroom lecturing. Involvement and interaction are crucial for learners and teachers alike.

In the Constructivist approach, classrooms are not "teacher centered" where the teacher symbolizes wisdom and authority. Instead, the most effective teachers endeavor to design a curriculum that allows the students to learn through practicing, problem solving, and decision making. More of the responsibility is put on the shoulders of the students (Dev, 2016).

Constructivism is described best using a "construction analogy." This metaphor puts the teacher in the role of an architect rather than a contractor in the building of knowledge. Teachers, like architects of a building, take on the responsibility of creating a plan that is understandable, meaningful, and complete. The students are given the plan, but the actual building process is entirely up to them. Learners must put in the effort for knowledge and skills to be acquired (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

As a teacher I strive to encourage student collaboration and group projects. Student collaboration and group projects create opportunities for students to engage with their peers and learn from each other. Creative endeavors are also a valuable, inclusive way for students to build on previous life experiences and honor their own culture and heritage. Group projects can have multiple steps that build on each other and help students see their growth over time. Having students discuss, write, film, and finally present a short movie is one example of a group project that involves several steps, uses a variety of skills, promotes peer collaboration and interaction, and makes space for students to draw on their previous experiences.

I also strive to let students explore their own interests: Whether it's playing *Minecraft* with another student, listening to songs in the target language, watching professional basketball or romantic comedies, reading about ancient volcanoes, making space for students to learn from things they are interested in is an important part of creating an engaging classroom in which students also take responsibility for their own learning.

In my classroom I create opportunities for community-based participation: The power of community can be a helpful tool in students' language development. Moreover, a sense of belonging in a community is also motivating for language learners. Socializing with others who are fluent in the target language, and doing it in a natural setting, can be a confidence builder for students, whether face-to-face or online. On a personal note, when I was learning Spanish, it was challenging at first to speak with speakers of a higher proficiency level. However, as I became more involved in my local community, it became easier. I will provide my students with that opportunity, through encouraging them to attend community events. Fairs, markets, parks, and restaurants are all great options. I could also encourage them to

participate in organizations, clubs, churches, or volunteer group activities.

Technology Based Learning

"If we teach today as we taught yesterday then we rob our children of tomorrow."

-John Dewey (1916).

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared a national emergency in the United States. Within days, schools across the country began to close, and students of all ages found themselves thrust into online learning, unfamiliar to most. Many teachers had only days to prepare for an entirely new method of instruction and new technology. As a graduate student during that time, I felt firsthand the growing pains that came with this unexpected transition for both students and teachers. Although the lines between remote and virtual instruction have become increasingly blurred over the last few decades, the pandemic of 2020-2021 completely shattered them (Lockee, 2021). Learning was disrupted, but it also became an opportunity for teaching innovations and technological advances as the spotlight turned to online learning.

As virtual learning continues to expand, the potential for a teacher's impact when proximity is no longer a factor potentially translates into a global audience. The issue is not whether online learning is an option, but rather how to make it more effective and accessible to all (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). I will take a Sociocultural approach as I intentionally include an online platform into my pedagogy. This will allow me to focus on the student experience and developing relationships both with and among students, thereby building and strengthening an online community of engaged language learners in my virtual classroom.

The Sociocultural Theory (SCT) of learning relies on peer interaction and developing Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). Simply put, SCT is a student-

centric learning model and encompasses all aspects of human mental functioning regarding cultural systems, with language being a primary focus (Lantolf, 2018). In the language learning classroom where communication is vital, modern technology has opened the door for an expanded application of SCT. Students can interact with peers through a variety of digital platforms and in unique and engaging ways. It is essential to include culture in language learning and be aware of cultural systems while teaching language online as well.

ZPD is a key component in the framework of SCT. ZPD examines the difference between the actual performance and the potential performance of a student and looks for ways to propel students upward in their language development (Kozulin, 2018). ZPD identifies skills that the student is close to mastering, and with the help of someone more knowledgeable these skills can be obtained. Teachers can then guide students in activities which create a ZPD. Online education provides ample opportunities to connect students with more knowledgeable peers and thus use ZPD to increase their target language skills.

One approach I want to take in my classroom is to create digital opportunities for play. Play is an important construct of SCT that has been proven effective for both children and adults (Holzman, 2018). Allowing students to play each other in digital gaming is a great way to promote peer engagement. Gamification and play are rapidly growing pedagogical strategies.

I want to include synchronous and asynchronous peer engagement in my classroom. Apps like Snapchat, What'sApp, Flipgrid, Marco Polo, and others create opportunities for students to communicate asynchronously. Of course, other platforms such as Zoom and Skype have been proven useful for synchronous meetings. These apps all have different tools that allow students to personalize their platform through filters, emojis, backgrounds, video

editing, and voice changing, allowing students to further engage in a way that is meaningful to them.

Implementing opportunities for digital journaling in a video, photo, or written format is a third approach I want to include in my classroom. Digital journaling is an opportunity for a ZPD to be formed as the instructor acts as a more knowledgeable other. The instructor will be able to better get to know and provide personalized instruction and feedback to individual students as they connect with them through their journals.

Multiliteracy Approach

That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.

- F. Scott Fitzgerald (as cited in Graham and Frank 1958, 260).

I have a passion for reading literature of all types and will use this enthusiasm in my classroom to inspire my students. Using a variety of forms and types of texts, in multiple modalities, is an integral part of my approach. Stories and storytelling can enrich the language learning classroom. Emphasizing activities and tasks based on authentic texts has many advantages for our students—from motivating them to finish reading a story to discover the ending, to inviting them to create with language to tell their own digital stories.

The Multiliteracy approach describes the expanded use of literature in second language acquisition. Decades ago, literature was considered only a functional tool by some in language pedagogy, but today's students use many different forms of literature in their pursuit of language learning (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Masny & Cole, 2009;). A wide variety of texts may be used, not limiting students to canonical "great books," nor to traditional print sources. Authentic texts come in many shapes, sizes, and genres, and multimodal sources abound on the internet.

Part of the Multiliteracy approach includes the idea that literature provides meaning and encourages motivation for students to help them solve problems, add context to their learning, and be active participants in the classroom (Paesani, 2016). In addition, students can feel increased inclusion when given the opportunity to share stories from their language and culture in their second language (Ntelioglou, 2012) and to reflect on their own cultural identity (Skinner & Hagood, 2008). Working with texts through this approach, students hone analytical, interpretive, critical thinking, problem solving, and other skills.

In my classroom I will utilize a Multiliteracy approach to promote student involvement, creativity, and cultural inclusion and identity reaffirmation. I will use a variety of methods to accomplish this.

Utilizing movie creation on i-movie is one method I will use. This could involve all four skills—reading a work of literature or excerpt, writing a script based on that work, creating a brief movie adaptation, and sharing it with others.

Another method is incorporating art into my classroom. There are many ways to use art in a Multiliteracy setting. One would be to invite students to create a piece of art based on their favorite book. Students then explain the art to their peers, giving them an opportunity to practice a variety of skills as well as utilize existing knowledge, and thereby finding personal meaning in the project.

Listening to and creating podcasts to share with their classmates is another method I will use. Podcasts are a great tool to learn about a variety of different subjects. Assigning students to groups in which they create a weekly podcast for an assignment would be a great way for them to engage with an authentic text, interact with their peers, get creative, practice new skills, and explore a topic that is interesting to them personally.

I will also provide opportunities for students to explore well-known texts in their original format as well as contemporary modes. It is very common to find adaptations, contemporary movies, music, paintings, or even games based on original literary works. Inviting students to explore original texts alongside their modern spin-offs or pop-culture reboots will provide them with an opportunity to engage more fully in both formats while also including more of their senses in the experience.

Conclusion

> *Every student can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way.*
>
> *- George Evans* (as cited by O'Donnell 2016)

My love of learning has led me to a love of teaching, as my joy is enhanced when I see my students' love of learning expand. My classroom will be centered around the success of students, as I will create an environment conducive to teaching a variety of learners from diverse backgrounds and using a variety of pedagogical approaches and platforms. As a teacher, I can help my students achieve success and make progress in their language learning goals, realizing that students are all different and learn at different paces and with different learning styles.

We live in a global community, and the demand for online education is going to continue to grow. Finding ways to create successful digital learning opportunities for my students will allow me to extend my impact. When teaching students from diverse backgrounds, I recognize the importance of creating space for them to celebrate their heritage and culture as well as providing them with opportunities to interact with the communities around them.

The most effective classrooms are those that allow the students to be engaged and involved in their learning. I am committed to sharing my passion for learning, and my

understanding of second-language acquisition, with students wherever in the world they

happen to reside.

LEARNING THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

Learning through practice and observation have always made a larger impact on my education than lecture or textbook. There is a big difference between reading about how something might be done in theory, and then seeing how it happens in real life. There are a lot of variables in education, and in the classroom, things rarely go according to a plan. Observing other teachers has also reminded me of the importance of reflecting on my own teaching after each class.

Throughout the USU MSLT program, I have been able to observe a number of classes in different languages, including ESL, Portuguese, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese. The students ranged in age from third grade to adult learners in college. The teachers all taught with their own unique style and had different ways of engaging with their students in the classroom. Being able to observe other teachers and see how they ran their classrooms was both educational and awe inspiring. I am grateful to these teachers for allowing me to sit in on their classes so that I could learn from them about lesson planning, classroom management, and being flexible. I know first-hand that it is not always easy to have a peer observe your class.

One of my biggest takeaways from conducting these observations is that teaching is always challenging and there is not one correct way of doing things. Being yourself, getting to know your students, and caring about your students as individuals is the best foundation to bring to every lesson. Students can learn the language whether your teaching philosophy is based on communicative language teaching or sociocultural theory. In light of this statement, I would like to offer a disclosure that my observation of classes is in no way a critique of these teachers but rather a review of what I learned from them and how the pedagogies in

these classes align with my personal teaching philosophy statement.

