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Timothy M. Mecham
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1-1-2012

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Timothy M. Mecham
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EXPLORING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE,
PRAGMATICS, AND SECOND LANGUAGE LITERACY

by

Timothy M. Mecham

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Logan, Utah

2012

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ABSTRACT

Exploring Second Language Learning: Communicative Competence, Pragmatics, and
Second Language Literacy

by

Timothy M. Mecham, Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University 2012

Major Professor: Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan
Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is a compilation of the author's teaching philosophy and three artifacts that explore elements of second language teaching. The teaching philosophy contains the author's strategies of second language teaching including instructional practice, communicative language teaching theory, and application. This portfolio also contains artifacts of second language teaching that explore communicative competence, formal address pragmatics, and second language literacy. An annotated bibliography of books and articles that have impacted the author's teaching beliefs and practices is also included.

(143 pages)

DEDICATION

For my wife, Nicole, who has always believed in me and pushed me to become my potential. For my parents, Michael and Pennee, who gave me encouragement to strive forward and to not give up on my goals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. de Jonge-Kannan, for being the kind of mentor that guided me to do better despite my shortcomings as a writer. Thank you to Dr. McGonagill and Dr. Manuel-Dupont for supporting me as committee members and providing insight and clarity.

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Introduction

During my experience in the MSLT program, I participated in course work that covered research, linguistics, pedagogy, and pragmatics. I have retained the best parts of each course and applied them to my teaching philosophy and artifacts in this portfolio. The first item in the portfolio is my teaching philosophy. The portfolio defines what I feel to be important aspects of language teaching and demonstrates my professional development as a result of the program. Additional contents of the portfolio demonstrate what I have learned in the MSLT courses.

The teaching philosophy discusses my goals as a German instructor. First, I discuss my role as a coach in the classroom. Students acquire second languages when they become an active participant in communication. Second, I explore what good teaching practices are in second language teaching. Teaching language requires ample modeling of communicative tasks, effective feedback, task-centered activities, and time to practice. Third, communicative language learning should incorporate interpersonal, interactional, and presentational communication opportunities. Included in communicative language learning is the PACE model for exploring authentic materials. Fourth, grammar must be learned in support of communication. Learning grammar without communication can be confusing for language learners, but incorporating grammar in a communicative activity enables the student to use grammar in support of communication. Last, assessment must have purpose. Assessment should test what the student can do in the 5 C's: communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Teaching Philosophy

Apprenticeship of Observation

My natural inclination to communicate has led me to language study and second language teaching. When I consider elements that shape my apprenticeship of observation, my first thought is that I cannot remember being taught how to read in grade school. Instead, my reading skills were developed by learning at home or at church when my mother would guide me through the hymnal, exaggerating the pronunciation of the words that were on the page. This led me to understand that language was fluid in nature and could be manipulated in many different ways to give emphasized meaning, feeling, and expression.

From elementary school, I mostly remember reading time on the rug, school plays, and going to recess. My earliest memory of learning academic material was when Mrs. T. explained times tables in the fourth grade. This was the first time I realized that I was being taught. However, we were only given worksheets, time limits, and charts. We did not learn patterns, even though patterns were likely presented. Nor did we apply times tables to learning games. Every day we just had a timed worksheet and if we did not finish, we did it again the next day. We just had drills and more drills; there was no real application. Still, I learned those times tables.

Fifth grade was a new world. Mrs. C. taught us the value of reading, writing, and learning just for the sake of wanting to know. She always asked us "what if?" The curriculum was centered on student projects and helping the students understand why they were learning. We learned to follow instructions and what the worth of an 'A' was. We never had worksheets, we had science projects, long-term

investigations, group work experiments, shadow boxes, and lots of short stories and non-fiction reports to read and write. Mrs. C's instruction enabled me to find meaning in summarizing, reporting, and creative writing.

My first attempt to learn a second language occurred when a Polish family moved in down the street. The father spoke English, but the mother and the son did not. I thought it was so cool to have friends who spoke a different language. In my naive attempts, I tried to learn some Polish so I could talk with the son who was a few years younger than I. It did not work. I thought that I needed books to instruct me and never thought to learn from the son directly.

The second language that I formally studied was Spanish. This was in the eighth grade, with a teacher who believed in worksheets, drills, and repeat-after-me lessons. Every time there was something I wanted to know more about, the teacher would give a quick answer and continue because he felt he needed to cover the course material in a certain time frame. I felt frustrated yet continued to learn the alphabet, selected a Spanish nickname, learned the verb *ser*, and colored pictures that were supposed to help me recognize items in a house and what members of a family are called. We had vocabulary lists, but no purpose for the lists except that the words would be on the test at the end of the unit. I was learning things about the language, but never did acquire the language. The lessons had no communicative purpose. We had minimal opportunities to practice the language through communicative tasks, daily routine tasks, nor were there any opportunities to negotiate meaning. The same pattern was repeated in ninth grade. I did not learn because I saw no reason to learn the language. We were not given authentic texts or

exposed to media that was part of the pop-culture in a Spanish-speaking country. Students kept asking if we were going to use the language we learned, but no plans or activities were ever undertaken to provide us with an opportunity to speak, write, or even watch a movie.

When I found out that my heritage was significantly German, I took the first opportunity to take a German class at school. In my inexperience of language learning, I assumed that because the language was part of my heritage and that I could learn German easily. I was disappointed to find that, even having spoken some German with grandparents before enrollment, the outcome was still the same. I learned a great deal about the culture, geography, and history of Germany. All instruction was given in English unless there was an example of how a sentence structure was composed or what the general pronunciation of a word was. Later in life, I found out that my teacher had never been to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, or Luxembourg. In spite of poor learning environments, I still acquired bits of German, not from class, but from my parents, grandparents, and specifically a friend's stepfather Thomas, who was an immigrated German.

Thomas spoke six languages and dabbled in three or four others. This is the reason Thomas was such a great resource for me growing up. He knew the difficulties and frustrations of trying to learn a second language. Each time I visited, Thomas required that I spoke to him in German. At first we only exchanged pleasantries and introductions, but once we were sitting at the table he would turn on the German and just speak. Everything that he said had meaning, such as: "Bitte reichen Sie mir die Butter" (Please pass the butter). He told me stories and jokes,

and encouraged me to respond and join in the discussion. Even though I may not have known a word or expressed an idea properly, he was patient and corrected me through recasting, not just stating that I was incorrect. He directed me to become functional in basic German. Thomas knew that one day I would learn reading and writing, so he only concentrated on speaking and listening with me. He made it fun and meaningful, and I could frequently use in class the new abilities that I learned from him.

In 2003 I was invited to serve as a missionary for my church for a two-year period. I was assigned to Hamburg, Germany. Before departing for Germany I was required to attend a three-month crash course that would teach me the German language and culture, as well as survival skills that I would need while there. The program was an immersion program in which we were encouraged to speak only German inside and outside of class. There were brief lessons on grammar and sentence structure, but the main objective was to speak the language and interact with other students regardless of proficiency level. After I moved to Germany and began interacting with native German speakers, my proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing improved to the point where I became fluent. There was purpose behind my learning German as I lived in the country. It might be called a "do-or-die" learning experience.

For my missionary work, I was assigned to a senior partner who had been in the country for some time already. He helped me and insured that I would get along with the language. We would read aloud in the morning, drill whenever we could during the day, and repeat phrases at meal times. My high school experiences with

learning languages through drilling and repeating had not produced the results that I hoped for. However, while in Germany, I learned German well despite similar styles of learning because, like my time with Thomas, it was all meaningful practice. What I practiced or read would be used later in real-life and it would have to make sense if I wanted to be understood. I continued this form of language study the entire length of the missionary service, rehearsing with myself before I would order food, buy groceries, or ask for directions.

In 2005 I began attending USU and, a few years later, graduated with a degree in German. During my studies in the undergraduate program I had three main professors who continued my education of German. During an upper-division course in grammar, Dr. P. was able to make our class meaningful and provided ample opportunities to use the reviewed or new grammar rules inside and outside of class. We were encouraged to meet outside of class to help improve on what we had learned in class. Even though it was a grammar course we were not limited to the textbook. We frequently read and analyzed magazine and newspaper articles and pointed out where the grammar rules were exemplified in the readings. We also listened to music and read poetry in order to recognize when unusual forms and grammar structures were used and how they could still make sense. Dr. P. heightened my awareness of grammar and how I could use explicit grammar knowledge to improve my writing and speaking. In comparison to the beginning German courses I took, in which grammar was taught, learning grammar in the advanced course from Dr. P. was beneficial to my language education because I was not being slowed down by cognitive overload as I had been in my beginning courses.

Examples of grammar and opportunity to practice grammar in real-life situations enabled me to grasp the communicative side of German grammar and use it as a tool.

Next was Dr. H. In her culture class the syllabus stated that we would be instructed in German and the language expected for all assignments would be German. However, that was not the case. Each time the professor could not remember a word or was unable to construct a proper sentence she would quickly make the point in English and move on. This was distracting because the class would frequently help her construct the sentence that she was trying to say or correct her on what we all considered simple German structure and idioms. It was frustrating for me to observe that the professor teaching a class in German was struggling with the language more than the students. For this reason most of my confidence in the teacher was lost and I was unable to regain it as the semester continued.

The third professor was Dr. M. We were challenged in the language through reading literature and learning culture through the L2. Each time we turned in a paper it was marked where the errors were, some corrected, but other errors were labeled for the type of error it was, and we were encouraged to figure out what was wrong and correct it. This type of learning at the upper-levels of German made me an active participant in my education. I was no longer an empty bucket, but a partner. This type of learning is an example of how I wish I had been taught from the beginning of my German language education. Dr. M. coached me to find my own errors, and push myself in German language development, as he organized my

learning into stepping-stones instead of tossing me into a river of confusion. I took interest in my own education because I was shown what potential it might have.

My potential to learn a second language has never changed from the first time that I started learning to the present day. I realized that learning a second language depended more on me than on the instructor. But, good instruction can be tremendously helpful. Each teacher in my education was teaching me that I was the only reason that would hold me back or push me forward. And further, the types of instruction that I received in learning a second language varied from immersion to application and self-improvement. In my teaching, I hope to be like Thomas Partosch and Dr. M. who created a low-stress environment to learn. I hope to enable my students to take interest in their own language learning by providing meaningful communicative purposes and opportunities to use the language in and outside of the classroom.

Professional Environment

My teaching philosophy targets teaching English-speaking students of German as a second or foreign language at postsecondary institutions. My professional environment is a university setting because it will afford me the opportunity to teach adult students. Beginning language students seem to be common in college courses; they may take a German class because it meets a requirement or fits in their schedule. However, I believe it is my responsibility to instill enthusiasm and intrigue about the language in the American university students, so that they will continue with their study of German. To captivate their minds and foster excitement about German language and culture, my approach will be interactive and communicative, allowing for English-speaking students to acquire the language well. I will design activities to get the students using the target language in the classroom environment as well as outside the classroom.

Although my goal is to teach German in American universities, it would also appeal to me to teach English in German schools. Although I understand that teaching German is not the same as teaching English, I believe that the principles I explore in my teaching philosophy can be transferable to the teaching of English to German-speaking students.

Personal Teaching Philosophy

My primary goal in teaching German is to guide students to measurably higher proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing by the end of each class, by accomplishing specific communicative goals for the day in the L2. This means following the ACTFL (2012) guidelines for second language teaching. It means giving students comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982; Lee & Van Patten, 2003) that is interesting to them, modeling (Merrill, 2009) that prepares them for communication, teaching them with more than just words, and checking that they understand (ACTFL, 2012). The students need to get used to interacting and speaking in German so they can use the language to express what they are thinking (ACTFL, 2012). As the instructor I encourage self-expression in German and negotiation of meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001) in the classroom to foster fluency and improve complex communicative expressions while I provide feedback to help improve communicative skills (Merrill, 2009).

I believe in coaching my students in learning German by providing them with the tools and course to follow while enabling them to continue to acquire the language outside of class. I want to coach my students to understand new words in context. By developing a new vocabulary and understanding the new vocabulary separate from English translations, students will think of the German word instead of attempting to translate an English word that they wish to use.

I will help my students to see that they will acquire German through dedication of time and effort on their part. It is my experience that only students who are motivated and dedicated will acquire second languages. I require my

students to show their dedication through participation in communicative activities. These activities then contribute to language development by providing a meaningful experience (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). During these activities, my German students will make mistakes, but that is part of learning the language; the students are encouraged to try again. Any mistake will not “impair [language development] as long as...feedback is provided” (Carpenter, S.K, et al., 2012, p. 85).