Student-Centric

As previously described in my teaching philosophy statement, a student-centered learning environment is effective because it puts students at the center of learning. Analogously, students are the engineers and construction workers while the teacher is merely the architect. I observed that when students were constantly engaged with discussion or focused on tasks, they seemed to be more attentive and aware. It was like engagement drove further engagement as students were comfortable and prepared to participate in the class, whereas a teacher-centric class that was only sprinkled with a little class involvement brought in much less student participation. I observed various levels of student involvement and interaction and various lengths of explicit explanations of grammar or expectations. Although teacher explanation is necessary to a point, I prefer to act as a "tour guide" on the learning experience they are engaged in.

One class I observed was a third-grade dual immersion Mandarin class. Dual immersion is a new context for me, and it was helpful to observe the teacher's strategies, even though I do not speak much Mandarin. The class was high energy and well organized and many quick activities were planned to keep students engaged. Students were constantly moving from one activity to another. One activity involved quiet reflection as they responded to a written prompt inviting them to draw a picture about their summer vacation. Next, the students engaged with a nearby peer to share and talk about what their picture meant. Lastly, the students shared with their teacher what their peer's picture was about as they negotiated meaning. The students were eager and animated as they talked...entirely in Mandarin!

Technology-Based Learning

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was able to both observe and participate as an instructor in several online classes. Though remote learning is far from ideal and has many limitations, I viewed this as a great opportunity to try new technology and to experience the frustrations that can accompany remote learning for students and teachers alike. Of course, there is a lot that can go wrong in a digital synchronous classroom when integrating different types of technology. One popular tool that was used in several classrooms I observed that I will focus on below was the website/app Kahoot! I learned through experience and observation that practicing with the technology prior to class is critical as a teacher, and that there will be a learning curve for new students. However, students are very capable of learning how to use new programs and it can be fun and rewarding to find new ways to encourage interaction in the classroom. Kahoot! and other polling apps seemed to increase student engagement in activities, and to help the teacher assure that every student was participating and able to be included in activities, as they answered polls and played games via the Kahoot! platform. Gamification can be a useful tool for language learning, as I have shown elsewhere in this portfolio.

My TPS goes beyond simply using technology, but also values applying Sociocultural theory and finding ways for students to make social connections both synchronously and asynchronously. The online classes I observed did a great job at putting students in pairs and groups during "breakout sessions" on Zoom. I noticed how students were able to learn from each other as they discussed new ideas. The teachers I observed would also drop in on each pair that was completing a task to monitor students and provide feedback.

One area that I plan to explore as a teacher is the addition of other apps and

technologies in an online classroom setting. I think that Zoom makes a great platform but finding more ways to connect the students through activities, gaming, conversation, and reflection will yield effective ways of increasing student involvement.

Multiliteracies Approach

Lastly, I observed the use of Multiliteracies to help students find meaning, motivation, and affirm cultural identity. I saw many teachers take advantage of multiliteracies displayed in a variety of methods, using a variety of multimedia, including multimodal literature, music, video, and other materials. The Portuguese class I attended early in the MSLT program was particularly striking. Students were learning content in a biographical text about the famous actress, dancer, and singer, Carmen Miranda. She was familiar to some students as the performer with fancy fruit hats. We watched a short film about Carmen and the impact that she had on the people of Brazil and the world. The students were then given a questionnaire to discuss with each other in a think-pair-share activity. With the questionnaire as a structure for the activity, they reflected on what they had observed in the video, and then related back to their own lives and how their personal experiences had influenced their lives as much Carmen Miranda had influenced the performance world. It was a great way of showing something new and allowing the students to find personal meaning in it.

During an ESL conversation class at USU, I observed that the teacher had planned weekly assignments for the students that had them read an article about a different cultural aspect of the United States and then watch a short video. This combined two kinds of text, video, and print. During class students would respond to a quiz through Kahoot! in which they competed against each other for first place. Competition and gamification of the

comprehension and analysis appeared to help with student engagement, with a high level of voluntary participation that I witnessed. Following that, they were divided into two groups that each filled out a collective document in response to questions about the reading and video. However, it didn't stop there. Each student then shared in their small group how their culture might be different. For example: "In the United States there are certain gestures that are considered rude. What were they? What are some gestures that might be considered rude in your country?" Thus, students were participating in comparison, following the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) standards and also being given the opportunity to share elements of their own culture and identity with others.

These assignments were noteworthy for several reasons. First, they were given in a variety of modes. Students that might not understand everything from the reading could find additional context in the video. They could also negotiate meaning together in their discussion. Second, there was an element of play in the Kahoot! challenge as the students all competed against each other. Third, the students were able to review the material in smaller groups that promoted increased participation as they practiced interpretive and analytical skills. This material is helpful for students to understand the culture they are experiencing in the United States and hopefully help them feel more confident in interacting with other people outside of the classroom. Lastly, students are encouraged to embrace their cultures and learn about that of their classmates. Because of this emphasis on their personal narratives, the culture lessons did not come off as instructions for the correct way to behave. Rather it was a helpful explanation of the world around them and a platform to celebrate each other's backgrounds.

Conclusion

Observing these classes was one of the most impactful parts of this program. Seeing different teaching styles and the way each teacher prepared with their individual students in mind was illuminating. It helped me define my teaching philosophy, as I found that different aspects of each class gave me additional understanding about the impact I wanted to make on my students as an ESL teacher.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES #1

Using Literature to Help Students Find

Meaning and Motivation in an L2 Setting

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

I became interested in the Multiliteracy Approach after studying it in this program. As someone who has a love of literature in many forms, I have concluded that this approach can be an excellent tool in language learning as it helps students find motivation and become meaning designers in their learning (New London Group, 1996). In addition to this, I have spent time as an English language teacher to students in China through an online platform and India during a service trip. I have often reflected on those experiences and thought about what could be done to create space for language students to express and honor their cultures.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the multimodal Multiliteracy Approach can be used to strategically put students in charge of their learning, and to create space for them to draw on their own experiences as they design meaning through various multimodal literature-based activities. As students are given freedom to draw from their own experiences and lives, their culture can be honored and preserved.

Into the Wardrobe

In C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia,* four young English children are sent to live with a distant relative to escape the London bombings during World War II. One day, while playing a game of hide-and-go-seek, the youngest girl, Lucy, discovers that the wardrobe closet in the spare room is more than it appears to be. In fact, as she climbs deeper into the wardrobe, the air around her gets colder and she begins to smell the scent of pine. When she exits the wardrobe at the rear, she finds that it is actually a portal into a marvelous world called Narnia. She later returns to this world with her siblings, and together they encounter an endless winter, lead an army of talking creatures into battle against a cruel witch, and become friends with a royal lion named Aslan. Since being published, over 100 million copies have been sold, and these books have been published in dozens of languages (Peterkin, 2012). People of all ages around the world have "climbed" through that wardrobe with Lucy for many decades, and in the process discovered the imaginary land of Narnia and the language and storytelling of C.S. Lewis. This is just one example of the popularity and power of literature to draw readers into a new world.

The advent of new technologies and modes of engagement throughout the last century has resulted in a shift in literature's impact and the definition of literacies (Mouza, 2002). Stories such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* or the medieval tales on which they are based remain compelling sources of escapism and learning; however, today, people may engage with Narnia not only through the print book, but also through the audiobook, full-length movies, short animated movies, video games, and even toys and a variety of board and card games. Thus, our definitions of literature and what constitutes a "text" have broadened considerably. There are many modes for the delivery of literature, including multimodal texts

and endless online multimedia sources. Many genres and types of texts continue to open doors to readers and language learners today.

This evolution has impacted second language acquisition (SLA) theory as well. Literature was previously used only as a functional tool for SLA in prior decades, but today there is an entire pedagogical approach to second language teaching that uses multimodal forms of literature and defines texts very broadly for second language (L2) classrooms (Allen & Paesani, 2010, Masny & Cole, 2009;). This is known as the Multiliteracy approach. This approach reminds teachers and learners that texts are vital for learning, and that there are many types of texts and many skills and literacies surrounding the understanding and interpretation of texts.

A multiliteracy pedagogy is used as a catalyst for engaged learning and can provide meaning and motivation for students as they solve problems, find context in their learning, and participate actively in the classroom (Paesani, 2016). This paper offers first a concise overview of the history of the Multiliteracy approach to L2 teaching, then examines meaning and motivation as it relates to the use of multiliteracies in the L2 classroom, and finally explores how the inclusion of multiliteracies in L2 teaching reaffirms cultural identity and expression. The paper closes with a brief discussion of some of the challenges that may arise with this approach to SLA.

Brief History of the Multiliteracy Approach

In much of the twentieth century the view on literacy was dominated by the perspective that the use of literature in SLA was a practical endeavor designed to give students skills and practice, rather than a creative experience (Warner & Dupuy, 2017). Literature in SLA was seen initially as a platform to rehearse proper language use or see

examples of correct language, and later was viewed as a vessel for "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1994) that would lead to language production or output (Aljumah, 2020). For example, in the communicative language pedagogy of the 1990's, reading practice was designed to help students navigate everyday situations such as ordering from a menu at a restaurant or following street signs. This approach and these activities remain useful today, although perspectives have expanded and adapted to new realities.

In the late 1990's and 2000's, increasing numbers of SLA researchers realized the importance of culture and began to argue that using texts to teach culture along with target language was important for fostering a greater understanding of and appreciation for that language (Warner & Dupuy, 2017). This set the stage for big changes when the New London Group (NLG) released a study that had a great impact on the field, called *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures*. The NLG proposed that, with the expansion of computer technology, the world was changing in a big way. It was increasingly becoming digitally connected, and current language learning methodologies were no longer meeting the needs of L2 learners (New London Group, 1996). The NLG study laid the groundwork for the Multiliteracy approach to learning, as digital communication continued to evolve. Today, literature, as well as other learning resources, are readily available in multiple forms (Zhang et al., 2019). In fact, some scholars argue that a multimodal multiliteracy education is necessary in today's world because students need to be able to interpret both written and visual communication (Cooper, 2013).

The Multiliteracy approach to education has been readily applied to SLA, as students can both create and respond to input in their target language from a variety of sources (Warner & Dupuy, 2018). Receiving, interpreting, and creating digital texts are important

skills for students today. For example, they can watch and listen to a movie, create a podcast, or document experiences in a digital journal. As we will examine in the following section, using a variety of digital platforms or genres and types of text that students are already familiar with in their native language can expedite SLA, help them construct meaning in their target language, and motivate them to embrace experiences and use their L2.

Meaning and Motivation in the Multiliteracy Approach

The Multiliteracy approach provides opportunities for students to engage more deeply in their language learning. Texts are important in this approach as students learn to negotiate meaning and build their interpretive and analytical literacy skills. Deeper engagement can mean more motivation, as I have observed in my own classroom and in observing other teachers that created interpretive activities based around stories or songs. As students make meaningful connections with their learning, they are motivated to continue the practice of their L2. Meaning and motivation both are vital components of the Multiliteracy approach. Below, we will look at meaning first, reviewing the requirements for meaning making to occur, and then the importance of engaging students to become their own meaning designers. We will then examine motivation through use of technology, interaction with peers, and reading texts and literature.

Requirements for Meaning Making to Occur

According to the NLG, the multiliteracies framework requires students to become active meaning designers. This suggests that learners are not "decoders of language" but are "designers of meaning" (New London Group, 1996. p.74). Meaning cannot simply be found in a text but is derived through an active and dynamic process in which learners creatively combine linguistic and other input (sound, gestures, etc.) in specific situations (Warner &

Dupuy, 2017). When students are provided a literacy education that goes beyond functional literacy and includes critical reflection of texts, including those they design themselves, they can more fully participate in school and society (Dahlstrom & Damber, 2020). In addition, reading texts and writing about them helps in the development of related literacy skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and linguistic and cultural understanding (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

Meaning making through multiliteracies can happen at all proficiency levels (Warner & Dupuy, 2017). As mentioned elsewhere in my portfolio, Menke and Paesani (2018) outline four key knowledge processes, each of which is crucial for meaning design to occur. These four processes are:

1. **experiencing** a text to express thoughts, opinions, and feelings about familiar and new ideas;

2. **conceptualizing** the language, conventions, and organizational features of a text by connecting them to the meanings they express;

3. **analyzing** a text to question the complexity of language, culture, and ideas;

4. and **applying** what is learned to create new texts and showcase new knowledge.

The four processes move from experience with an existing text, to the interpretation and analysis of meaning within the text and its context, to the application of what is learned to a new context or creating with language. It is therefore important to both experience an existing text and then apply that knowledge to create new texts. Note that as part of the Multiliteracy approach, the word "text" refers to more than the written word and can include many genres, multimodal texts, and refer to different types of literacies.

As teachers use a variety of tools and resources, the opportunities for students to

experience, conceptualize, analyze, and apply increase. For instance, in one study by Toohey et al. (2012) designed specifically around the use of video-making in SLA, researchers described its benefits as follows:

> We have informally observed in our projects that video making seemed to enhance L2 learners' language learning, involve them in print-literate tasks, and engage them powerfully in discussions with peers about aspects of composition, storytelling, language usage, and film techniques. ... Seemingly, the promise of creative production during filming and sound recording can also provide motivation and incentive for students to challenge themselves and to work through personal, group, and technical challenges (Toohey et al., 2012, p. 79).

As described here, students were able to move through the four processes outlined above, first experiencing new information, then conceptualizing with their peers and analyzing different aspects of the language, and finally applying what they had learned through the creation of original video.

Engaging Students to Become Active Meaning Designers

As suggested above, meaning finding requires many steps and entails more than simply experiencing the content (Menke & Paesani, 2018). Too often, L2 education falls short of the complete meaning-making experience. The four processes cannot occur effectively with the desired learning outcomes if there is no engagement. In addition, it is not enough to present texts, because teachers must help learners engage with a wide variety of texts. Meaning can be found as students engage in activities that allow them to conceptualize, analyze, and apply: "Engaging in the act of meaning design is essential to developing students' literacies and entails establishing form-meaning connections, interpreting the

language, conventions, and ideas in texts, and using language in new and creative ways"

(Paesani & Allen, 2020 pg. 125) . Before students will become active meaning designers,

they must be engaged.

An example of engagement when using the Multiliteracy approach can be seen in a

study done at the Louvre in Paris as part of a professional development course for teachers

(Palpacuer, 2018). The test subjects were eleven K-16 teachers of L2 French in the USA who

were learning how to use the Multiliteracy approach in their classroom by participating in

several multiliteracy activities. The curriculum focus in this case was the painting titled *The*

Wedding Feast of Cana, by Paolo Veronese. Instructors experienced visiting the actual

painting and discussed the sights and sounds surrounding that experience. Later, they created

photo journals, examined representational and social dimensions of the painting, discussed

metalanguage and design elements, compared it to the written Bible scene, and brainstormed

additional activities they could apply in their classroom such as having the students create a

pretend dialogue between some of the people in the painting (Palpacuer, 2018). These

instructors, acting in the capacity of students, became active meaning designers as they went

beyond the experience, and practiced conceptualization and analysis (Menke & Paesani,

2018). Engagement levels were high as the participants interacted with the text/painting and

with each other in the active construction of meaning.

A multimodal multiliteracies pedagogy can help students of all ages find meaning in

their second language learning, and successful results have been seen with students in K-12

settings. One example is a case study of ESL instruction using a multiliteracies approach in a

secondary school in Malaysia. Five ESL teachers and 33 students were studied. Researchers

trained the teachers in a Multiliteracy approach to teaching, which they then used with their

students. Results indicated that student engagement and learning increased as teachers used

multiliteracies in their classrooms (Ganapathy, 2012). These findings support the stance that

a multimodal multiliteracy education is necessary in today's world because students need to

be able to interpret both written and visual communication (Cooper, 2013). Moreover, the

approach can promote inclusivity, as diverse learners of different backgrounds, ages,

abilities, and cultures may experience, interpret, analyze, and construct meaning together.

Motivation Through Use of Technology and Interaction with Peers and Literature

Along with promoting meaning finding or engaging with texts, stimulating

motivation in students is an essential part of language teaching (Zhang, 2017). Research

supports the use of multimodal multiliteracies to foster motivation in students through the use

of technology and the interaction with peers and literature, and that this motivation is

correlated with better performance in the L2 classroom (Lee & Revesz 2020; Oga-Baldwin et

al., 2017).

Motivation and Technology

Computer literacy in the digital age is an expectation for many learners. Twenty-first

century learners are preparing for a world that requires them to express ideas using various

forms of technology. This technology-based society has created a demand for alternative

learning materials and methods and has been a global catalyst for English learning in the

form of watching TV shows, reading the news, listening to music, and participating in online

gaming and social media (Brevik, 2016). More authentic texts (sound, print, video, and

beyond) and learning materials are available and accessible to language learners today than

ever before.

Though the internet offers teachers and learners endless sources for authentic

materials, platforms for communication, and different genres of texts, it is important to note that simply allowing students to type rather than hand write an assignment does not qualify as a multiliteracies approach (Shelton, 2014). The approach used in a multiliteracies programs should include printed, visual, audio, digital, and multimedia texts that offer learners opportunities to make sense of their world (Kellner, 2000; Unsworth, 2001).

The use of technology to motivate language learning has been supported by research. One example is a study conducted by Lee (2012) on a group of 20 Taiwanese ELL children who had been diagnosed with various learning disabilities. The researchers integrated digital storytelling into their studies to see what kind of effect it would have on the students. The students created projects online using key vocabulary words and photos that told their own stories. Over the course of one year, the students' progress was followed. At the end of the study, researchers analyzed student progress and found "their attitude and motivation did improve noticeably in their more active responses to the stories presented using technology and more cooperative behavior in related activities" (p. 297). Motivation and classroom inclusivity were both increased by the use of digital storytelling technology as students were able to construct meaning and create with language.

Motivation increases when students choose the texts or material themselves, or if it especially meets their interest (Jeon & Day, 2016). An example of this can be found in the Brevik (2018) study in the Netherlands. It is a common assumption that a student who is a poor reader in their L1 will struggle when reading in their L2 (Bernhardt, 2011). The Brevik study challenged this assumption by examining the "outliers" of a previous study that compared L1 and L2 reading abilities in the subject students. Although many students had test results that were comparable between their L1 and L2, there were students who tested

higher in their reading abilities in their L2 than they did in their L1. Researchers surveyed

the outlying students at two of the schools and asked them a series of questions. One of the

questions was concerning their interest and motivation in their L2 learning. They found that

the students were motivated to do well on their L2 test, but that they were also interested in

extramural L2 activities outside of school (Brevik & Hellekjar, 2018). It is impossible to

identify causation in this study, but only correlation. While technology appears to be a factor,

the association with peers could be an additional factor in the high level of motivation with

students in their L2 development.

Motivation and Interaction with Peers

Research shows that students are motivated in L2 learning by interaction with peers.