Coaching involves the principle of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Within the ZPD, I am able to teach German by creating a social language learning experience in which language acquisition is scaffolded. This requires that students receive assistance from an experienced German speaker in order to accomplish a communicative goal (McCormick & Donato, 2000). Through scaffolding I assist students by “addressing the [their] varying levels of language [and] pragmatic ability” (Cohen, 2008, p. 128) and by enabling them to create meaning in the target language through social interaction within the classroom (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). This leads to students comprehending the meaning of conversations and texts in small group activities. Specifically, the student must be engaged in using the language with other German speakers for authentic purposes such as problem solving (Johnson, 2011; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). In this manner, the class works as a team to negotiate meaning in the target language, and my role is to direct how the language is used (Johnson, 2011; Lantolf, 2000). If the students work alone, then I become a central figure who dispenses information (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). However, language acquisition is more effective if the students work together and “transform what [I] offer them as

they appropriate” (Lantolf, 2000, p.17) or acquire the target language. Following this ideal, coaching requires that I be well prepared to coach and have lesson plans with specific communicative goals.

Language acquisition in a classroom occurs when teacher and students work together for a common goal, which is communication. For students to acquire a second language, two sets of key features must be present in the classroom: first, sound teaching principles, comprehensible input, and assessment that measures communicative ability accurately; and second, communicative language learning and opportunity to use the language (Lee & Van Patten, 2003).

Teaching Principles

The instructional design principles set forth by Merrill (2009) for the foundation of lesson planning describe the steps that I perceive as effective in second language teaching. Merrill proposes that five steps of instruction provide a clear process for students to comprehend and subsequently use what is taught. The steps begin with demonstration, and then move to application, task-based instruction, activation of the principles (i.e., in the case of the language classroom, activation of principles is tasks, vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics) with prior knowledge, and lastly, integration of concepts into the student’s “everyday world” (Merrill, 2009). Merrill claims that these steps of learning are generic and applicable in all fields. They are “general so that [they apply] to any delivery system or any instructional architecture” (Clark, 2003, as cited in Merrill, 2009, p. 43). The steps of instruction are interrelated and each works in accordance with the other steps. Merrill’s steps reflect the principles of instructional design for second

language acquisition explained by Lee and VanPatten (2003), and Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro and Mandel (2001).

The first principle in Merrill's instruction design is demonstration.

Demonstration is commonly referred to as modeling in second language instruction. Within the communicative approach to language learning, comprehensible input is required to begin the language acquisition process (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). As part of input, the student is exposed to vocabulary, structure, pronunciation, and other linguistic aspects during modeling. The modeling prepares the student to function in the task (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandel, 2001). Merrill has labeled this type of task modeling as "how-to". The student is shown how to perform a given communicative task. As Merrill explains, the student first receives modeling and an example of how to use it in a task. This task is presented with supporting visuals that correspond to new vocabulary or communicative function (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandel, 2001; Merrill, 2009). In addition to modeling, demonstration provides guidance (Merrill), through which the instructor assists the students in recognizing the steps of the task and can "monitor the students' performance" (Lee & Van Patten, 2003, p. 13) when the students are practicing with each other during pair or group work (Merrill).

The above-cited scholars all appear to agree that modeling a communicative task is the proper first step for second language instruction. However, modeling is more than demonstrating or listing steps for the student to follow. I believe that modeling should incorporate student participation in front of the class, because in my experience, when students witness a classmate practicing a German language

task, they become motivated to attempt the task as well. I have noticed that by using this type of modeling, the class observes that mistakes may occur by the demonstrating peer during communication, but those mistakes can be overcome through negotiation of meaning and rephrasing. This style of demonstration provides opportunity for feedback and phrase recasting.

When applying the model to the task, the students need feedback, coaching, and practice with peers (Merrill, 2009). Feedback should be presented in the form of recasts, in which the student receives positive reinforcement through a corrected sentence so the student notices the correction, but is not explicitly instructed in what was said incorrectly (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The instructor could also negotiate meaning by clarification feedback or metalinguistic feedback that encourages the student to self-recast (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Coaching during application is what Shrum and Glisan (2010) offer in their definition of the zone of proximal development in which the student receives assistance in production of the L2 with the goal that the student will perform in the L2 with less assistance in a later lesson.

Following the demonstrations, language lessons should move to application through activities that are task-based (Merrill, 2009). Task-based activities need to focus on specific communication goals that prepare the student for real-world scenarios. Tasks should focus on communication, and provide some sort of gap of information that the student must find through negotiation of meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandel, 2001; Merrill, 2009; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993). The

contextualized practice should prepare the student to use the L2 for real-world purposes.

Last, students must integrate prior knowledge and experiences to accomplish the communicative goal (Merrill, 2009). In other words, students need to associate new communicative skills with prior knowledge in order for the specific skill to become a viable part of the students' language ability. Activation and integrations steps are essentially the same step and could be applied as one step in the language classroom, because both reflect the students' learned knowledge. This is when the student attempts to bind the new communicative skill with prior general knowledge and also prior learned communicative skills. This in turn enables students to use more complex structures in the L2. Also, in the step of integration, the students "publicly demonstrate" their new skill, which helps in acquiring the new skill (Merrill, 2009). Although communication occurs in the classroom between classmates, publicly using newly acquired skills should be practiced at extra-curricular meetings, specifically for the purpose of speaking the L2 with fellow students in real-world social settings.

Communicative Language Learning

The design principles from Merrill (2009) discussed above reflect a similar pattern of language instruction. They emphasize good modeling, peer interaction, and communicative instruction goals embedded in the tasks. In short, they all support the communicative approach to language learning. The communicative approach contains three goals, (1) interpersonal communication through which students practice communicating with classmates, (2) interpretive communication

which focuses on lexical knowledge and developing broad L2 usage in multiple topic areas, and (3) presentational communication to enable the student to present both oral and written discourse in public and professional settings (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Brecht & Walton, 1995).

Interpersonal communication is an opportunity for language learners to communicate in person with interlocutors. The purpose of interpersonal communication tasks is to challenge and develop the student's ability to produce the language and negotiate meaning from the response of the interlocutor (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Native-speaking volunteers in the classroom could assist with interpersonal communication activities. If it is difficult to find native-speaking volunteers to assist with interpersonal communication, I will use small groups in which the students complete tasks and engage in conversations that contain goals for a specific language skill. Possible communication scenarios are endless. For example, students could talk to friends about planning a trip, preparations to make for the trip, etc. Each sub-task of communicative goals would be built on the foundation of the previous activity. By the end of each lesson, the student will then be able to demonstrate the ability for a specific task in the L2. Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) claim that "students who regularly engage in carefully constructed task-based activities [in the L2] learn how to listen, to trust their ability to extrapolate and form hypotheses [about the L2], and to use what they know in novel and creative ways" (p. 15). This means that the exercises that the students complete in the classroom must be built around the interests of the student, and the tasks must be meaningful. Thus, students will begin to form

implicit rules about the language and how it works, and will begin to use the language on their own for purposes that are intended by the student.

The second communicative goal is interpretive, which is focused on developing broad L2 usage in multiple topic areas (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). This requires that my lessons cover a broad range of topics to encourage lexical and schema foundations in both written and oral form. Exposure to oral and written discourse will exercise the students' interpretive skills. Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) suggest that story telling is a method by which interpretive communication is practiced. If storytelling includes opportunities for teacher and students to ask questions and negotiate meaning, the students can begin to make inferences about the story and interpret its meaning. Another way of teaching interpretive communication skills and developing oral proficiency is by using PACE lessons. PACE stands for: Presentation, Attention, Co-Construction, and Extension (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). For example, in the presentation phase, the instructor first reads a passage to the students without the students looking at the text. Next, in the attention phase, the instructor and the class both read through the text again, this time paying special attention to a grammar point, or a story feature, or vocabulary, etc. In the co-construction phase, the instructor and the students collaboratively talk "to reflect on, hypothesize about, and create understandings about the form, meanings and function of the new structure in question" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Last is the extension phase, in which students use their newly acquired language, such as completing a task. After all the steps of PACE are used in the lesson, I would give the students time to reflect on the plot, grammar models,

and vocabulary within the story. Time to reflect on the text enables students to focus on form and integrate forms into their language ability (Adair-Hauk & Donato, 2002). Students are required to use the newly learned form in a task-based activity. For example, if the form exemplified in the text is accusative prepositions, the students would use the PACE text as an example on which to build their understanding of usage of accusative prepositions. The students would then be required to conduct a task-based activity that focused on accusative prepositions. The purpose of PACE and the following task-activity is to enable students to develop interpretive communication skills as well as negotiation of meaning skills (Adair-Hauk & Donato, 2002; Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

In order to glean interpretive communication skills from the PACE reading, listening to a text, carefully reading the text, co-constructing language features based on the text, and engaging in a task-based activity, students must first understand the oral language sufficiently to recognize the orthography, morphology, syntax, and the written structure of the language (Koda, 2007). This knowledge may be part of Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 1985, as cited in Shrum, & Glisan, 2010) at a subconscious level, but it does need to be made explicit in the L2, specifically the writing system. PACE would also serve as a tool in promoting the interpretive communication development in the student, because it provides the student with meaningful input, and allows the student to make inferences about the text and receive feedback about the text for proper understanding (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, Mandell, 2001). With the utilization of PACE along with other interpretive tasks such as story telling, following instructions, or responding to L2 news reports,

topics can be broadened from simple schema about parties, shopping, school schedules, etc., to developing schema for topics that are presented in the literature that may not be presented in a textbook or considered for classroom discussion, such as hypothetical speech, narrative forms, and spontaneous language production during casual conversations. PACE can also be broadened to include non-text forms of media. Exposure to videos, audio segments, tasks, or role-play, as long as they are authentic, can produce effective language learning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

Third, I will use presentational tasks (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001), which require students to display their language abilities to others and promote public display of L2 proficiency while clearly conveying information. Students will be required to give oral presentations and submit written presentations. This work can be completed individually or in groups, but the main purpose is that the students understand that presenting information to an audience is the main goal, with the choice of words and explanations understood by the audience (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). There are several ways to practice presentational communication. If presentational communication is, at first, difficult for the student, several helping media may be utilized. First, I will use authentic literature as a starting point. From the authentic literature, language learners could re-tell or summarize stories to small groups of language-learning peers. Besides being authentic text, L2 literature provides examples of smooth language use. For example, beginning German language students might use the reading primer "Mein Geschichtenbuch für das 1. Schuljahr" by Manfred Mai, or short children's stories by

the Brothers Grimm. For the advanced students there are several plays and poems that provide useful structures for presentational communication. Examples I have used include poems and short stories by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff and the plays of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Once the students develop confidence in speaking before an audience, they present to the class a report on a short story or a poem that they have read.

Presentational communication may raise affective filters (Krashen, 1984), which is any personal, interpersonal, environmental, or instructional element that can create debilitating anxiety within the student, which could prevent the student from performing in the L2. When language learners are presenting before the class, it is important that the entire class is supportive of the presenter and create a welcoming environment when practicing presentational communication. This occurs when the class takes on the attitude that language learning should occur in a supportive and accepting environment, and that when peers make mistakes, encouragement should be given to foster language learning.

Reading authentic literature presents opportunities to practice interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication. If students are exposed to ample and varied L2 situations and texts, they will be ready to use the L2 outside the classroom for communication and reading (Arnold, 2009). Extensive reading activities, which “replicate real-life reading” (Arnold, 2009, p. 341), are activities in which students engage in reading several texts on several subjects in the L2. Examples of extensive texts can be books, newspapers, magazine articles, and online materials. Extensive reading focuses on input whereas intensive reading

focuses on grammar, form and content. Extensive reading as comprehensible input and as a communicative tool presents situations in which the student notices the grammar (Zyzik, 2008) in the text and can implicitly learn grammar (Arnold, 2009; Zyzik, 2008). As Zyzik clarifies, grammar study is linked to vocabulary study because in order to understand the function of vocabulary it is required that the grammar behind the vocabulary is presented simultaneously. For example, in the case of verbs, it is required to know not only the meaning of a verb, but also how a verb interacts in the parts of speech (Zyzik, 2008). Extensive reading engages the student in acquiring grammar and vocabulary simultaneously by providing examples through meaningful input and context.

Teaching Grammar

Grammar instruction can have three approaches: “grammar has no place in the classroom”, “grammar for grammar’s sake”, and my preferred method, “grammar in support of communication” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). If real-world examples of usage are being provided, then grammar is taught in tandem with how it is used. Teaching grammar just to cover content in the textbook does not benefit the student’s language acquisition. Students may use the newly taught grammar rule during class, but after class has ended they simply forget the rule, usually because the rule was not used in a meaningful way embedded in comprehensible input. Much time may be spent on grammar, but for grammar instruction to be effective it has to be meaningful and the student must have a chance to use the grammar learned in real-world exercises that are similar to the demonstration (Merrill, 2009). Students must be given time to acquire the language

for a real-world use from real-world examples (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Grammar should be taught in support of communication, as a property of communication, not as a property of language, meaning that "explicit grammar instruction has a definite [but limited] role in the classroom, but it is not the goal of instruction" (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). There must be a specific goal of communication that involves the grammar rule in order for the grammar to be considered meaningful and to be 'picked up' by the student (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). By learning grammar in this manner, students begin to recognize that grammar is used as a tool within language and can actually "liberate" communication (Cullen, 2008). Cullen (2008) also posits that language learners do not struggle with communication because they are lacking in grammar knowledge, but rather they are restricted by vocabulary and context. Teaching grammar in support of communication enables language learners to concentrate on tasks and vocabulary.

German language learners frequently struggle with grammar because they attempt to equate German and English word for word (Chavez, 2011). Equating German to English becomes problematic because language learners attempt to develop linguistic meaning in German from English (Chavez, 2011; Culman, Henry, & VanPatten, 2009). An example of this is when language students attempt to assign the first noun in a sentence as the subject of the sentence (Culman, Henry, & VanPatten, 2009). In addition, some German learners attempt to equate learning German with other content areas. However, this is bound to lead to frustration because "unlike learning in content classes, which are taught in the learners' native

tongue and...takes place by way of a mutually intelligible language, L2 learning...does so...via the very subject under examination – the L2.” (Brown, 2009, p. 46). Because of preconceptions of language learning among learners of German (Brown, 2009; Chavez, 2011) it would be beneficial to German students to learn some basics about second language acquisition. Language learners frequently believe that learning grammar means following a classic form of learning by analysis (Brown, 2009). In the past, many of my students have asked for explicit explanations of grammar and do not want to practice grammar in communication. To overcome these grammar-learning difficulties, I continually encourage the students to use German, I explain the basics of second language acquisition, and I stress the importance of practicing grammar through communicative activities. If individual students are still struggling with German grammar, I assist them during private tutoring sessions.

Class time should be used to encourage the students to use only the target language. This is another characteristic of the communicative approach. Using only the L2 in the classroom for instruction and tasks will foster an understanding of how the language works in various situations, and how the language can be used in everyday speech. If the teacher speaks the L1 in the classroom, no matter the reason, students may become dependent on the L1, and the L2 could be labeled as less important. This display from the instructor defeats the purpose of learning the L2. In my experience when using only the L2 in the classroom, I have found that any slips into the L1 increase the desire for students to also use the L1. In a study by Bateman (2008) on target language use by student teachers, one teacher reported

that students became more motivated to speak the target language when they saw the teacher use the target language. Another student teacher reported that the students “felt good about their increased knowledge of [the target language]” (Bateman, 2010, p. 24) because of dedicated L2 speaking in class. Even though L1 usage at the beginning of the course might be seem preferable for lowering student anxiety, I believe that the classroom needs to become as L2 immersive as possible for the benefit of the students’ language learning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

I will use authentic media, which are “materials that were produced by members of a language and culture group for members of the same...group” (Galloway, 1998, p. 133), in the classroom. Authentic materials include literature, news media, video clips and movies, and audio segments. I believe this will accomplish several goals for language development simultaneously. Authentic materials provide natural language examples of real-world language (Crossley, McCarthy, Louwarse, & McNamara, 2007). Through exposure to authentic materials students can start to develop appropriate communication and pragmatics. Authentic materials display proper use of the language in communication, and more importantly, allow for learning grammar through context. Then, when the student struggles to communicate proficiently, the authentic materials can be remembered and the student’s linguistic foundation is re-enforced.

The linguistic foundation is similarly reinforced by following the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) pattern, which involves “responding to learners’ display of knowledge” (Waring, 2008, p. 577), waiting for a student’s response, then

evaluating with appropriate responses or recasting for correction (Pica, 2002; Shrum, & Glisan, 2010). IRE enables the instructor not only to provide evaluations of incongruous German development, but also to go “beyond being corrective” (Warning, 2008, p. 590) during evaluation. My responses to students need to become assisting evaluations instead of simple feedback consisting of statements that inform students if they are correct or incorrect. In other words, I must respond to both content and language. Johnson (2004) explains that recasting language usage will model appropriate language usage and enables the student to acquire L2 in a manner that is not damaging to language development. Therefore, IRE feedback is a natural approach to language development (Johnson, 2004; Waring, 2008).

Assessment

The purpose of my assessments will be to take inventory of the students’ proficiency in the L2 in order to mediate further language acquisition and provide feedback to my students on current progress (Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007). According to the Hadley model a test that contains “divergent-response items” which include “writing, listening, and reading skill in a naturalistic discourse” (Hadley, 2000, as cited in Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001) provides an inclusive assessment that accurately portrays the proficiency level of the student. The type and quality of assessment in language learning is fundamental to the students’ progress and therefore requires much preparation on the part of the instructor (Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007). Coombe, Folse, and Hubley (2007) clarify that assessment must be developed at the same time as lessons or units in order to appropriately assess what the student can do in the L2.

According to this model, the standards set forth by ACTFL in the “5 C’s” form a goal to reach in each assessment. Addressing the five C’s can be accomplished through various combinations of interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational communication. Each of these modes of communication can be addressed as mentioned above in speaking, reading, writing and listening in an attempt to meet communicative goals as compared to the ACTFL (2012) proficiency standards. This means that in every assessment, throughout and at the end of the course, students should be assessed in communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities (ACTFL), and in speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007).

A student’s ability to communicate can be assessed through demonstration and analysis of “conversations, announcements, films, news articles and media, and the like” (Arens, 2008, p. 38). The purpose of assessing communication is to assess ability to communicate and negotiate meaning on several topics through listening and speaking (Arens, 2008). The end goal of learning German is to be able to communicate. When assessing if my students are able to communicate in German, I am not assessing grammar or excellence in vocabulary. Rather, I am assessing if the student is able to communicate an idea well and negotiate meaning if communication was perhaps not successful in the first attempt.

Assessing culture would require the student to demonstrate ability to operate in the L2 through pragmatics, behaviors, and explicit knowledge about the L2 culture. Topic discussion or presentations in the L2 on specific cultural aspects are one way to assess this standard. These presentations could also demonstrate

the connections standard, by demonstrating what the student has learned in content areas within the second language.

Comparisons are assessed through associations between the L1 and the L2. An example of sufficient assessment might be comparing “two language performances in formal terms”, which means the assessment would result in a clear ability to switch between cultures of the L1 and the L2 in an independent manner (Arens, 2008). An example of this type of assessment might be presentations of traditions or expressions of L2 culture in comparison to L1 culture. Also important is for the students to develop identity within the L2 and appreciate the difference and uniqueness between the L1 culture and L2 culture. If my students struggle with a German expression, I often look for ways to increase the students’ understanding of the expression through increasing knowledge and understanding of German culture.

The last standard, communities, may be more suited in a non-classroom setting, such as a coffee hour or film evening. However, assessment can still be conducted at activities outside the classroom. Some type of report or feedback on a film or discussion forum can be used to provide proper assessment and meet the ACTFL standards of the “5 C’s”. Additional community assessment may include additional language learning experiences by going abroad, reading L2 literature, and engaging in further L2 development through multiple other media sources.

Conclusion

As a teacher of second languages I have the goal of helping students advance in second language proficiency by meeting goals in communication by the end of

each class period. I believe in active learning, with the student as the instigator of learning. As I provide the opportunity for language use, I am an architect of second language development. In the same respect, the student's role is to construct the second language and make inferences about the language for meaningful communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). The ACTFL standards are a guide in my teaching as I evaluate myself and determine whether I am providing meaningful language instruction. By using the Communicative Approach, PACE methods, and sound instructional practices as prescribed by several scholars (Arens, 2008; Arnold, 2009; Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Bateman, 2008; Merrill, 2009; Shrum & Glisan, 2010), the standards of ACTFL can be met. Through this integrated approach students will acquire the language in a meaningful way and will retain motivation in language learning because their progress will be noticeable.

Artifacts

Language Artifact Introduction

This paper on fostering communicative competence while keeping good communicative approach practices was originally written together with my classmate Liji Waite in the spring of 2011. Since that time I have substantially revised the original text. In this artifact I focus on using the communicative approach in language teaching to students to develop communicative competence. Researching communicative competence helped me realize that learning a language is significantly more complex than developing vocabulary and grammar. Communicating in a second language also requires the development of pragmatics and strategies. Teaching for communicative competence and using the communicative approach, I can be effective in guiding my students in German language learning.

Teaching for communicative competence

Communicative competence (CC) is derived from a concept first introduced in 1957 by Chomsky who coined the term linguistic competence. CC, having a large potential in SLA, was embraced by numerous scholars and modified to fit a more modern description and definition of CC for use in the classroom. Credit is given to Hymes (1967) for dividing CC into two sub categories that he termed linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence. Hymes' idea differed from Chomsky's in that Hymes claimed the acquisition of language was not context free, but rather required the student to learn the language in a context of social language use, or the sociocultural theory (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Hymes, 1967; Magnan, 2008). Savignon (1972) concluded that communication consists of more than just language. Savignon claimed communication also includes pragmatic strategies to communicate effectively, which contain more social and interactional features than linguistic features.

As research on CC continued, scholars proposed amendments under the umbrella of CC. Grammatical competence and strategic competence were added (Canale & Swain, 1980), and later discourse competence was appended (Canale, 1983). Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) proposed that CC includes: linguistic competence, strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, actional competence, and discourse competence. However, Celce-Murcia (2007) proposes that the umbrella of CC contains sociolinguistic competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, and interactional competence, all of which are supported by discourse competence and are subsumed under strategic competence.

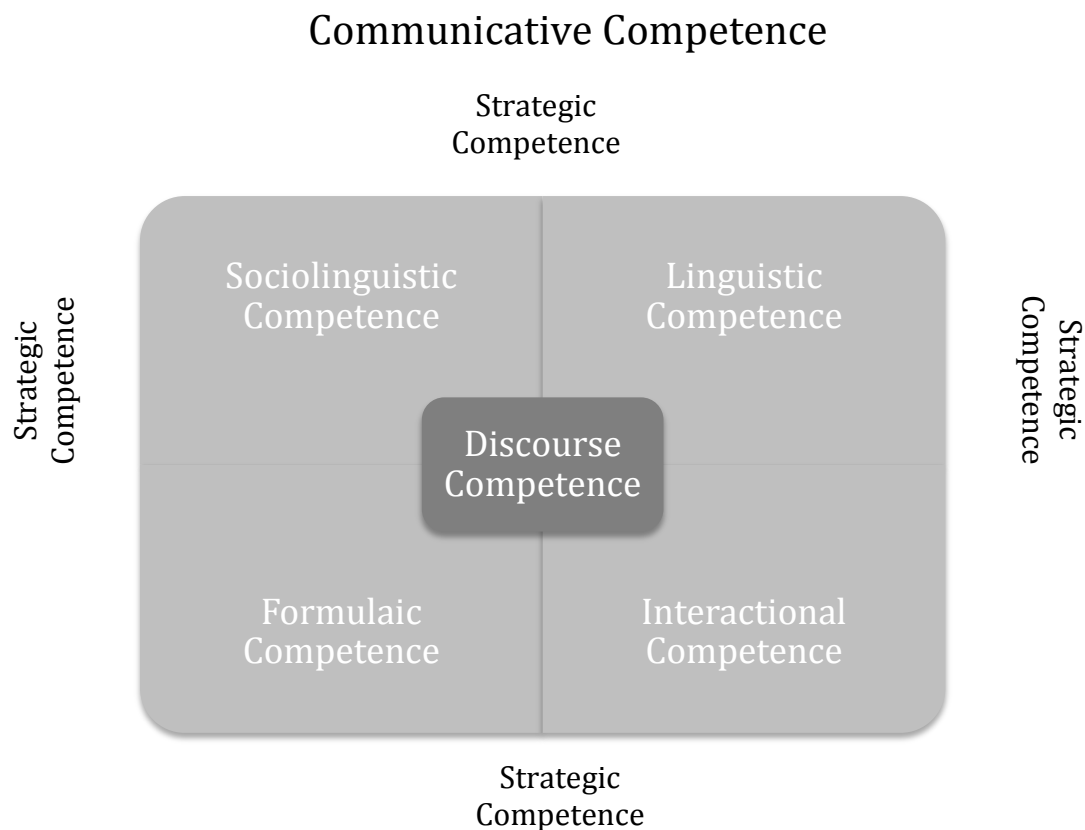


Figure 1. An adaptation of Celce-Murcia's (2007) depiction of communicative competence and its components.