A study in China involved 141 survey responses from ethnic minority students in Hong Kong

who were given voluntary access to Chinese social media. These students reported that social

media influenced their motivation and efforts both directly and indirectly. The author found

that when ethnic minorities were given access to social media, they were more motivated to

learn the dominant culture's language (Lai, 2018). Technology and social media platforms

play a role in motivation, engagement, and interaction. (This is a growing field, and a full

review of this topic is outside the scope of this portfolio.)

Another study conducted by Lee and Lee (2018) on Informal Digital Language

Education (IDLE) explored this phenomenon and found that students interacting with

English through digital settings (games and social media) are positively impacted in their

language learning. In both these studies students were motivated to communicate with online

peers using a shared lingua franca.

Motivation and Literature

Literature often deals with universal themes and can give students something to relate to. One of the benefits of teaching language through both fiction and nonfiction literature is the opportunity for students to discuss universal themes that may invite them to express themselves about their own backgrounds, previous experiences, or prior knowledge they may have in common with the texts. Students have many opportunities to share feelings and opinions as they delve into the layers of meaning encountered in these texts. As described in the previously mentioned study about the Taiwanese EFL learners, the students were more motivated when given the opportunity to express themselves in meaningful ways (Lee, 2012).

Meaning and motivation are intertwined, and research suggests that learning becomes more meaningful when there is a direct link between theory and practice (Navehebrahim, 2011). When students are able to practice or interact with content, such as with reading, they create meaning (McKay, 2016). Students are also more motivated to read when they are offered material they have chosen themselves, or that meets their interests (Jeon & Day, 2016). Giving learners a choice in texts and facilitating their social interactions as they express themselves are important for teachers to emphasize as they put the Multiliteracy approach into practice.

Multiliteracies and Cultural Identity and Expression in Language Education

Globalization and culture have a dynamic relationship that has both a positive side that shares new ideas and enriches society, and a negative side when the culture and identity of smaller nations is threatened by the influences of economically more powerful nations (Savic, 2014). Language is an important part of a nation's culture, and the loss of that

language can mean the end of a way of life (Fishman, 1996). Studies have shown that the multiliteracies approach can provide meaning for students as they reaffirm their cultural identity (Ntelioglou, 2012; Toohey et al., 2012). This section will discuss what is gained from a cultural perspective by using the multiliteracies, and how teachers can implement an inclusive, culture-reaffirming curriculum in their classrooms.

What is Gained with Multiliteracies and Culture

We are aware today that culture is not a static concept, but rather is dynamic and individual; furthermore, it is a "relational process" (Michelson, 2017). Scholars agree that culture is fluid, multifaceted, and complex, and goes far beyond a surface level to include local, family, small group, individual culture and beyond. Multiliteracies pedagogies are ideal for including students' cultures and the culture(s) of the target language in meaningful activities. A study conducted by Danzak (2011) had 32 ESL students create graphic novels that described their own immigration stories. As each story was a unique and meaningful part of each student's history, this type of activity allowed for the integration of language with writing instruction and helped students find meaning in their learning (Ntelioglou, 2012; Skinner and Hagood, 2018). In the "applying" part of this activity, students conveyed meaning with language, by making their own texts to tell their own stories.

In another example of an inclusive and culturally reaffirming activity, Ntelioglou's (2012) study analyzed three high school drama classes involving 106 high school English language learners (ELLs) participating in a multiliteracies-based pedagogy. It involved interpreting skills, the construction of meaning, and creating with language, as well as "academic language development" (p. 195). The study showed how working with texts helped students to reaffirm and express their personal culture. In this study students would

interact to read, interpret, analyze, and write creative stories through a collaborative effort, with the end result being a play to perform. Students were able to move beyond simply reading texts and became active meaning designers as they used their own perspectives and personal real-life experiences to create unique content. When asked about their experience, students responded that they enjoyed sharing stories from their own language and culture in their L2 (Ntelioglou, 2012). Furthermore, students in this study seemed motivated by the cultural aspect of their interpretive reading and creative writing activities.

The multiliteracies pedagogy creates space for students to find additional meaning in their learning as they reflect on their cultural identity (Skinner & Hagood, 2008). Moreover, it is important for teachers to value inclusivity and to recognize that lessons can be keyed to individual students. Multiliteracies class projects and tasks have the potential to create a safe and welcoming space for language learners to share their own personal stories, and to advance in their language and literacy abilities (Danzak, 2011). Additionally, diverse students' views can influence their own learning as well as the learning experiences of those around them and inform educators on how to facilitate learning (Cook-Sather, 2020). In multiliteracies pedagogies, teachers can help students to feel that their own prior experience and knowledge are valued, and students learn from each other as they interact to interpret the universal themes of a text or to construct meaning.

In another example, a study conducted on diverse EFL elementary school students ages 9-12 from Canada, India, and Mexico participating in a video-making project found that students became active meaning designers as they created original content to share with peers in other countries. These students were tasked with creating videos in English that depicted something special about their lives and culture in their own country. Students shared

everything from their own renditions of popular songs, to an explanation of significant events and holidays in their countries. Teachers reported that "the children's engagement, enjoyment and effort in making the videos were evident" (Toohey et al., 2012, p. 85). Regardless of students' ages, teachers have an opportunity to use multiliteracies to impact L2 development by finding ways to engage their students through making meaning. In such an activity, students become engaged, as they are able to express and (re)establish their own cultural identity while learning a new language (Skinner and Hagood, 2018; Ntelioglou, 2012).

Potential Challenges with a Multiliteracy Approach

While the Multiliteracy approach to second language teaching creates immense potential to add meaning making opportunities and motivation to the learning experience for students, it is helpful for teachers to recognize that it creates some challenges for teachers and learners, as well. The Multiliteracy approach may need to be combined with aspects of other pedagogical approaches. Some of the potential challenges or limitations that may arise include assessment difficulties, teacher prejudice, and skill imbalance.

Assessment Difficulties

Although teachers may utilize verbal or formative assessment in their classrooms, many students will still be required to take standardized language tests which may not be geared towards the multimodal style of learning (Cope et al., 2011). In the Toohey, Dagenais, and Schulze (2012) study, for example, researchers acknowledged that even with the value that video creation brought their students in the form of creative expression, meaning design, and motivation, it was something that could not be assessed solely on grammar and vocabulary. Digital storytelling and group video assignments may require innovative,

complex rubrics or different types of assessment. Assessment is a critical element in most classrooms and recognizing this potential obstacle can provide opportunities for teachers to be creative and more inclusive in designing rubrics.

Teacher Prejudice

Another potential challenge of the Multiliteracy approach to L2 teaching is that teachers may enter the field unprepared to use this approach. Warner and Dupuy (2017) suggest that teachers may enter the profession with their own prejudices and teaching practices with multiliteracies, because "...they come to the classroom with deep-seated notions of language and culture, of language learning, and of teaching practices, and tensions often arise between their beliefs, those reflected in instructional materials, and those of multiliteracies pedagogy" (p. 121). Warner and Dupuy (2017) recommend a solution in giving teachers time to reflect on these tensions and providing opportunities for professional development aimed at understanding the long-term gains in conceptual knowledge rather than short-term goals of passing tests.

Skill Imbalance

A final pitfall to be considered is the fact that teachers may cause an "imbalance of skills" by choosing works that are popular, but the students may not be ready for (Warner & Dupuy, 2017). Teachers can overcome this by enhancing their skill and knowledge of available literature and being willing to explore new territory in order to meet student needs. Teachers must be innovative in classroom management and creative in activities (such as, for example, Literature Circles) that allow for different language proficiency levels to work together with different roles in the creation of meaning. Other creative approaches could include selecting excerpts, extracts, or a variety of modes of interacting with a text.

Conclusion

Storytelling and literature have long been a major component in the development of societies and the preservation of culture. Just like they did for Lucy in the imaginary world of Narnia, stories open doors. Stories help us to express ourselves, capture our imagination, help us identify with the human experience, generate empathy for people from different backgrounds and cultures, and create a meaningful avenue for information dissemination and education. When combined with language education, stories and other authentic texts provide students with opportunities to negotiate meaning, and work in a communicative and interactive environment. The use of authentic texts, or texts created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced (Little and Singleton, 1988, 21), will help learners understand the people they will be speaking with and may reaffirm their own culture. The various genres and modes of literature can help ensure that students at different proficiency levels and with different educational backgrounds are given the same opportunity to engage with new material. In summary, the use of a Multiliteracy approach in the classroom and integration of authentic texts can be a key element in creating a communicative, engaging, and inclusive environment that is meaningful for students, and gives them motivation to achieve their language learning goals.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE #2

Sociocultural Theory and Online Learning

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

This paper developed slowly over the course of the program and is also based on my own experiences as both a teacher and a student. I have taught elementary school students online in China and completed a practicum in an online setting through USU with ELL (English Language Learners). Due to the COVID-19 virus, a field that was already increasing exponentially grew at an even faster rate. I believe that online language classes are going to continue growing in popularity in the future, and that finding ways to create engaging online classrooms is an important factor to consider as a future language teacher.

The foundation of this paper is designed with Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and how it can be used to create a student centered and social classroom in an online setting. It highlights key areas of SCT including the creation of the Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding. It also cites several examples of different digital options that can be helpful in an online classroom.

Introduction

Online education has increased rapidly in popularity in recent decades and is particularly useful to education during the time of COVID. In 2019, it was estimated that approximately thirty percent of students in the United States take at least one online class (Palvia et al., 2019). Educators and learners today can choose from a wide range of platforms, devices, and apps. Online learning is essentially learning using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops) with internet access. It can be done either synchronously or asynchronously, and students can be anywhere to learn and interact with instructors and other students (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Thus, online learning may be achieved from home, work, school, or countless other kinds of remote locations. Many aspects of online learning are appealing to diverse groups of people. Some of the benefits include accessibility, affordability, flexibility, learning pedagogy, and life-long learning (Dhawan, 2020). Though not everyone has affordable or reliable internet access, for some, online learning may bring the classroom home or closer to home or be more inclusive in the access it offers.