In light of Celce-Murcia's (2007) proposal, the focus of CC research has become more social and less linguistic. The only feature of her model that deals solely with language is linguistic competence. All the other features explain competence with respect to social abilities, expressions and idioms, pragmatics, communicative strategies, and conversations. Under this model, communicative language teaching is student centered and social (Magnan, 2008). This means

teaching the communicative approach requires designing tasks that provide the opportunity to negotiate meaning (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001 as cited in Magnan, 2008). Using the communicative approach in language teaching should produce a measurable increase in CC that will manifest itself in the student's successful communication with speakers of the target language. Communicative lessons should be designed to incorporate exposure to each element of CC.

Teaching Principles

Communicative instruction is based on the use of the target language in the classroom, not as an object to be studied, but as the language of instruction and communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001). Making instruction communicative means that specific goals must be met. Communicative instruction requires the opportunity to use three types of communication. First, *interpersonal communication* is communication with one or more individuals in an information exchange setting in which both sides are negotiating meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Second, *interpretive communication* means using the target language, or knowledge of the target language, to understand written and spoken language (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001) such as reading literature or listening to audio media. Last, *presentational communication* refers to presenting information to a group of listeners in such a way that they understand the information expressed (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Communicative instruction must also have focused objectives. Fostering language learning requires that learners be engaged in focused communicative tasks

(Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993) in which grammar supports communication within the task (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993).

Designing suitable communicative lessons that incorporate tasks and the three types of communication can seem intimidating. However, Merrill (2009) provides an outline for good instruction based on general principles that guide communicative language teaching. Merrill's principles are: demonstration, application, task-centered communication, activation, and integration.

According to Merrill (2009), good teaching practices require that material be presented to the student in an organized manner. When teaching CC under the communicative framework, the instructor first models or demonstrates the task, giving sufficient modeling to the students in order for them to grasp the basics. In this stage of instruction, comprehensible input is crucial, as it gives the student building blocks to function later in the lesson (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). All modeling and input must be provided in such a way that the students can understand. For example, when teaching vocabulary, using pictures with words (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Merrill, 2009) helps the students acquire vocabulary and does not overburden them with too much information (VanPatten, 1996).

Merrill's (2009) second principle is application of the new task. In this step students receive feedback from the instructor in review of small group activities (Merrill, 2009). In a language lesson, this is when the students begin to process the input that they have received and start to make inferences about the language (Lee

& VanPatten, 2003; Merrill, 2009). In this stage of instruction the teacher guides the students, coaching them to do more with their new language skill. Instructors must allow students to develop the language autonomously (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Merrill, 2009; Shrum & Glisan, 2010) by keeping the lesson student centered instead of teacher centered (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Magnan, 2008).

During and after the application step, task-based activities are modeled for the students (Merrill, 2009). Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1992) state that in a task-based activity: “there must be a communicative purpose...a focus on message rather than on linguistic code...some kind of gap [of information]...[an] opportunity for negotiation [of meaning] when performing the task... [and] the participants must choose the resource...required for performing the task” (p. 204). In other words, the students must perform real-world tasks with the language. Task-based activities also require that the students use the language to find out some specific information (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Merrill, 2009; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). For example, Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro and Mandell (2001) describe a basic task-based activity consisting of four steps. Step 1: students inquire about a classmate’s family members. Step 2: report the ages of the family members to the class. Step 3: find out professions of a classmate’s family members. Step 4: interview another classmate, but this time do all previous steps in one culmination. This example of task-based activities follows an A-B-C-culminating task format that focuses on communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Merrill, 2009; Nobuyoshi & Ellis,

1993; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The students concentrate on completing the goals of the task rather than allow anxiety over grammar to affect communication and negotiation of meaning.

Activation and integration of learned knowledge work together in solidifying the students' new skills (Merrill, 2009). In this step, students use interpretive and presentational communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010) to demonstrate what they can do.

Discourse Competence

It is clear that Merrill's (2009) instructional design principles can be applied in the language classroom within the framework of communicative language teaching and enable language learners to develop CC. The description that Celce-Murcia provides for DC places it central to the other competences where each competence intersects and interacts with it. Figure 1 exhibits DC as a supporting component within CC. DC "refers to the way in which language elements, such as words and phrases, are arranged into utterances in order to express a coherent idea on a particular topic" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 13). Celce-Murcia (2007) proposes that DC involves more than the order of communication topics, but also the sequencing and structure that unifies a spoken message. In her model, Celce-Murcia expands DC to contain its own sub groups. She lists *cohesion*, which is how well the expressed language holds together, its lexicon, and so forth. Next listed is *deixis*, which refers to proper grammatical use of temporal terms and other phrases that are similar to topics of formulaic competence. *Coherence* is how well the language is maintained to elicit understanding, and last is *generic structure*, referring to the

ability to signal the difference between language types such as the difference between a lecture and a sermon (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

To acquire DC is to develop language ability beyond isolated sentences (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). A language learner who has developed DC can interpret and express multiple-sentence texts in a coherent manner. Nassaji and Fotos view DC as the ability to hold a conversation or exchange discourse with another person. This is why DC is central to CC as Celce-Murcia (2007) describes. Figure 1 illustrates that elements of CC are connected together and must interact with DC. If DC is to be developed, then communication using interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills is required. By teaching communicative task-based activities using the A-B-C-culminating format (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001), one activity could be used to teach each type of communication, then the last to practice them all together. In an A-B-C-culminating activity, the students are provided opportunities that enable DC development through communication by expressing, interpreting, and negotiating meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell). In effect, the student must become a communicating member (Hymes, 1974 as quoted in Magnan, 2008) of the target language community. In this manner, DC is developed as an entity of social interaction (Magnan, 2008) and therefore requires communicative instruction.

Linguistic Competence

Initially, Chomsky coined the term linguistic competence in 1957. Canale and Swain changed the term to grammatical competence in 1980. The term linguistic competence (LC) as proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. in 1995 is a revised label for

grammatical competence. Celce-Murcia, et al. reasoned that the change to LC was required because it included the phonetics, lexicon, and grammar. Celce-Murcia's (2007) redesigned schematic of CC requires that the competences interact with DC, which alludes that LC includes types of pragmatics embedded in grammar. LC includes four knowledge types as listed by Celce-Murcia: phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic. This is reflected also in Aguilar's (2007) description of LC. Primarily, Aguilar's (2007) description of LC indicates that during a communication session, LC interacts with DC in creating cohesion of information during communication and is constructed in such a way that information can be logically connected to information previously communicated (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Such cohesion could be exemplified in clear reference to an antecedent in relative clauses. LC also interacts with DC in the coherence of communication such as maintaining temporal continuity and organization within the sentence or paragraph (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

When LC is considered by itself, the main focus of instruction becomes grammar, as grammar involves knowledge of the four topics within LC (*phonological*: pronunciation, accent stressing, intonation, etc.; *lexical*: vocabulary and usage; *morphological*: major grammatical features; and *syntactic*: structure and word order). Under the framework of the communicative approach, grammar, or LC, should be taught in support of communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001) because LC is a sub-category of CC. It is important that grammar be taught in such a manner that the communicative goal is socially and culturally appropriate in the target language (Aguilar, 2007). Grammar should be taught to

support communication by providing the student access to comprehensible semantic and discourse meanings. This is achieved through explicitly teaching grammar and marked forms that differ from the student's L1 through repeated communicative activities (Ellis, 2006). As students become more advanced in their linguistic competence, more grammar instruction can be added (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Ellis, 2006). Also, a communicative approach to grammar instruction means that it is extensive (Ellis) by providing ample modeling of grammatical forms in a communicative manner before students practice a task.

Modeling grammar should follow the basic instructional design as presented by Merrill (2009). In modeling, the instructor provides comprehensible input that affords students the opportunity to understand the new structure and usage before production. The teacher's modeling and the students' production should be task-based in an A-B-C-cumulative activity format (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Ellis, 2006; Merrill, 2009). Last, feedback in the form of recasting should be provided by the teacher to help students notice linguistically accurate communication (Ellis, 2006; Merrill, 2009; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). This displays correct usage of the language without requiring perfection of language use.

Under the communicative framework, the role of the instructor is to be a coach and the role of the student is to be an active learner responsible for language acquisition (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The key to this method is that the student receives modeling of a grammatical feature, and is then asked to perform a series of tasks that allow for output and communication along with negotiation of meaning with an interlocutor other than the instructor (Ballman,

Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993). This is followed by feedback and a review of the task. Following this method, students become responsible for their language learning and use the language in real-world situations as opposed to drills or worksheets in the classroom.

Interactional Competence

Interactional competence (IC) is similar to sociocultural competence and pragmatics. A noted difference is that IC is stated as the hands-on version of pragmatics (Celce-Murcia, 2007) because IC involves interpersonal communication or “discourse as a social action” (Young, 2000, p. 1). Like pragmatics, IC is the knowledge of how to act within the culture of the language, particularly with regards to the operation of speech acts and conversation scenarios (Celce-Murcia, 2007). For this reason, IC involves more than the student, it also involves a community of language speakers (Young, 2000), specifically to practice “common speech acts...information exchanges, interpersonal exchanges, expression of opinions and feelings, problems...[and] future scenarios” (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 48).

IC also means possessing knowledge of non-verbal behaviors in the target culture such as eye contact, filler words, turn taking in conversations, etc. “Normal conversational practice in one culture is often construed as rude behavior in another” (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 49), which is why it is important for the student to operate in the target language and become communicatively competent. IC might not require the student to possess a proficient level of language ability, but it does require that the student understand the target culture well enough to see the world

from a different culture or a native speaker's point of view (Kramsch, 1986). So, IC relates to cultural interactions.

Young (2000) presents a framework for how to approach teaching IC. He begins by teaching students rhetorical scripts, or speech acts. Second, Young presents the students with lexical knowledge, similar to the function of formulaic competence. Third, Young practices strategies for taking turns in conversations. This presents a foundation for the student to notice additional IC features as they continue to practice the target language. Fourth, Young suggests that the student practice managing topics and the duration of conversation that is considered polite. Last, he discusses boundary signaling. IC instruction can include every type of interaction that students have with an interlocutor. IC acquisition develops when the student is exposed to authentic interaction that has a communicative and a pragmatic goal (Hall, & Doehler, 2011). Hall and Doehler (2011) state that it is the order of the interaction and the ability "to make sense of what is occurring" (p. 2) that is important in developing IC. By addressing these interactional behaviors, Young (2000), and Hall and Doehler (2011) present important guidelines for communicative instruction. IC requires students to perform in interactions in multiple settings that are focused on communicative goals.

Formulaic Competence

Another communicative component is formulaic competence (FC). FC is knowledge and ability to speak in everyday language using "fixed and prefabricated chunks of language" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 47). Assisting language learners to

become formulaically competent requires that formulaic sequences (FS's) and formulaic language (FL) of the L2 be learned. Wray and Perkins (2000) define FL as:

a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (p. 1).

The key to FS's is how they are stored. Multiple words are sequenced and then stored as a single unit having a single meaning, such as in English, "How are you?", meaning just "Hello." Wray and Perkins, quoting Altenberg (2000), state that as much as 70% of adult native language could consist of FS's, indicating the importance of this type of language. Wray and Perkins consider FS's involving two functions: a tool for social interaction, and a tool for shortcuts in processing.

As a tool for social-interaction, Wray and Perkins (2000) organize the purpose of FS's into three categories: manipulation of others, asserting separate or group identity, and establishing or reinforcing membership. When FS's are used to *manipulate others*, individuals are striving to satisfy their physical, emotional, and cognitive needs (Wray & Perkins). An example could be "Be a pal would you and..." The goal of using FS's to *assert one's identity* is most often done to be taken seriously, or to separate oneself from the crowd (Wray & Perkins, 2000). A manifestation of this could be "Yes, but I would think that..." Interlocutors use FS's to *establish* or *reinforce membership* in a group. They may use phrases that imply overall membership in the group or that demonstrate their place in the hierarchy of

the group (Wray & Perkins, 2000). Americans chanting, “U.S.A.” at an international soccer competition is an example of this type of usage.

It is easy to understand why both native speakers and second-language speakers rely on formulaic language to lessen the processing load. Ready-made phrases can provide interlocutors with a shortcut in processing to buy time, and to manipulate information (Wray & Perkins, 2000). As time buyers, formulaic phrases can be invaluable to language learners. A common phrase used in German-speaking communities is ‘*Und zwar,*’ signifying, ‘indeed’, and ‘though’. Using such phrases as ‘*Und zwar*’ allows second-language speakers a little extra time to gather their thoughts before they state their opinion. When speakers rely on FS’s in order to manipulate language it is most often used to gain and retain access to information that is not likely to be remembered under other circumstances (Wray & Perkins).

The importance of FS’s to L2 learners is undeniable; not only do FS’s allow non-native speakers to be understood more easily by interlocutors, they allow them to easily process what they hear. The question for language instructors is: if FS’s are so vital to language, how can they be taught in the classroom? A growing body of research demonstrates that among language instructors there is no clear agreement on how to approach this task.

Wray (2000) provides a brief review of how two language educators have proposed to teach FS’s in the classroom. Willis (1990, as cited in Wray, 2000) emphasized the importance of helping students notice FS patterns and speculate on them. His goal was to introduce FS’s as part of the data used to demonstrate words and their normal usage. He said, “The commonest patterns in English occur again

and again with the commonest words in English” (1990, as quoted in Wray, 2000, p. 469). Willis’ suggestion is that when teaching FS’s, instructors should focus on key words that appear most frequently. As an example he demonstrated how the word *way* (which is the third most common noun in English) appears in such phrases as ‘*by the way*’ and ‘*by way of*’ (as cited in Wray). Not only does *way* show up in fixed phrases, but also in frames such as ‘*the best way to... is to...; one way of ...-ing... is by...-ing*’ (as cited in Wray). Providing language learners with these types of tools helps learners focus on communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993) and be understood by target language speakers.

In contrast to Willis (1990, as cited in Wray, 2000), Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, as cited in Wray, 2000) approached FS’s by focusing on “the interactional functions associated with individual examples of common formulaic sequences” (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, as quoted in Wray, p. 468). In order to teach FS’s, they recommend three steps. First, students should participate in tasks using fixed routines. This will help them to develop confidence and fluency. Second, controlled variation in the task will help learners to see that the FS’s that they previously learned were not invariable routines, but patterns that can be manipulated. Third, tasks should include increased variation to allow students to further analyze patterns (Nattinger & DeCarrico, as cited in Wray). For Nattinger and DeCarrico, FS’s provide learners with patterns of usage that they can analyze and then through extrapolation create their own usages, thus providing learners with a sort of building block for language.

Strategic Competence

Strategic competence (SC) is a term coined by Canale and Swain (1980).

They define it as an ability that consists of both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that could be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication (Canale & Swain). They divide these strategies into two types: those that relate to grammatical competence, such as paraphrasing grammatical forms that are not yet mastered or cannot be remembered at that moment, and those that relate to sociolinguistic competence, such as how to address strangers when unsure of their social status (Canale & Swain). They conclude that these strategies are most likely acquired through real-life experience and not through practice in the classroom, especially if that practice does not involve meaningful communication (Canale & Swain).

Since 1980, many others have theorized about SC (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Faerch & Kasper, 1984; Paribakht, 1980; Tarone, 1980). Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) seem to have the most comprehensive description of SC. They outline the five main parts of SC: avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling or time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies, and interactional strategies. “*Avoidance or reduction* strategies... [include]...replacing messages, avoiding topics, and... [even]...abandoning one’s message” (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 27). Speakers are essentially tailoring their message to their resources. L2 speakers employ “*achievement or compensatory* strategies... [to]...manipulate available language to reach a communicative goal” (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 27). They do this through circumlocution, approximation, all-purpose

words, non-linguistic means, restructuring, word-coinage, literal translation from L1, code switching to L1, and retrieval (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). Celce-Murcia et al. expound that the strategy that L2 speakers use most often is *stalling or time gaining*, which they do by using fillers, hesitation devices, gambits, self repetition and repetition of others. Another common strategy discussed by Celce-Murcia et al. is *self-monitoring*: when speakers make use of self-initiated repair and self-rephrasing to ensure that their interlocutors understand them. Celce-Murcia explains that *interactional strategies* are probably the most useful as far as ensuring that all involved comprehend the conversation. Speakers do this by appealing for help, using meaning negotiation strategies such as indicators of non or misunderstanding, responses, and comprehension checks (Celce-Murcia et al.).

Sociocultural Competence

In response to Chomsky's claim that any consideration of social factors was outside the domain of linguistics, Hymes (1967) asserted that there had to be some type of sociolinguistic competence. He stated

there must be a study of speaking that seeks to determine the native system and theory of speaking; whose aim is to describe the communicative competence that enables a member of the community to know when to speak and when to remain silent, which code to use when, where and to whom, etc. (Hymes, 1967, p. 13).

This system came to be called sociolinguistic competence (Hymes, 1967) and was modified to be called sociocultural competence (SCC) (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) define SCC as “the speaker’s knowledge of how to express messages appropriately with the overall social and cultural context of communication, in accordance with the pragmatic factors related to variation in language use” (p. 23). This means that a socioculturally competent person would know how to use appropriately styled language and when. An example might be variations in using requests such as, “I’ll have the hotdog”, at a sporting event versus, “I’d like to deposit this check, please” at the bank.

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) provide the most comprehensive definition of SCC. They propose four main sociocultural categories in which knowledge of cultural practices are critical. First, there are *social contextual factors*. These include participant variables, taking into account age, gender, office and status, and social distance between interlocutors. Also included in social contextual factors are situational variables, which take into account the time, place, and social situation (Celce-Murcia et al.). Second are *stylistic appropriateness factors*. Included in this category are politeness conventions and strategies, and stylistic variations, which deal with degrees of formality, and field-specific registers (Celce-Murcia et al.). The third category addresses *cultural factors*, which is further divided into three components. Under cultural factors, an important aspect is a knowledge of the sociocultural background of the target language community, this includes knowledge about living conditions, social conventions and rituals, major values, beliefs and norms, social and institutional structure, cultural aspects including literature and arts, taboo topics, and historical background. The other two components of cultural factors are an awareness of major dialects or regional

differences and cross-cultural awareness including knowledge of differences, similarities, and strategies for cross-cultural communication (Celce-Murcia et al). Finally, there are many *non-verbal communicative factors*. These consist of kinesic (body language), proxemic (use of space), haptic (touching), and paralinguistic factors such as sounds and non-verbal cues. Also included in these is the use of silence (Celce-Murcia et al).

SCC is of utmost importance for language learners. When native speakers know they are dealing with a NNS, they will be willing to forgive any number of grammatical errors. However, if an error occurs within the realm of SCC, it is not so easily forgiven, or is not forgiven at all. O'Brian (2004) reflects this in her study on German pronunciation when NS's weigh sociocultural aspects and pronunciation of language heavier than grammar. Peeters (2009) indicates that when SCC errors occur, NS's "view it as evidence either of a personal or social shortcoming of the non-native speaker, or of an attitude which comes close to insolence or impertinence, which is proof of bad faith, poor education or lack of sociability" (p. 61). In other words, grammatical errors are attributed to a lack of linguistic knowledge, while SCC errors are attributed to flaws in character. If a language learner conjugates a verb incorrectly, the language learner is just lacking a little linguistic training, but if the language learner forgets to say please, the language learner is perceived undesirable. Teaching SCC is similar to IC instruction discussed earlier, as both SCC and IC require ability to interact appropriately within the boundaries of the L2 culture. Instruction in SCC, in order to avoid SCC offences, may

also include training in pronunciation for tone and quality of speech (Elliot, 1997; O'Brien, 2004).

Conclusion

Communicative language teaching is becoming increasingly popular in SLA. The goal is to enable language learners to communicate in the target language not only in terms of language but also in terms of culture (Magnan, 2008). For language teachers to meet this goal, communicative language teaching needs to provide opportunities for students to develop CC, which may seem like a difficult task. If language lessons are to provide for CC development, then lessons designed with goals in each component of CC need to be integrated. In order for CC to develop within language learners, instruction must feature student-centered learning (Magnan, 2008), provide a communicative environment, and guide language learners to become members of the target language community (Hymes as cited in Magnan, 2008).

Culture Artifact Introduction

An element of culture that may be difficult for English learners of German to understand is the nuances of formal and informal 'you'. Appropriate communication in German requires the use of different pronouns and verb forms depending on whether one addresses an interlocutor of greater, equal, or lesser social status or age. Teaching for pragmatic appropriateness is discussed in terms of incorporating technology in the classroom and providing opportunity for language learners to communicate with native speakers. Research for this artifact indicates that communication with native speakers after classroom instruction enables language learners to develop appropriate levels of communication and pragmatic skills. Understanding teaching methods that break away from traditional classroom instruction with textbooks and worksheets enables me to explore new ways of language teaching. This helps me expand my skills in assisting my students to develop target language proficiency.

Speaking with native speakers to learn formal address

Based on my experience as an English-speaking member of western American culture, my pragmatics for formal address were developed over years of implicit and explicit training from parents, grandparents, extended family members, teachers, mentors, etc. Sociopragmatic training is a part of growing up in a particular culture. We are commonly unaware of what we practice within our culture until we are required to address it or have been introduced to a new culture and our identity within our own culture has been challenged (Guth & Helm, 2011). Our identity makes up the person that we are, how we act and how we address people. In Standard American English, there are no formal pronouns of address that indicate respect. Rather it is the way in which we treat each other that shows our respect for one another. We use titles, careful construction of sentences, body language, and other methods to show respect and formality in language. However, when that culturally and linguistically appropriate practice is interrupted with the introduction of a new formal/informal address system, it becomes difficult to operate under the parameters that are established for the new system. The simple fact is, second language learners in the United States experience cultural and linguistic difficulty and instability when attempting to learn formal address systems of a foreign language (Dewaele, 2004). Dewaele (2004) colorfully describes what is happening in the foreign language learning experience when he states that for the second language learner, who is “already struggling with grammar rules, with verb morphology, with a limited lexicon, with lower fluency, and with higher levels of communicative anxiety, the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence must seem

like the crossing of a linguistic minefield” (p. 384). Each language contains its own rules, limitations, and common practices for formal address.

Although certain segments of the English-speaking population in the USA are familiar to some extent with “thee” and “thou”, the concept of formal address in language is mostly foreign to English speakers in America. Formal address features three elements that have different roles in the use of formal address. They are: first, *Forms of address*, which are forms and titles that refer to the listener; second, *Verb forms of address*, which typically function with the third, *Nouns of address*, which differentiate between a formal you singular and plural (V), and an informal you singular and plural (T) (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2008). One may address an interlocutor by showing respect to the title the interlocutor may hold such as Mr., Mrs., Dr., and can even elaborate as German ‘*Herr Professor Doktor*’. In the case of pronoun usage, addressing an interlocutor with a V-form you singular would show more respect for the collocutor than a colloquial T-form you singular. Each language possesses its own rules and norms for V and T usage. The primary rule, however, is that there are no rules on how V and T usage functions, because each language has its own pragmatic rules within each region and city, even among individuals (Hickey, 2003; Kempf, 1985). Concrete V and T usage rules do not seem to exist; in fact as Dewaele (2004) claims, “there is no central executive entity directing the components, no global objective, only local interactions” (p. 397). Based on Dewaele’s assertion, the only rule that could be applied to various languages and their V and T usages is that standards exist at a local level only, and that standards change by region. If all these

factors are introduced to second language learners, it is almost inevitable that students become confused and struggle with proper V and T pragmatics.

Second language learners can also become confused if they are being taught archaic V and T practices and attempt to use them in a contemporary setting. For example, East-German politicians of the Socialist Unity Party in the Cold War era frequently preferred to address each other with the T- form of you rather than the V- form, which they believed showed solidarity and familiarity, but it also excluded those who were not of the party's affiliation (Kempf, 1985). Political figures today do not practice T- form with each other. With the frequent changes in V- and T- address norms it is futile to establish a set rule for any given period of time for any language. Even the German native speaker is often confused as to which form to use in every situation (Belz & Kinginger, 2003). Belz and Kinginger (2003) claim that the rules for formal address in German are highly complex. They recommend that instruction in formal address pragmatics not be presented in a traditional classroom setting. Rather the pragmatics must be experienced (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2008) through role-playing, but preferably through real-world interaction.

Choice of either a V-form or a T-form in German depends on several variables, which makes choosing seem like a daunting task. In addition to using the V- and T-forms to address people, the forms can also be used in non-addressing ways, such as speaking to oneself, relating a hypothetical or anecdotal account and generic usage (Hickey, 2003), for example: 'You know what I mean?' or 'You know you aren't supposed to do that'. However, in this paper I will consider the types of address that concern a student's interaction with a native speaker on the basis of

addressivity in a sociolinguistic context. Even though there is much individual variation among German-speakers in linguistic form use depending on social class (Hall, 2003), German address forms are much more than a hierarchical assignment of status of social class or employment (Belz & Kinginger, 2003). The basic rules of formal address in German can even seem to contradict one another as demonstrated by Belz and Kinginger, who presented two types of sociolinguistic systems. In the first sociolinguistic system, (S1) the objective of usage is to display deference among interlocutors. The unmarked form, V-form or *Sie*, is to indicate social distance while the marked form, T-form or *du* and *ihr*, is used to show intimacy and solidarity of relationship. In the second sociolinguistic system, (S2) the opposite rule applies. The V-form, *Sie*, is the marked form and indicates non-membership or non-affiliation, while the T-form, *du* and *ihr*, is unmarked and displays group solidarity and sameness. So, the problems that occur from contradictions of S1 and S2, as Belz and Kinginger comment, is that “ambiguity may arise, since the same form may mark different social relations...[and] result in threats to face” (p. 598).