When COVID-19 became a global pandemic and was declared a national emergency in many countries, students of all ages found themselves thrust into an online learning setting and teachers had merely days to prepare for an entirely new method of instruction (UNICEF, 2021). Paradoxically, a global pandemic that shuts down schools and limits human contact to only the most essential face-to-face interactions can also be an opportunity for innovation and new ways of interacting. In March 2020, it quickly became clear that if students in the US and many other countries were not taught virtually then they would not be taught at all— and this includes the teaching of languages. As many educators and scholars have pointed out, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the discussion about how to make online learning

more effective for second language learners (SLL) (Kamal et al., 2021).

While aspects of many language acquisition theories can be translated to online modalities, Sociocultural Theory (SCT) seems especially able to be utilized across a variety of technological platforms (Zuengler, 2006). This paper will discuss the history and principles of SCT applicable in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) context in general, and then discuss key benefits of the application of SCT in an SLA online setting.

History and Foundation of Sociocultural Theory

Looking back to the beginnings of SCT briefly is useful. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian psychologist who focused on the psychological development of children (Esteben-Guitart, 2018). Vygotsky's goal was "...to lay the foundation for a theory of human psychology as well as a general framework for how to approach the study of higher forms of human thinking and development as a scientific undertaking" (Lantolf, 2018, p. 5). At a time when children's development was thought to precede learning, Vygotsky argued that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing" (Vygotsky et al., 1978, p. 90).

Vygotsky's work was initially banned in Russia, but decades later was embraced by researchers globally (Fraser & Yasnitsky, 2015). His writings became the foundation of a large body of research and theory that came to be known as Sociocultural Theory (SCT) around 1986. In short, the basic concepts of SCT are that all cognitive development has an initial social or cultural component, which subjects will internalize as they develop to a level capable of completing an activity on their own (Lantolf, 2018). In other words, people learn in a social and cultural context.

First principle: Social Interaction and Learning

The first principle of Vygotsky's theory is that social interaction plays an important role in learning, and that development takes place at multiple levels. To reiterate,

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Simply put, Vygotsky believed that people's mental abilities are shaped by the way they interact with others and with the culture in which they live. An individual's cognitive development over time is based on the relationships between the individual's social/cultural produced artifacts and physiological aspects (Swain et al., 2015). From learning to walk playing an instrument, there needs to be mediation from a source other than self (Holzman, 2018). Social and cultural impact extends to every aspect of development.

Play is an important component in childhood development because of the interaction between imagination and rules. Vygotsky found that when children are interacting in imaginative play they are freed from the constraints of real life while creating their own rules. In fact, they are making these rules up as they go (Holzman, 2018). In Vygotsky's words,

Though the play-development relationship can be compared to the instruction-development relationship, play provides a much wider background for changes in need and consciousness. Action in the imaginative sphere, in an imaginary situation, the creation of voluntary intentions, and the formation of real-life plans and

volitional motives—all appear in play (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 102-103). Learning about real life occurs in part through play, and therefore play can be an effective approach to learning and language learning.

Senderoff (2021) identified four characteristics of play that link it with language skills. First, it enlists symbolic thinking, such as pretending one object is really another object. Second, the social interactions that are part of play feed into language development because children stretch themselves in play to use words they normally would not use in other contexts. Third, the amount of language input available in play contributes to language development. Fourth, when children are in control of a situation, they tend to be more engaged. Senderoff (2021) also suggests that when adults provide scaffolding that seeks a predetermined learning goal, but then follows a child's lead, this may offer an especially effective learning opportunity. Swain et al. (2015) add that play is beneficial because of its use of gestures, which help children gain context clues through body language for words or phrases of which they are unsure.

Social norms during the era in which Vygotsky's theory was being developed perceived play as something meant for children, while formalized instruction was geared towards older students and adult learners (Lantolf, 2018). However, current research suggests that play can be beneficial for adult learners as well (Holzman, 2018). Moreover, play, game-based learning, (GBL) and forms of gamification are quickly growing subfields of research and development in education, second language teaching, and in instructional technology, with countless recent studies being published on the role of play and games in preschool through adult education (though it is outside the scope of the present study to review them). Play is an important part of sociocultural learning for students of all ages.

Second Principle: Language is Critical to Development

Vygotsky (1962) viewed language as humans' greatest tool and believed that it develops from social interactions because of the necessity for communicating with other people. With language as a primary focus, Vygotsky's (1962) work was originally meant to encompass all aspects of human mental functioning regarding cultural systems. Language plays two critical roles in cognitive development. First, it is the main means by which adults teach children, as stated above. Second, language itself becomes a powerful tool of intellectuality that aids in the construction of meaning and understanding.

According to Vygotsky, language is developed in three phases. The first phase is referred to as social speech and is directed toward others with a communicative function. The second phase is known as private speech. It is an external speech, like social speech, but is directed at the self. Private speech is more of an internal process, also related to problem solving strategies for an individual. The difference is that private speech serves a self-regulating function instead of a communicative function. The third phase is known as inner speech. Inner speech is when language becomes internalized. Inner speech is therefore covert or hidden from others. At this point, thought and speech separate into two separate systems—thoughts becoming verbal and speech becoming representational (McLeod, 2014; Vygotsky, 1987). This is in a sense verbal thinking. The reason this is important is that in phase three language drives cognitive development, and inner speech directly impacts our thoughts, behaviors, and development of higher order thinking skills. While these phases of language development are evident in children as they learn to talk in their L1, students learning an L2 go through similar phases of language development (Zhang et al., 2013). It is helpful for language teachers to be aware of these phases.

Third Principle: Zone of Proximal Development

The third major concept in Vygotsky's theory is that learning occurs in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD highlights the difference between the actual performance and the potential performance of a student (Kozulin, 2018). Vygotsky described it as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

According to SCT, development occurs because of the guidance or collaboration with someone who is more capable, meaning that development potential is greater than what can happen on their own, because of help from an outside source. In SCT the term for this outside human mediation is commonly known as scaffolding. Although this term has taken on different meanings with other theories in other contexts, when applied to SCT it signifies an expert, or more proficient peer, who helps a learner understand an idea or accomplish a task (Wood et al., 1976).

Examples of a ZPD can be found everywhere and are often created unintentionally (Holzman, 2018). Parents of young children create ZPDs every day as they act as the more capable family peer in their child's development. Children at a playground, sports field, or bike park will observe older children before venturing out of their comfort zones to try something new.

We now turn to a simple example, that of a child learning to tie their shoe. If the child has never seen a tied shoe, or observed the process of tying a shoe, then chances are when they are faced with a shoe that needs to be tied they will not get far. They may not even guess how to begin. However, if they are consistently seeing adults around them engaged in the act

of tying shoes, and are even given one lesson, then they will be able to develop the ability to tie their own shoe. Observation and instruction in a social context help them to learn to tie their own shoes.

Note that comprehension must precede production before a ZPD can be truly established (Wood et al., 1976). If the learner is disinterested and disengaged, even when paired with an appropriate mentor, they will not be able to reach their full developmental capability. The same holds true for learners who may have a limitation that prevents them from fully being able to comprehend what is being demonstrated or said. In addition, it is ideal that when paired with a more capable person, there needs to be enough common ground for a ZPD to form (Swain et al., 2015). In the classroom, teachers can be aware of this and help to find common ground to facilitate a ZPD.

SCT Application in the Online SLA Classroom

As a result of its focus on language, SCT quickly caught the attention of second-language researchers, theorists, and practitioners as they recognized the implications this theory had for learning and teaching languages (Lantolf, 2018). In recent decades SCT has been used to evaluate the necessary conditions for second language acquisition to occur and to inform second language teaching in a profound way (Ableeva, 2011). These principles are equally helpful concepts to consider as a language teacher seeking to support students through the online platform (Dobberfuhl-Quinlan, 2018). Application of the principles of learning through social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development will be described below.

Social Interaction

Students in an online setting seem to be willing to have less interaction with their

peers than students in a face-to-face setting (Morris, 2016). However, just like in a traditional classroom, in an online classroom student-student and student-instructor interactions are vital to student satisfaction and success (Dailey-Herbert, 2018). Nilson and Goodson (2018), among many others, have emphasized the need for interactions to be intentionally created by the teacher, "In a face-to-face classroom, interactions usually occur spontaneously, but in an online class, you must design productive interactions in advance" (p. 132). Teachers in the context of remote and online learning must provide more opportunities for interaction.

Class discussions are a go-to for many teachers in the online setting. However, they are not always effective. Helms et al. (2011) suggest specific strategies for discussions to promote engagement and interaction. Some of these are: requiring students to work together for some discussions, setting up a system for responsible critique of contributions, and facilitating the discussion as a guide, while not dominating.

Group work is an opportunity for students to work together and interact. Nilson and Goodson (2018) suggest that when setting up groups, teachers should try to build heterogeneity into each group so that students vary in academic background, points of view, and/or relevant skills. Group projects should be challenging so they demand the group members to work together on tasks, and expectations need to be clearly defined first by the teacher.

Specific options that can provide interactive opportunities include breakout rooms on platforms such as Zoom or Skype, which would allow for a learning buddy or larger group discussion, or a team drawing activity for which students need to collaborate and negotiate the rules of what is being drawn (Ostroff, 2020). Both examples are opportunities for synchronous interaction among peers that can take place online.