Threats to face play a role in how one chooses to address someone. To avoid threats to face, most language learners are instructed to use the V-form, almost like a safety net, when speaking with native speakers for the first time. Contrary to common traditional language instruction, however, using the V-form in first-time encounters may not be the appropriate choice of address. Hickey (2003) describes and categorizes a large set of contingencies in which one should use the V-form or the T-form in German. Hickey voices the distinction between the T-form and V-form as the “language of the heart” (T-form) and the “language of intellect” (V-form),

which addresses the hierarchical forms of German, but the variations still allow for it to be flexible. Hickey continues to expand his classifications of which form is used with whom. T-forms are categorized as being used with family, friends, children, animals, and in some cases neighbors, professional colleagues and acquaintances. Historically, T-forms and V-forms were used as political statements, and followed the S2 system (Kempf, 1985). Hickey continues to reference several situations when one would use the T-form or V-form: professional settings, relationships, exclusion or discrimination, and uses with groups. Culturally, Hickey explains, using a T-form plural when addressing a group is culturally acceptable even if a few members of the group are technically on V-form status with the speaker.

What may seem odd to the American English speaker is that most all acquaintances begin with the V-form, but will not change to the T-form without a verbal agreement between acquaintances, in which one acquaintance, commonly of a higher social, power, or hierarchical position will verbally communicate with the interlocutor to agree if a T-form will be used or not depending on the familiarity and intimacy of the relationship (Belz & Kinginger, 2003; Dewaele, 2004; Gonzales-Lloret, 2008; Hickey, 2003; Kempf, 1985). The ritual of asking to be on T-form terms with someone in German, according to Hickey (2003), involves several face-threatening elements that may create awkwardness within a relationship (Belz & Kinginger, 2003). For example, even after two people have agreed to use the T-form within the relationship, if they are not in contact with one another for a period of time, upon meeting or communicating again, it is common for reaffirmation of the T-form agreement. In other cases, if one person attempts to use a T-form with an

acquaintance in an effort to establish solidarity between the two, but is rejected, it can also create awkwardness and face-threatening situations. Hickey also accounts for switching between forms due to situational requirements. One of his examples, which is comical and awkward, is the case of a private relationship in which there is a power differential between the participants which requires the two to use V-forms in professional settings and T-forms outside of those professional settings.

Formal and informal address forms may also be expressed without the use of the V-form and T-form pronouns, a feature termed *parafeatures*. In this case the forms of address are clearly expressing a V- or T-form but do not “show...binary division” (Hickey, 2003, p. 11). Scholars note that these forms include signaling formality through linguistic composition, body language, gesturing, title using, etc. (Hickey, 2003; Kempf, 1985). An example of this is the common greeting act of shaking hands between business professionals, which signals that the terms of the relationship are formal and professional. Perhaps the most evident use of formality without using pronouns is the use of titles. Kempf (1985) and Hickey (2003) posit that the use of titles or first names is commonly a strategy in German used between superior and subordinate interlocutors. However, in most cases, the subordinate interlocutor will still address the superior interlocutor by the V-form pronoun despite a first name or no-title agreement (Hickey, 2003). According to Belz and Kinginger’s (2003) S1 and S2 classifications, when the superior interlocutor uses the first name with T-form it is because the superior interlocutor wants to create solidarity with the subordinate interlocutor, using S2. However, the subordinate

interlocutor may feel the need to still display respect and will continue to use the V-form with first names, falling back on S1.

Given the complexity of addressivity pragmatics, it is important that pragmatics instruction be explicit. “Explicit instruction seems to have an advantage over implicit instruction” (Nikula, 2008, p. 95) when teaching language learners pragmatics in L2. In a study by Gonzalez-Lloret (2008), explicit instruction and practice were tested with English-speaking students of Spanish and Spanish-speaking students of English. Participants of the study interacted in chat forums to complete a planning task. In this study, Spanish-learning students received explicit feedback from their English-learning counterparts for use of V- and T-forms in Spanish. Spanish interlocutors would instruct the English-speaking students to accurately use V- or T-forms, sometimes repeatedly. After explicit instruction from their Spanish-speaking partners, Spanish-learning students began using appropriate address forms with the Spanish-speaking students, exhibiting that explicit instruction in sociopragmatics is effective. This study, however, does not discuss classroom instruction for pragmatics before engaging in cross-linguistic communication practice. It should also be pointed out that learning to use formal address pragmatics appropriately was not immediate.

Still, computer-mediated activities can provide adequate practice and explicit instruction in pragmatic development (Nikula, 2008) as well as provide a social environment where quality learning can occur (Lee, 2009). Such activities can provide more opportunity for learners to apply sociocultural learning when interacting with native speakers (Lee, 2009; Nikula, 2008). Dewaele (2004) concurs

that this practice is effective and that “increased contact with native speakers allows learners to develop their sociolinguistic competence and their stylistic range” (Dewaele, 2004, p. 385). At the core of learning appropriate formal address, language learners must be exposed to native speakers as much and as frequently as possible. Scholars who investigated the effects of long-term exposure to native speakers may not have been able to adequately investigate learning pragmatics due to the type of technology available at the time of the studies. Belz and Kinginger (2003) used blogging and emailing, while Gonzalez-Lloret (2008) and Thoms, Liao, and Szustak (2005) chose chat forums.

Considering the studies that have been conducted using chat and emails with native speakers, one can see a factor holding back authentic quality of communication. There is no face-to-face interaction and therefore no oral pragmatic practice. However, we know that students need to interact with native speakers in order to acquire pragmatic competence (Dewaele, 2004). Even though students are indeed interacting with native speakers, even similar aged native speakers, the students are still using chat or email, which use a written format. But to develop their communicative competence fully, students need oral interaction as well. Students need to be involved in using the language for oral communication. With new advancements in communication technology, video conferencing or face-time has become more available. This technology would provide the in-person communication needed for an authentic interaction in which all elements of communication and pragmatics, besides the physical presence of the interlocutors, can be experienced. This raises the questions I would like to answer:

1. If a student is speaking to a native speaker via Skype, which areas of the student's language development will increase in ability?
2. Do video conference interactions with a native speaker yield better results in formal address pragmatics ability than chatting or emailing interactions, or in other words, does a computer-aided synchronous activity enable the student to develop better addressivity skills overall than an asynchronous computer-aided activity?

Methodology

American English language learners of German at the college level and German language learners of English of varying ages 18 years and older are proposed participants for this study. German participants are intentionally various ages, as the researcher wishes to find if the American students are able to function within normal formality pragmatics regardless of the age of the German interlocutor. The American English language learners of German should be at a fourth semester level of language ability. It is required that the language learners are able to converse in their target language at the ACTFL intermediate low level. This means they are able to converse on a variety of topics but are hesitant as they search for the correct phrasing in order to be understood, and much of their language ability is influenced by the L1 (ACTFL, 2012). When listening, the intermediate-low language learner is able to understand some conversation but still struggles (ACTFL, 2012), which presents plenty of opportunity to negotiate meaning between interlocutors.

The American English learners of German will be instructed in formal address forms that are used in German. Instruction will include explicit instruction (Dewaele, 2012; Gonzalez-Lloret, 2008) and an opportunity to practice pragmatic forms during role-playing with other American English learners of German. This phase of the study is to ensure that all American English learners of German are aware of the formal and informal forms of address in the German language and when it is appropriate to use such pragmatics.

After the instruction phase, all participants will receive training on the software used in the study. The proposed technology, Skype, enables people to communicate in a real-time video conferencing interface. The application is free of charge between Skype users; however, first there must be access to computers at both locations that are allowed to have the Skype application installed.

Two groups will be formed from the two participating classes. One group will interact through a chatting forum in Skype and the other will interact through real-time video conferencing in Skype. Each student of German will be paired randomly with a counterpart from the native German-speaking classroom. The communication phase of the study will continue for two weeks, and on each new day participants will be assigned a new partner. This is an attempt to provide opportunity to use V- and T-forms during the study. Each day, students are to discuss and make party preparations. They are to discuss things like: who will attend, what the entertainment will be, who will cater, what kind of decorations there will be, who is responsible for what? Each conversation will be recorded or transcribed and analyzed for pragmatic usage of V- and T-forms and linguistic

improvement. Each use of V- or T-form will be counted and checked for appropriateness depending on corrections from the German interlocutor.

The two types of communication will be compared for appropriate usage of V- and T-forms and for differences associated with the use of video conferencing versus chatting. This will be accomplished by a longitudinal analysis, which will compare each American English student of German during each day's conversations and if pragmatic and linguistic ability increased by the end of the study. If there is appropriate pragmatic usage in the video conferencing group, then the hypothesis stands that video conferencing provides a more authentic conversation environment than chatting and can develop pragmatically appropriate communication skills faster.

Conclusion

In future studies, additions that can be made to this test format could include testing of speech acts such as requests, refusals, salutations, and apologies. Also, useful information for SLA could come forth if there is a study of several pragmatic acts among several languages and cultures in one study to find if there are any rules that could be applied as a universal pragmatic rule. In learning German formality when speaking with people, it is important to remember that there are no rules except those that are provided by the interlocutor. Learning V- and T-forms is difficult for American English learners of German not only for the social complexities that must be considered, but also the difficult linguistic similarities between pronouns and possessive pronouns in German. Pragmatics may possibly be one of the more difficult tasks for a language learner, but practice and exposure

to authentic situations seems to be the key to learning to use them appropriately (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2008).

Literacy Artifact Introduction

During my time studying in the MSLT program I had the opportunity to hold a position as a Graduate Instructor of German. Even though German is the emphasis of my Teaching Philosophy, I am also interested in teaching English to non-native speakers. At Stevens-Henager College, I worked with L1 Spanish-speakers who struggled in English L2 reading. Since that time I have considered their struggles with English L2 reading and if L2 reading ability might be related to poorly developed reading ability in their native language (L1). This artifact explores strengthening L1 literacy skills and strategies that transfer to L2 reading skills and strategies. The proposed study portion explores whether it might work to develop reading skills and strategies in Spanish (L1) that transfer to English (L2) reading. Transfer of reading skills and strategies from the L1 to the L2 can occur because reading skills and strategies are similar in the L1 and L2. Realizing how important L2 literacy is for ESL students in the U.S.A. and knowing that transfer can occur more readily through training, I explore this possibility of empowering language learners to be successful in higher education.

Improving L1 reading skills that transfer to the L1

The transfer of reading skills from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2) is viewed by many researchers as a tool for increasing the L2 reading ability of the student (Cummins, 1981; Cummins 2003; Gelderen, Schoonen, & Glopper, 2004; Koda, 2007; Pichette, Segalowitz, & Connors, 2003; Rinnert & Iwai, 2010). The interdependence hypothesis, according to Cummins (1981), claims students with a high level of L1 reading proficiency transfer reading skills and strategies to L2 reading. Thus, L1 reading proficiency assists in L2 literacy acquisition. "Students who have strong literacy skills in their L1 take less time to acquire comparable literacy skills in their L2" (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004, as quoted in Piloniete & Medina, 2009, p. 129). Reading in the L1 requires that the reader understand the writing system in order to decode the information on the page. Similarly, to comprehend texts in the L2, the student must understand the writing system, which means creating the association of the oral language system with the writing system (Koda, 2007). Koda (2007) describes L2 reading as a process that involves both the L1, using mainly prior knowledge, and the L2, using linguistic knowledge for comprehension. Thus, L2 reading is more complex. When L1 reading skills transfer to L2 reading, both L1 and L2 metacognitive and vocabulary skills play a significant role in assisting comprehension (Gelderen, Schoonen, & Glopper, 2004). The transfer of reading strategies from the L1 to the L2 is also proposed (Sarig, 1987, as cited in Erler & Finkbeiner, 2007). Based on research in L1 and L2 literacy, it is hypothesized that if L1 reading skills and strategies are practiced, language learners could more readily transfer L1 reading skills and

strategies to the L2 in order to increase ability in L2 reading. The research question pursued in this study is: If L2 learners practice L1 reading skills and strategies, do their L2 reading scores improve?