Dailey-Herbert (2018) was one of the first to provide extensive recommendations to maximize learning, and to optimize use of instructor time through various activities (though in 2020-2021, schools, academic associations, textbook publishers, and institutions of higher learning around the globe have created many handbooks and guidelines with endless suggestions for best practices). Dailey-Herbert's recommendations were to create opportunities for students to co-create and co-produce content in the course, establish collaborative communities of practice that invite expertise sharing from your learners and external experts, produce materials that can be recycled, reused, and accessed on demand for learners, and provide timely (and slightly customized) feedback for learners (p. 3).

In addition to these helpful recommendations, Dailey-Herbert (2018) evaluates a variety of common synchronous and asynchronous tools and methods that an instructor can use to create intentional interactions with and among students. Synchronous options include instant messaging, live chat, webinar, and audio or video conferencing. Asynchronous options may include: email, discussion boards, pre-recorded lectures or videos, podcasts, and social networking sites. Each of these options carries its own advantages, disadvantages, and recommended uses (though space does not permit us to review them all).

Dailey-Herbert (2018) identified several advantages, as well as disadvantages, to be aware of in tools and methods. Immediacy of interaction, as observed in instant messaging, chat, virtual or augmented reality, webinars, and audio/video conferences, is one benefit to students. Another is simplicity of use. Instant messaging, chat, webinars, social media, discussion boards, and email are generally the most familiar to teachers and learners and are simplest to use. The most complicated to use are audio/video conferencing and virtual or augmented reality. One hurdle for students and instructors working through technology is

problems with low bandwidth. This can be especially important for low income or international students. Tools that generally require relatively little bandwidth include instant messaging, chat, email, and podcasts. Tools that use high bandwidth are recorded videos or lectures, webinars, audio, or video conferences, and virtual or augmented reality.

Both students and instructors favor tools and methods that provide a reward of some sort, or are naturally engaging. This includes instant messaging, chat, audio, or video conferencing, virtual or augmented reality, and social media. On the other hand, discussion boards, recorded videos or lectures, webinars, and email seem to be less effective at engaging students. Some tools are application based, such as virtual or augmented reality and in-language learning audio or video conferencing (Dailey-Herbert, 2018).

Clearly, the choice of tool or method would vary depending on the student, situation, and assignments. No one-size-fits-all approach exists for engaging students and creating opportunities for connection. Course design needs to intentionally include activities and opportunities for engagement that will best support the students in having meaningful social interactions.

Play in the Online Classroom.

Imaginative play is an important tool for language learning for both children and adult learners (Holzman, 2018). Although the type of play may look different depending on the age, online resources offer many options that have the potential to work well.

The use of Virtual Reality (VR) has been said by scholars to have the capability to deepen understanding and empathy, change the way students experience material, and provide opportunities for meaning design (Dede et al., 2017). Participants in a VR simulation can turn and move around as they would in the real world. This can lead to the implicit

learning of complex information (Johnson-Glenburt, 2018; Slater, 2017). Virtual worlds such as the game *Second Life* offer students the chance to work with other students both in real time and in imaginative scenarios (Lantolf, 2018). Research by Canto et al. (2013) found that students reported feeling as motivated and engaged in meaning and goal achievement as they did with real world relationships. Another benefit of virtual reality came in the use of avatars. Some students who tended to be shy in face-to-face interaction reported feeling less anxious when using an avatar (Gardner et al., 2011). Such pretend identities can be used in VR as well as in messaging platforms or games.

One example of research supporting language learning in VR is a study in Iran that investigated the effect of VR games on English pronunciation. In total 36 low-intermediate learners between the ages of 6 to 12 years old participated in the study. The students took a pronunciation pre-test and then were divided into a control group and a test group. The test group participated in ten 90-minute games that were specifically geared towards helping students improve their English vowel pronunciation. At the end of the study the students were tested, and it was found that the test group scored significantly higher in pronunciation (Khatooney, 2019).

Another popular option for digital play would be games which "include action, adventure, role play, strategy and simulation genres, each of which offer affordances for language use" (Reinhard & Thorne, 2016, p. 417). Shahrokni (2021) conducted a case study that examined how a multiplayer online game called *Stronghold Kingdoms* contributed to second language acquisition. This game spanned five years, with the researcher observing as an active player in the game. Other participants were both native and nonnative speakers of English. Each player in the game chose a 3D avatar to represent them to their peers. The

avatars all had specific skills and roles to play in the virtual world, which encouraged communication, collaboration, skills, support, rules, closeness, trust, status, and shared experiences. Upon the conclusion of the study the researcher interviewed other players and determined that the game had contributed to further language acquisition. Such games provide space for greater social interaction and create a ZPD for students.

The results of Shahrokni's 2021 study are corroborated by a larger study conducted by Chotipaktanasook and Reinders (2020). In this setting thirty university students in Thailand enrolled in an English language course participated in a blended face-to-face and gaming experience. Language use was recorded in both spoken and written forms and then analyzed. Researchers found that the students interacted with their L2 more extensively and used more varied English functions when in the gaming setting rather than the classroom. This shows how gaming may contribute to motivating students in the language learning setting through play and shared social experience.

Motivation through virtual gaming can also be seen in a study by Sevy-Biloon (2017). Researchers examined English language learners at a university in Ecuador. The students are required to take English classes and may therefore lack intrinsic motivation. The study looked at how playing games could enhance motivation and improve English language learning in these students. Researchers found that these students were more motivated to learn when games were included regularly. The author argues that competition is important because motivation increases when students are challenged, making them more responsive and engaged. As students wanted to succeed in the games, they began to practice and remember parts of speech and vocabulary.

The social interaction and play that occurred in these studies created opportunities for

language learners to interact and learn from each other and from a game or technological resources they utilized. Application of SCT was evident throughout.

The Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Learning through the Zone of Proximal Development is vital to Sociocultural Theory pedagogy and is a natural occurrence during in-person learning. However, it may require intentionality to build it into the online classroom. When designing a course, a teacher can select the tools and methods evaluated by Dailey-Herbert (2018) and described above in a way that supports the development of a ZPD in an online classroom between the students, as well as between the students and the teacher.

One short-term study applied a SCT framework in developing blended and fully online university-level beginning German courses (Dobberfuhl-Quinlan, 2018). Instructors used technology, synchronous and asynchronous interactions between instructor and students, and authentic cultural resources to provide extensive scaffolding and create a collaborative environment. Findings showed a slight improvement of student proficiency by those involved in the study; however, it was unclear what type of interactions occurred in terms of social scaffolding versus scaffolding with resources. On the matter of social scaffolding, Capellini (2016) conducted a study that involved telecollaboration between third-year undergraduate students in a Chinese university and first-year undergraduate students in a French university. Cappellini's intent was to analyze the roles created in the online environment and to examine the language-learning possibilities that could result. The study included 26 students, half of whom were French and half Chinese. The students were paired with each other and given the task of working in tandem to learn each other's language. They would spend half the time on French and half on Chinese. Their sessions

were recorded, and the results analyzed to examine the frequency that scaffolding occurred. Analysis revealed that there were 518 instances of scaffolding (Capellini, 2016). These results show that by pairing each student with a more knowledgeable peer, a Zone of Proximal Development was formed, and the students were able to engage in learning opportunities in their respective target languages.

Although journaling has typically not been considered a very social activity, there are methods of dialogue journaling that are much more interactive due to conversation and comments back and forth (Darhower, 2004; Gebhard et al., 2011). In addition, because it happens asynchronously, journaling gives students the chance to utilize outside mediation tools to expand vocabulary and take time for deeper language growth and reflection (Darhower, 2004; Harwood & Brett, 2019;). The teacher can use this as an opportunity to create individualized constructive dialogue with their students, to hold a conversation, and to guide their students as the more knowledgeable helper (Stephens, 2017). This creates the opportunity for a ZPD to develop between the student and their instructor, and for the student's written language abilities to grow (Gebhard et al., 2011). Research has demonstrated that journaling helps a teacher focus on each individual student and better understand their needs (Fiock, 2020), which is beneficial for language learners and teachers alike.

Each of these research examples shows how a technological platform can be utilized to not only provide opportunities for social interaction, but also for the development of a ZPD and scaffolding through peer-peer and teacher-student interaction.

Affordances and Constraints

Every mode of delivery offers inherent affordances and constraints, with affordances

being tools that act as a vessel for learning, and constraints being roadblocks that inhibit learning. One main constraint, specifically with asynchronous learning, is the diminished potential for nonverbal communication. For example, in a face-to-face classroom interaction (or even Zoom remote video interaction, to a lesser extent), a student would have the benefit of body language to guide the context of what a peer or teacher is saying. In an asynchronous written or verbal dialogue or forum the student would be left to interpret context and would not necessarily have the benefit of immediate follow up, which may lead to misinterpretation (Fiock, 2020).

Another constraint is the technological barrier that many students might experience. Although technology has the power to open doors for students, it can also be a roadblock (Nilson & Goodson, 2018). Whether they don't have access to a computer, internet, or the knowledge on how to effectively use it, technology can create limitations to learning. Another constraint is that it may be harder for teachers to know why a student is struggling and how to help them (Fiock, 2020). Teachers must be aware of access issues and the limitations of technology.

Affordances of online learning include more time for students to consider responses, access to outside tools and artifacts, and the use of emojis to provide emotional expression (Harwood & Brett, 2019). Technology, although in some situations considered a constraint, can also be an affordance. This is because students have access to many more resources than they would in a classroom without many technological resources, and they have the flexibility to learn from any location. In order to help more students utilize technology, instructors can have students assess themselves at the beginning of the class to determine their technological capabilities (Nilson & Goodson, 2018). Teachers can also provide an

orientation to set students up for success during the class (Ekwunife-Orakwue & Teng, 2014). An orientation to the technology and platforms being used can prove invaluable in the online classrooms.