When skills or strategies in the L1 are accessed in the L2, this is sometimes called transfer. However, the term 'transfer' is disputed (Fukking, Hulstijn & Simis, 2005; Walter, 2007). In opposition of transfer, Walter claims that the term transfer could be erroneous in describing what occurs during L2 reading with influence from L1 reading. She argues that transfer is a non-linguistic process, and that comprehension is a skill independent of linguistic skills, although developed at the same time in cognitive development. She introduces the term "access" in place of transfer. She describes transfer as accessing skills from the L1 to use in the L2. This can include the use of L1 reading skills during L2 reading. Based on the Gernsbacher Framework, Walter (2007) states that:

comprehending texts is not a linguistic skill; rather, it is a general cognitive skill developing at the same time as the L1, but independently from it. It follows that the metaphor of 'transfer' of L1 comprehension skill to the L2 is misleading: what happens is more appropriately characterized as access, via L2 text, to the individual's already established, amodal comprehension skill (p. 16).

Walter conducted anomaly reading tests of 19 stories. Each story was provided to subjects in both the L1 and L2. Of the 19 stories, 18 were altered from the original text and given anomalies. Subjects were asked to identify anomaly differences between the L1 and the L2 copy. The anomalies' role was to expose the

failure to access structure building skills from the L1 when reading L2 texts, but the students could have pre-noticed anomalies in the text provided in the L2. Students who have comprehension problems in the L1 were found to have comprehension problems in the L2. Those students were not able to access those skills in the L2 because of the lack of development of reading skills in the L1. Walter's study reveals some sort of cognitive process is occurring, indicating that transfer, or as she calls it, access, is indeed a process in L2 reading. However, other studies in this literature review confirmed that the good reading skills as well as bad reading habits transfer to the L2 (Scott, Bell, & McCallum, 2009). Access is a term for transfer from a different perspective, yet it describes the same principle as transfer. Although access is a useful concept, which explains how some skills that do not directly transfer to reading in the L2 (Walter, 2007), Koda (2007) clarifies that the reading process, including cognitive processes related to reading, still require linguistic knowledge when reading the L2. Transfer includes active use of the L1 and L2 when reading. Transfer happens when L1 reading skills and strategies are used to enhance L2 reading comprehension. Considering both terminologies, the term "transfer" will be used for the purposes of this paper.

Transfer is a commonly cited process of L2 learning recognized by experts of the field, even though "there is little consensus as to what constitutes as 'transfer'" (Koda, 2007, p. 3). Researchers addressing the topic of transfer claim that sub-skills of reading in the L1 transfer to the L2 for desired comprehension. Skills are categorized in various studies as decoding, fluidity of reading, reading speed, vocabulary recognition and metacognitive reading. The National Reading Panel

(2000) suggests five skill elements that should enable the student to become proficient in reading. The Panel's recommendations are: (a) teaching phonetic awareness, (b) teaching phonics and word play, (c) practicing fluency, (d) increasing vocabulary, (e) and teaching for comprehension. This list of teaching recommendations covers skills that a good L1 reader should be able to perform after sufficient instruction. Topic knowledge and conceptual knowledge are also needed for reading comprehension (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Gelderen, Schoonen, & Glopper, 2004). Koda (2007) expands the skill group to include syntactic parsing. If texts to be read can be chunked into pieces that are easier to recognize than as a whole, the reader may have an easier time of word or sentence decoding (Cunningham, 2009). Learning the skill of parsing words or sentences should enable the student to speed up comprehension. Take English for example, in which "20 prefixes account for 97% of all prefixed words" (White Sowell, & Yangihara, 1989, as cited in Cunningham, 2007, p. 311). By recognizing the meanings of the affixes or how the root is modified by application of the affix, the reader should be able to develop word recognition and interpret sentence meanings at a higher level. If parsing is applied to the L2 reading, the student may learn to decode more easily with practice. Decoding in the L2 would also require the use of phonological skills and orthographic skills, the latter transferring easily when learners decode similar writing systems (Koda 2007; Meschyan & Hernandez, 2002). L1 and L2 reading processes are similar, but L1 and L2 reading have fundamental differences as well, such as vocabulary skills and topic knowledge (Gelderen, Schoonen, & Glopper, 2004),

In addition to reading skills, a variety of reading strategies can be incorporated to enhance L2 reading comprehension. In theory, L1 reading strategies and L2 reading strategies are essentially the same (Cummins 2003). Therefore, readers can have the ability to transfer them from the L1 to the L2. Strategies that a good L1 reader may include when reading are strategies such as “self-questioning, monitoring, organizing, and interacting with peers” (Alvermann, Phelps, & Gillis, 2010, p. 6). An L2 reader might use strategies such as remembering the gist of the text, taking a broader translation, understanding based on context, looking up a word when other strategies have failed, etc. (Erlar & Finkbeiner, 2007).

The National Institute for Literacy (2007) states that good readers will ask questions before, during, and after reading which enables students to process and monitor comprehension. The National Institute for Literacy posits that in addition to student-generated questions, teacher-generated questions for recalling information from the text are also beneficial for literacy development. Such questions stimulate discussion and critical thinking skills which can encourage the reader to take on more challenging texts. Other strategies that should be the same regardless of whether one reads in the L1 or the L2 are monitoring comprehension during reading, summarizing the text, learning text structure (which is developing knowledge of specific content area structures such as text books), drawing graphic organizers based on the text, and developing comprehension strategies (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). The National Institute for Literacy (2007) suggests that when reading comprehension strategies are taught, instruction should consist of three phases. Phase one is explicit modeling from the instructor. Modeling can be

performed by demonstration of mental processes or think-aloud demonstrations that “verbalize [the teacher’s] decision-making about which strategies to use” (The National Institute for Literacy, 2007, p. 25). Phase two is guiding the reader through practicing the strategies. Phase three is providing the reader with an opportunity to practice independently.

Studies conclude that L1 reading ability is directly associated with L2 reading ability and that L2 knowledge, mainly the L2 linguistic ability, is also a contributor to improving L2 reading and comprehension (Cummins, 1981; Cummins, 2003; Erler & Finkbeiner, 2007; Koda, 2007; Pichette, Segalowitz, & Connors, 2003). But, if reading in the L1 is generally slow and laborious, even if the reader appears to be a good reader, the reader will struggle with comprehension in the L1 (Chun, 2011) and therefore the reader will struggle in the L2. Pichette, Segalowitz, and Connors (2003) explain in their literature review that when L1 reading is not maintained, L2 reading is hindered, but the results of their study found that transfer still happens even when L1 reading isn’t maintained because the skills and strategies are present but not active. However, their study did not investigate the effects of improving L1 reading skills on L2 comprehension and literacy. The question resulting from this finding is: does improving the skills in L1 reading, namely skills and strategies, enable the student to improve their L2 reading and comprehension?

Improving L1 reading skills may help L2 learners because success in reading counters a potential loss of motivation. Students lose motivation when performing poorly in L2 reading (Scott, Bell, & McCallum, 2009), which is an indicator that assisting the student to reach levels of language proficiency that provide some

success in L2 reading comprehension is beneficial. Pichette, Segalowitz, and Connors (2003) hypothesize that:

the reader has to reach a threshold of L2 prior knowledge in order to be able to transfer his or her reading skills effectively from the L1 to the L2; otherwise, insufficient knowledge of the L2 would 'short circuit' the reader's reading system (p. 392).

Referencing the issue of threshold, Upton and Lee-Thompson (2001) "proposed that there may be a threshold of L2 proficiency where thought in L1 becomes less efficient than simply reading the L2 text using automatic and proficient L2 reading skills" (as cited in Erler & Finkbeiner, 2007, p. 197). These theories point to a paradox of language learning. The L2 reader transfers skills from the L1, but can only transfer the skills if there is sufficient prior knowledge about the L2 text. According to this paradox, the L1 reader must have adequate reading ability to transfer to the L2, but also have prior knowledge of the L2 text. From the threshold theory there is a learning process proposed. First, the reader must be able to read well in the L1. Second, L1 reading skills transfer to the L2 and the L2 must reach a threshold of topic and lexical knowledge about the L2 text before adequate comprehension occurs. At this level of proficiency, L1 reading skills transfer readily to L2 reading. Third, once there is sufficient knowledge about the L2 text, another threshold is reached at which the reader no longer requires assistance from the L1. Even with the thresholds, there is still need for a strong foundation in L1 reading.

Another hypothesis suggests that a foundation of L2 prior knowledge is a pre-condition for transfer of L1 reading skills to occur. It is described as training the

L2 to receive skills that transfer from the L1 (Fukkink, Hulstijn, & Simis, 2005). Fukkink, Hulstijn, and Simis postulate the idea of training the L2 learner for word recognition in the L2, and ask if “it would not make sense then to train second language (L2) learners in methods of quick retrieval of word meanings after they have been exposed to these words the first time?” However, transferring L1 reading to L2 reading requires skills in L1 reading.

L1 reading skills are thought to be a “foundation” for L2 reading and “develop concurrently” (p. 163) with L2 reading skills (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, Humbach, & Javorsky, 2008), but as Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, Humbach, and Javorsky declare, there is no real support yet for this hypothesis. It is, however, known that general native language development predicts how successful the L2 language development will be (Meschyan & Hernandez, 2002), which may be applied to predicting L2 reading ability. In fact, according to Meschyan and Hernandez (2002), there is a correlation between L1 decoding ability and L2 decoding ability that provides for long-term memory to L2 reading skills. Decoding and possibly other skills improve L2 reading with more exposure to L2 reading and decoding practice (Meschyan & Hernandez, 2002; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, Humbach, & Javorsky, 2008). L1 reading skills predict levels of L2 reading comprehension early in an L2 program, and L2 skills predict later in a program for L2 reading comprehension levels (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, Humbach, & Javorsky, 2008). Meschyan and Hernandez (2002) reflect this in their study that demonstrated that L2 reading competency is advanced by continued L2 reading development and L1 skills predict early L2 skills. This is in agreement with the threshold concept that L1 reading skills transfer to L2

reading in the early stages of the language program (Meschyan & Hernandez, 2002). These two concepts describe a window of language proficiency, meaning that there is a time frame early in L2 development that is most effective in learning L2 reading with assistance from L1 transfer. Also, L2 decoding and use of semantic and syntactic relationships to understand text can predict L2 reading comprehension (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006). In other words, these studies point to a combination of L1 and L2 reading skills improvement to enhance transfer of skills for increased L2 reading comprehension. Contributions from L1 reading comprehension, more specifically, the skills and strategies that support comprehension, transfer to L2 reading for comprehension (Gelderen, Schoonen, & Gloppe, 2004).

Hypothesis and Methods

These studies seem to suggest that by improving the L1 reading skills of beginning L2 language learners, transfer will occur more readily and assist L2 reading comprehension (Cutting, & Scarborough, 2006; Gelderen, Schoonen, & Gloppe, 2004; Meschyan & Hernandez, 2002). To test this prediction, the following research question is proposed: If L2 learners practice L1 reading skills and strategies, do their L2 reading scores improve?

The proposed study will be conducted at a private college in the western United States. All incoming students at this institution are required to take an English reading comprehension test. There are A and B versions of the reading comprehension test. In the proposed study, test A will be used as the pre-test, and test B as the post-test. The reading comprehension test is comprised of word associations, short sentence comprehension, and short text comprehension, and has

a total of 30 questions, each presented in a multiple-choice format. Scoring is based on 100%. A passing test score is 80% and higher. The college's Dean of Education has stipulated that L1 Spanish-speaking students who score below 47% on the reading comprehension test are placed in an eight-week ESL reading class. The L1 Spanish-speaking students placed in the eight-week ESL reading class are the desired participants for the proposed study.

L1 Spanish-speaking students who scored 47% and lower will be separated into two groups, the control group and the treatment group. They will be assigned randomly to control and treatment groups in order to rule out any pre-selection bias. In order to do meaningful statistical testing, at least thirty participants will be selected for each group.

Test A scores will be used as a base line for both the control and treatment groups to indicate the English reading levels at the beginning of the study. The groups will then be instructed separate of each other. The control group will receive the standard eight-week curriculum as assigned by the college. Control group instruction is given in English (L2) and is a reading skills and strategies course designed to increase reading proficiency in English. The treatment group will receive equivalent reading skills and strategies to the control group; however, instruction is given in Spanish (L1) and is designed to increase native-language reading proficiency.

Instruction for the control and treatment group will consist of reading skills instruction such as monitoring, vocabulary development through inferring word definitions from the context of surrounding sentences, and reading fluency. They

will also be trained in reading comprehension exercises such as summarizing the text, asking questions to oneself about the text, and discussing with peers the main themes of texts. Both group's literacy programs will follow the recommendations from Biancarosa and Snow's (2004) Reading Next report, which includes fifteen recommendations regarding roles for the student and the teacher.