Teachers must also be mindful of their own limitations and level of familiarity with the technology available. Awareness of potential constraints and affordances can help teachers plan and prepare their lessons in a way that helps their students reach their learning potential and achieve their language learning goals, either in person or online.

Conclusion

As the online learning trend continues to grow and develop in new and exciting ways, and technology evolves quickly, ESL educators like me will need to look for ways to improve the student and instructor experience on their respective platforms. As this paper shows, SCT is a theory that applies in a variety of settings and to diverse groups of students. Even with potential constraints, such as not meeting face-to-face or seeing every gesture, online education can be a social and interactive endeavor. It can also be more inclusive and give more people more access to different kinds of education. Students with a device and an internet connection literally have the world of learning at their fingertips, and teachers have many options to engage their classes in new and exciting ways. In addition, the use of technology also provides affordances that a regular face-to-face classroom may not. With proper planning, knowledge, and access to technology, the online classroom can become a rewarding sociocultural experience for both students and instructors.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Multiliteracy Approach in a Global Context:

A tool to preserve culture and identity

Introduction

English has become a global language, and a lingua franca for much of the world (Pac, 2012). This global trend has created an immense market for both the business and academic sectors. As someone who has worked and volunteered as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in both local and international contexts, I have experienced first-hand how teaching and learning a second language can be immensely beneficial for both parties.

The students I taught in India were born in colonies created for people who had been diagnosed with Hansen's disease, commonly known as leprosy. These students were part of a marginalized group that was deprived of many opportunities given to students born outside of the colonies, including attending school and learning English. For the students I taught, learning English gave them the opportunity to advance their professional lives and improve their standard of living, as it opened additional avenues for education and work. In addition to the experience in India, I have also taught K-8 students in China online, and found that although the setting was much different, the motivation to have access to future opportunities remained the same.

As a student in the Master's in Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University, I have reflected frequently on the impact that the globalization of English has had on my students and wondered about the impact that it had on their culture. I have experienced both having the privilege of being more "hireable" because of my native speaking status, and seeing dear friends turned down for the same position because their first language was not English. This disparity in access to employment is an issue of which language teachers should be aware.

The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to spotlight a helpful selection of the vast body of research that has been conducted in recent years on the globalization of English and how it is impacting students. To provide a close-up look at the impact of the globalization of English on students, I have selected China as an example. Space does not allow for a literature review of research on all countries, of course, and I have chosen China because it is one of the countries in which I have first-hand, recent experience teaching students, and on which there has been a good amount of research published in recent years. I will then focus on the implication of culture loss and how to potentially address it with the use of the Multiliteracy approach in English language education in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language).

Globalization of English in China

To generalize, the belief that proficiency in English has significant benefits, and is even essential, is strong among administrators, faculty, and students in Chinese universities, and this trickles down to younger K-12 students. Many Chinese students of all ages participate in English education in both their school and home life. Students may take English classes at school, and then more private English classes once they are home, often through remote learning. For example, in 2019, there were over 500,000 K-12 students in China who were registered to take classes through one of the main online companies (Ark, 2019). When examining the number of total students learning English in mainland China it grows to a staggering 400 million students (Wei & Su, 2012) with this number growing since 2012. The emphasis on EFL education and the belief in career advancement often held by students and teachers alike in China has generated an environment where parents are under ever-increasing pressure to provide more EFL opportunities for their child (Lin, 2019).

Anecdotally, as an online EFL teacher, I saw students as young as five routinely registered for a couple of paid tutoring sessions each day of the week. This is often done at great financial sacrifice by the family. Due to government policy and popular perception, learning English has affected K-12 learners in nearly every aspect of their lives including their homes. Thus, learning English is viewed by many students and parents in China as one possible way children and their families may gain more educational and employment opportunities to escape poverty (though education inequality and the lack of access in poor and rural areas remains a problem).

Governmental and Economic Influence

China is no stranger to the English language, since the arrival of British colonialism centuries ago. During the last 50 years China has seen a period of dramatic growth economically (Morrison, 2019; Teo, 2017). In conjunction with the economic boom, the Chinese government has established official measures to promote EFL education (Hu, 2005) and China's influence has increased as it has sent its students and business professionals throughout the world (Wei & Su, 2012). In 2008, Beijing hosted the Summer Olympics, which sparked an even greater political and national interest in learning English, and China strengthened its efforts to increase the quantity and quality of EFL education for its students, in hopes of providing even more opportunities to compete on the global market (Teo, 2017). In 2010, China took its place as the second strongest economy in the world (Morrison, 2019).

Teaching and Assessment

With its entrance into a new economic sphere, China has also adjusted its EFL education practices to remain competitive in a world market that relies on English for business and education (Li, 2016). One of the major developments for EFL education came

in a revision to the National English Curriculum Standards (NECS) in 2011 (Zheng, 2012). The reform included a change to the traditional, teacher-centered classroom approach for EFL education, and instead opted for a more student-centric approach with an emphasis on using English appropriately in conversation and communication with others (Zheng, 2012). This shift away from the traditional, Chinese approach to language learning reflects one way that the globalization of English may affect culture. This western style of learning affects students beyond the EFL classroom (Tan, 2011; Wang, 2013).

Another recent change that has happened in China is the English proficiency exam that is required for college entrance. Much of the Chinese educational system and some forms of employment are heavily exam-based, and the test for English proficiency is conducted through standardized examinations, mostly written assessments. In the past, the exams have been fragmented and focused on aspects of language learning that do not always include comprehension and conversational abilities (Li, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the Chinese government has instituted a student-centric curriculum, but the results of a study of eight EFL classrooms in two different cities in China point to a deviation from the government's education initiatives. Recordings of the lessons were transcribed and coded. The results showed that the teachers were using a teacher-centric model with lots of repetition and guiding students to the correct answer rather than allowing them to figure it out (Teo, 2017). In my own teaching, I will need to be mindful of the background of some of my students and that they may be coming from teacher-centered learning environments.

One possible reason as to why classroom practice has not adapted is because the system was relying heavily on exams that did not focus on communication abilities (Li, 2016). This created a need for a syllabus designed for passing an exam rather than one

designed with a focus on communication. This teaching to the test can be very frustrating for both students and teachers who would prefer, or benefit from, an approach geared towards strengthening communication abilities (Pan & Block, 2011).

Perception of Teachers and Students

A study conducted in Beijing during the 2008 Olympics surveyed 53 Chinese professors and 637 Chinese university students. Results showed that the general perception of these academics was that English was a lingua franca (Pan & Block, 2011). The common perception was that (1) teachers and students see English as a global language and acknowledge its importance to the development of China, and (2) English is perceived as "more international" and "global" than other languages. Students also stated that furthering their career was the main motivation for learning English. This research on perceptions and motivation is helpful for my own future teaching, as I strive to motivate my students.

Many students must overcome a bias toward native speakers, although this bias may be diminishing in many contexts around the world. Many of the companies that teach English in China require their teachers to be native speakers of English (Searight, 2019). The common perception that native speakers of English are better teachers has been a prevalent belief in China (Chen, 2012) even to the point of disregarding professional experience and education in preference for native speaking ability (Ng, 2018). There is some research that shows this belief may be changing. Wang & Fang (2020) conducted a study investigating students' and teachers' attitudes towards native English-speaking teachers and non-native English-speaking teachers. Online questionnaires were distributed to both teachers and students, and 106 questionnaires were considered usable for the study. Results showed that the students and teachers did not see a significant difference between the two types of

English teachers. This study is relevant for my future students hoping to become teachers, and it is promising that attitudes may be changing as the education system is beginning to be more inclusive of different Englishes and different accents.

Potential Gains as a Result of the Globalization of English

China is just one example of a country that is being impacted by the globalization of English. Countries throughout the world seek an English language education because of the doors it potentially opens to education and prosperity (Smokotin et al., 2014). One potential gain is academic opportunity. Some researchers have criticized this increased opportunity for causing what is often commonly referred to as 'brain drain.' In other words, some feel that when students become educated, they leave their home countries in order to receive more opportunities in other countries. Kousar et al. (2020) conducted a study in Pakistan, for instance, that highlights the trend of new college graduates leaving Pakistan to look for jobs elsewhere, often because there are not enough jobs for them within the country. This research demonstrates this flight of educated youth as a negative for Pakistan.

On the other hand, other sources have credited globalization with 'brain gain' and 'brain circulation' as evidenced in a Chinese study by Ma & Pan (2015). These researchers observed that when students are fluent in English they have opportunities to attend schools in other countries, collaborate with global experts, and then return to their home countries with additional knowledge, experience, and connections. They identified several incentives that the Chinese government offered to entice citizens to return home, as well as suggested other things that China could do in the future to improve reintegration and opportunities upon return to their home country.

Another potential gain is the perception of increased work opportunities because of

the ability to speak a language that is becoming a lingua franca (Doan & Hamid, 2019). The global market leaves an avenue for the increased circulation of working professionals who collaborate with others from around the world (Ma & Pan, 2015). This can open the avenue for increased communication, idea sharing, and problem solving as a global community. In addition, other scholars have shown the benefits and limitations of English as a lingua franca in a transnational, transcultural academic environment (for example Baker, 2016).

Potential Losses as a Result of the Globalization of English

The potential gains to a nation and its people as they embrace the globalization of English are evident, but they are countered by potential losses. When a foreign language is adopted on such a large scale, as is happening in China, losses inevitably include negative impact on at-risk groups and potentially a profound culture and identity loss for many people.

At-risk learners include students with disabilities, low income, ethnic minorities, and the elderly. In China, for example, with the high costs for private tutors (Searight, 2019), not everybody has the same access to English learning opportunities. Thus, a lack of resources impacts learning and the result is the creation of a wider gap in a social chasm (Lee, 2010).

Language is not just relied upon for thinking, communication, and information transmission. Language also contains cultural knowledge (Tao, 2019) and is a vessel for passing on heritage, traditions, and customs from generation to generation. This is described below by DeCosta (2021):

> Culture loss has certainly been the case with Indigenous languages of American Indian communities, many of whom in the past were sent to boarding schools — often outside of their reservations — with the goal of erasing the home languages of American Indian youth. The sad result is that because of immense pressures from

outside their respective communities, many of these speakers lost their languages and
became monolingual English speakers. Such a loss is further solidified across
generations because parents, for example, elect not to use their community languages
with their children, and the downstream effects are distressing and often irreversible.
One result of this is when grandparents can no longer communicate with their
grandchildren because they do not share a lingua franca.

This is an example of the type of culture loss that occurs across generations and can be found
in countries throughout the world. Teachers of EFL/ESL can try to become more aware of
the potential for culture loss when young people and their families receive relentless
messaging about the power of English.

Globalization gives both the promise of enrichment and the threat of cultural
extinction. The loss of language, for some people, can mean the end to a way of life
(Fishman, 1996). It can happen as a result of unintentional teaching practices that tend not to
support cultural identity retention. As a language teacher, I will be mindful of ways in which
I might support cultural identity further and be more inclusive of different cultures in my
classroom. As one partial solution, I suggest that the Multiliteracy approach to English
language teaching can be used to counteract some of the negative effects of English
globalization, both internationally and domestically.

Foundation of the Multiliteracy Approach

In 1996, an influential document, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social
Future* was released by the The New London Group (1996). Here, researchers demonstrated
that our world was becoming increasingly more digital, and that the current language-
learning methodologies were no longer meeting the needs of second language (L2) learners.

The publication of this research was a pivotal moment for the development of the

Multiliteracy approach, a flourishing pedagogy in which various types of texts can be used in

multiple forms for educational purposes (Zhang et al., 2019). Since 1996, of course, our

world has become much more digitally connected and changed by globalization.

When the Multiliteracy approach is used in English as a Second Language (ESL)

teaching it provides opportunities for students to find meaning in their language learning.

Moreover, it allows students to practice useful skills beyond language skills. Meaning is a

vital component of the Multiliteracy approach as students can both create and receive

information in their target language from a variety of sources (Warner & Dupuy, 2018). The

Multiliteracy approach defines texts broadly, and students may focus on a wide variety of

authentic texts, which enables students to learn and build interpretive, analytical, and critical

thinking skills. Students learn to negotiate meaning and create with language through

different media and modes, including written literature, films, ads, podcasts, music, games,

audiobooks, and more. As I have discussed elsewhere in this portfolio, as a teacher I value

the Multiliteracy approach and will use many types of texts and even multimodal literature to

engage my students.

Applying the Multiliteracy Approach to Support Culture

Studies have shown that the Multiliteracy approach can combat culture loss in

language learning by helping students find their own voice, reflect on their personal history

and experiences, reaffirm their cultural identity, and share their culture with those around

them. Students can use methods with which they are familiar in their native language to find

meaning in their target language (Jeon & Day, 2016). Multiliteracies can support the

globalized classroom and support the diversity of our students (Khadka, 2014). Again, in my

classroom, I will endeavor to create tasks that incorporate the Multiliteracies approach to texts and encourage my students to find meaning and share their own stories.

It is useful to turn to the practical applications of this approach and look at some types of possible activities for implementation. Multiliteracies approach researchers Menke and Paesani (2018) analyzed the material from 25 lesson plans created for a lower-level collegiate Spanish class. They used the lens of the knowledge process framework in their analysis. This is a framework within the Multiliteracies approach that describes the process of learning along with a typology of activities. The framework consists of four steps:

1. **experiencing** a text to express thoughts, opinions, and feelings about familiar and new ideas;

2. **conceptualizing** the language, conventions, and organizational features of a text by connecting them to the meanings they express;

3. **analyzing** a text to question the complexity of language, culture, and ideas;

4. and **applying** what is learned to create new texts and showcase new knowledge. Incidentally, the researchers found that these lesson plans emphasized the knowledge process of experiencing, and that conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying occurred less often. They proposed that a change in curriculum to include the other three processes would be beneficial for students, as students would be able to understand the socially situated nature of language and to explore the human experience through different cultural lenses. I will try to encourage and facilitate more in the "applying" category in my future teaching.

First- or second-generation immigrants can have a hard time affirming their identity, often feeling caught between two worlds, but also feeling like in some way they do not quite fit in (Bejarano, 2005). Danzak (2011) used the framework of identity-as-narrative and

multiliteracies with a group of English learners (EL's) to complete a project called "Graphic Journeys." This project was designed as a way for a group of middle school students to share their families' immigration stories. The students went through several steps in this process, beginning with reading graphic novels and journaling. Later they interviewed and integrated written text with family photos. At the end of the project the students were able to share their completed stories with the community in "a powerful forum where the students could express their individual and family identities, explore their cultural heritage, and share their immigration stories with others" (p. 187). This study supports other research conclusions, that dual language learners "are successfully supported through multilingual pedagogies that acknowledge and explicitly value students' prior learning experiences and multilingual knowledge as an integral resource in their language learning" (Wernicke, 2019 p. 134). The model of the project in this example is just one way I can help my students tell their own stories and support their cultural identity in my classroom.

The Multiliteracy approach can be used to support students' reaffirmation of their cultural identity. Its efficacy in this context has been confirmed by many studies, including two separate studies I summarize here. One study by Ntelioglou (2012) examined high school drama classrooms and how students could perform their own stories that would value their cultural identities. Another study by Toohey et al. (2012) looked at elementary classroom video projects. In both studies, students worked in collaborative groups where they were able to identify and express their own stories as it related to their personal history and culture. Toohey et al's study involved students in three different countries: Canada, India, and Mexico. The participants created a video in their L2 to be shared with students in another country. This study parallels Danzak (2011) in showing how sharing cultural stories with

others can enrich the classroom environment for everyone. I also will strive for an inclusive environment and hope to be able to offer more video storytelling and digital storytelling opportunities for my future students.

Owens and Brien (2014) conducted a study entitled "Writing themselves: Using Creative Writing to Facilitate International Student Accounts of Their Intercultural Experience." In this study the researchers assigned a creative writing project to students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, all of whom were learning English as an additional language at an Australian university through a writing class and mentoring program. The participants wrote creatively about cross-cultural experiences, drawing on their own experiences of language learning. Although the stories did not have to be true, they still provided a platform for students to express their thoughts. The researchers found through this project that it helped them become less prone to correct and reject the voices of their students. These stories were then published and shared with various stakeholders in hopes that it might encourage cultural understanding and empathy. This cross-cultural approach can be very effective.

The use of the Multiliteracy approach to learning can give students a voice. Being involved more in deciding what to read/write not only helps motivate students to greater levels of participation (Jeon & Day, 2016), but many researchers also believe that student voice has the potential to open up spaces and capacities for "racial and ethnic historically marginalized youth to play key roles in change and hybrid learning spaces" (Gonzalez, Hernandez-Saca, & Artiles, 2017 p. 451) .

Likewise, Bisai and Singh (2020) agreed in their research that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all pedagogy and that it is important for teachers to tailor learning to their

students' individual needs. This study demonstrates that the Multiliteracies pedagogy can make education more inclusive and accessible for diverse learners as it allows students to build on their life experiences and interests to find meaning in their learning. This is a goal I share for my own teaching.

Conclusion

The globalization of the English language is inevitable. Along with the potential gains of globalization, it is important to remember that the effects that linguistic and cultural conformity can have on a society are often permanent. Language and culture once lost in a generation are difficult to regain. From a teaching perspective, I believe that it is crucial to ensure my classroom is a safe place for all students. It is not enough to refrain from lessons that encourage linear cultural perspective. Instead, actively working to create a classroom tailored to meet student needs, promote cultural integration and reflection, and to honor cultural identity are vital goals. There are several things I can do to ensure that students are able to reaffirm their cultural identities when learning a second language. One of these is to work to erase the stigma surrounding non-native English-speaking teachers. Another is to engage students in the Multiliteracy approach where they are able to find meaning in their learning. I can ensure that students are given opportunities to have culturally affirming experiences in the classroom. I can also provide opportunities for students to tell their own stories, and to share and celebrate their history and culture with others. I am excited for the future of English education, domestic and international, remote and in person and hope to see more research done on multiliteracy education and cultural preservation.

LOOKING FORWARD

       The completion of the MSLT program marks the beginning of a new journey. I am grateful for the classes and observation experience from this program, and especially thankful for the helpful practicum I completed in my last semester that provided additional teaching and mentorship experience. I feel like one major discovery I have had in this program is how passionate I am about both educational technology and cultural preservation. I accept the challenge of finding new and creative ways to connect students around the world, and the implications of what new technologies may allow us to do in the future. I value diversity and promote inclusivity in my classroom, both in person and through remote learning. I also believe that all the cultures of English language learners around the world (and really of any student learning another language) must be acknowledged, celebrated, and preserved. As an ESL teacher, I know that English can be an asset for knowledge sharing and communication and is already useful to many as a global lingua franca. However, its prevalence does not make it a superior language, but rather a convenient one that can benefit the lives of those who learn it. I plan to continue with community outreach and advocacy for ESL learners when possible. Although I am working on the plan for my future career, I am gravitating towards working in instructional technology and curriculum development. I will continue keeping up with the latest developments in Ed. tech to learn how it may enhance language learning.

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