Recommendations adapted for the proposed study will include (a) explicit L1 reading comprehension instruction, (b) literacy principles embedded within content areas, (c) motivation and autonomous learning guidance, (d) text-based collaborative learning, (e) concentrated strategic tutoring, (f) exposure to texts with varying difficulty, (g) writing exercises based on readings, (h) incorporating technology, (i) frequent self-assessments for students to evaluate personal progress, (j) extended or additional time for literacy instruction, (k) ongoing assessment of the program to ensure instruction is effective, and (m) teachers meeting often to discuss instruction strategy. Texts provided for the control group will be in English. Texts gathered for reading in the treatment group should be authentic Spanish texts originating from both USA culture as well as Central and South American culture. Using texts from both L1 and L2 cultures in the treatment group may enable the students to connect background knowledge in preparation for the English reading comprehension test B.

After the completion of the eight-week courses, both the control and treatment groups will be assessed using test B of the English reading comprehension test. Test scores will be compared to find if practice in L1 reading skills and strategies increases L2 reading proficiency.

Conclusion

From the literature review of this text, it can be inferred that without sufficient ability in L1 reading, L2 reading is at a disadvantage. Language educators who encourage language learners to strengthen literacy in the L1 might observe L2 reading and language improvement among students.

Future studies should include testing for specific skills that can transfer and assist in L2 reading comprehension, as the proposed study only treats skills in general. Also, future studies should include students that are learning a foreign language at various proficiency levels of language ability such as university French or German students. These future studies could contain multiple groups that would be tested and trained for specific transfer skills.

Analysis and Reflection of Teaching Video

Analysis and Reflection of Teaching Video Introduction

This section of the portfolio is an analysis and reflection of an example of my teaching that I video recorded during spring semester of 2012. Simona Moti allowed me to teach for twenty minutes in her second semester German class. After teaching a short segment, I reviewed the video recording and compared claims in my teaching philosophy to actual practice in the classroom. This analysis and reflection is a self-assessment of my teaching abilities.

Analysis and Reflection of Teaching Video

My teaching was video recorded in a second-semester German class, in which I was allowed to teach as a guest. There were eleven students, and one teaching assistant. As the students arrived, I played the German news for beginners from Deutsche Welle, after which I opened the lesson with a brief discussion of narrative past verbs. The regular instructor was currently teaching narrative past verbs. As an additional warm up to accompany listening to the news, and to get the students accustomed to responding to me, we talked about some narrative past verbs that the class learned the previous day. I began by introducing four new vocabulary words: *als* (when, as), *wenn* (when, if), *wann* (when), and *ob* (whenever). I displayed a short story that gave an example of how to use *wenn*, *wann*, and *ob* in context, followed by examples of *als*.

In the target language, I explained *als* is different from the other three new words because it is used specifically to join two past events together in one sentence. In a collaborative activity, students worked in small groups to combine two sentences together using *als*. On the board we examined the sentences with important elements underlined to confirm how *als* could be used.

The next activity began with modeling of a *Sign Here* activity in which student would interview each other to find out information about each other's pasts based on a choice of topics on a worksheet. After completing a short interview on one topic, the students would sign off the interview topic on their partner's worksheet, find a new partner, and begin interviewing on a new topic. I encountered difficulties during modeling when the volunteer that was modeling

with me became anxious. As a class, we were able to give her encouragement to complete her part of the modeling. After her part of the modeling was completed, the class showed their approval of her success. This enabled the volunteer to regain confidence in her language ability. Students completed the *Sign Here* activity, after which, I reviewed the activity by asking the students to give examples of their conversations from their interviews.

Wenn, wann, and ob were taught through cloze sentences. I asked the students to identify which new vocabulary word could be used to complete each cloze sentence. Students were able to identify the new vocabulary that could be used appropriately for each sentence. I used the current activity as assigned homework that would be discussed the next day.

I will now analyze this lesson and the degree to which it accords with the main parts of my teaching philosophy. The first section of my philosophy argues the importance of sound teaching principles. In my teaching video, I was able to demonstrate coaching and teaching in the ZPD. During the *Sign Here* activity interviews, I interviewed and worked with students who appeared to be struggling to communicate effectively. I also encouraged students who understood the activity well to work with those who did not. During the lesson I felt confident that I was able to model, assist students to apply the model to the task, and review the task in a way that was sufficient. However, after analyzing the teaching video, I noticed that my modeling could improve. I noticed that students struggled to understand me because I spoke too fast. I noticed on several occasions students expressed confusion after I had relayed information or modeled too quickly.

In accordance with my beliefs in communicative language instruction, I was able to provide two activities that provided opportunity for students to communicate using German. However, on the last activity, I changed the lesson plan because I was running out of time. My initial plan was for students to receive examples from the cloze sentences. The sentences could accept one or more of the new vocabulary. This would have enabled students to appropriately assign vocabulary to the fill-in-the-blanks during pair work. Then students were supposed to write a story using the new vocabulary, and present the story in small groups. Because of time constraints, I compromised teaching communicatively and opted for coverage. This is directly against my teaching philosophy. If I encounter a similar situation again in the future, I plan to first recognize urges to opt for coverage and continue my lesson through communicative language instruction. Depending on the amount of time left, I can still provide modeling and do part of the planned activity. I can also modify the activity into sections that can still be completed in the time remaining, assign homework that will be used in the next class, and pick up where the lesson ended the next time class meets.

In my teaching philosophy I claim to teach grammar in support of communication. The four new vocabulary words are actually grammar intensive. However, by introducing them as vocabulary, addressing how the words can be used, and what they mean, I believe I was able to maintain a grammar lesson that encouraged German students to use grammar in support of communication.

I believe that I was able to provide a lesson that mostly matched the key aspects of my teaching philosophy. From this analysis, it is clear that it is difficult to

incorporate every item from my teaching philosophy in every lesson. Even though my performance in the teaching video may have been acceptable, it is obvious that there is always room for improvement. The teaching video has reminded me that the most important teaching strategies that I need to work on are: (1) decrease my rate of speech and increase my fluency, because without improvement in these areas I will continue to witness confusion among students; (2) model until it is sufficiently clear that the students understand the purpose of the task and how to carry out the task; and (3) provide a low affective filter environment. My self-assessment is that I must be aware of my weaknesses in teaching and learn from my mistakes. I learned that preparation is key in designing an appropriate German lesson. If I had designed my lesson to be modified in the event that I may run out of time, I would have been able to continue in effective communicative instruction.

Annotated Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography Introduction

This section of the portfolio contains annotations on books and articles that I found to be most useful for developing my teaching philosophy and artifacts. These articles and books have impacted my beliefs and perceptions about second language acquisition. I have organized the annotations into four sections. The first section contains sources on second language acquisition. Second, I discuss sources on communicative competence and pragmatics. Third, I present sources on the topic of literacy in language learning. Last, are sources dedicated to German language learning.

Second Language Acquisition

Arnold, N., & Ducate, L. (2011). *Present and Future Promises of CALL: From Theory and Research to New Directions in Language Teaching*. San Marcos, TX: CALICO.

Summary

Arnold and Ducate address the use of technology in the classroom and the opportunities computer-aided language learning (CALL) brings to second language acquisition. In the beginning chapters, the editors argue that CALL is a tool for enhancing instruction and learning of second languages. The authors establish that language pedagogy and learning strategies are aided by CALL. CALL is best applied to language learning when practiced through national standards of second language acquisition.

After the beginning chapters, the focus of the book turns to modes of communication that can be accompanied by CALL. Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication is enhanced by technology that can provide better reading, listening, and speaking opportunities. Technology can also promote the development of pragmatics and cultural norms. CALL can be used as a tool to engage in communication with native speakers by way of chatting, video conferencing, and playing social media games. Instruction in the classroom can be enhanced by completing tasks designed for blogging, writing wiki pages, producing target language media, etc. Finally, computer-based language assessment is presented as a tool with which students can perform in the target language in a

more natural form. CALL assessments have the potential to enable the student to demonstrate language ability in authentic contexts.

Reaction

'Present and Future Promises of CALL' promotes language teaching that differs from traditional classroom instruction. The use of CALL in language learning maintains the same standards and goals of language teaching so long as the lessons use the technology as a tool for learning and not a tool for amusement. Although the focus of this book is technology in the classroom, it also contains information about teaching and learning language and culture based on current SLA research. The types of technology discussed in this book equip the instructor with teaching ideas that are not taught in a standard second language theory book. By using technology, my students may better demonstrate what they can do in the language instead of performing less effective in-class tasks. By applying CALL in the classroom, students' learning and production of the language can become more communicative and authentic.

Elliott, A.R. (1997). On the teaching and acquisition of pronunciation within a communicative approach. *Hispania*, 80(1), 95-108.

Summary

Language instruction by the communicative approach has targeted the four main areas of language use: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. But, there has been little examination on communicative instruction for pronunciation.

Pronunciation was traditionally viewed in the late 80's and early 90's as a linguistic

feature of language acquisition. Later studies resulted in contradictory findings: pronunciation study was of no use, no benefit, had a negative effect, or no effect. Elliott investigates if formal phonetic instruction of Spanish pronunciation fosters better language production and pronunciation. Three college classes participated in the study, two of which were used as the experiment group. The experimental group received phonological pronunciation instruction in addition to regular instruction. Four instruments were used for testing: mimicking pronunciation of a discrete word, mimicking pronunciation of a sentence, pronunciation of isolated written words, and a free speaking exercise. Native and near-native speakers evaluated recordings of the tests. Results showed that the experimental group improved pronunciation on all nineteen practiced sounds, and that phonological instruction in orthography may actually impede phonological pronunciation. Even though in previous studies audio input did not reveal significant improvement of pronunciation, the treatment investigated here resulted in significant improvement of pronunciation from audio input.

Results from this study suggest that formal instruction at the intermediate level could improve overall pronunciation. Improvement was measured in reading, sentence repetition and word repetition. The author suggests the implications of pronunciation instruction could also benefit listening comprehension.

Reaction

This study's investigation of pronunciation with the communicative learning approach is interesting because it implies that although communication is the goal of language learning, one cannot be understood if one does not pronounce

understandably. Investigation of pronunciation instruction was warranted due to the conflicting results of previous studies. It would be pertinent for the author to include continuing study of pronunciation instruction across other languages to find if the significant results in this study are consistent across multiple languages. These additional studies would also narrow the results of this study and other studies to find if pronunciation instruction improves communicative competence. The author also mentions that students are commonly insecure about pronunciation skills in the target language. This finding is especially useful when I teach German because it is a reminder to be aware of students' speaking anxieties and to lower affective filters.

Bateman, B. (2008). Student teachers' attitudes and beliefs about using the target language in the classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(1), 11-28.

Summary

Bateman declares "optimal language learning occurs when instructors present material directly in the target language without recourse to the students' native language". In his study on using the target language in the classroom, Bateman explains that by using the target language, the instructor is creating a source of input for the students. Participants for the study were student teachers at the middle and high school level. They were asked to assess their own use of the target language as the language of instruction before the beginning of the semester, then again after the semester. On the whole, student teachers reported that they

began to use the target language more as the semester progressed because they saw the benefits that students received from target language interactions in the classroom. Reasons for possibly not using the target language were gathered through journaling. The student teachers reported that they didn't use the target language initially because of classroom management issues, which required explicit instruction. Also, student teachers reported there was often not enough time to instruct in the target language, they were fatigued, and they felt it would damage their rapport with the students. Oddly, one student teacher reported she didn't want to confuse students with new vocabulary.

Reaction

I found it interesting that student teachers' reasons for not using the target language as the language of instruction were often excuses for being unprepared. Except for possible discipline issues, I am of the opinion that the target language should be used as much as possible. The excuse of lack of time doesn't make sense. Speaking in the L2 shouldn't take much more time than the L1. Under the section about the limitations of the instructor, participants expressed that they felt inadequate in the target language, which also doesn't make sense, because teachers ought to be confident in their knowledge of the topic they teach. Teacher fatigue seems to me an excuse for lack of effort, as does the fear of new vocabulary. One purpose of a language class is to learn new vocabulary, no matter the form of delivery.

Coombe, C., Folse, K., & Hubley, N. (2007). *A practical guide to assessing English language learners*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Summary

Practical assessment means creating assessments that are designed in coordination with the curriculum. The importance of assessment in language learning is paramount because it tests appropriate language use and informs the student on ability and progress in L2 acquisition. Coombe, Folse, and Hubley present types of assessment and instruct teachers to consider the purpose of a test. When developing tests, teachers should contemplate the usefulness, validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity, etc., of an assessment before presenting it to students. The authors explore assessment for language learners in areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Alternative assessments ask students to show what they can do, which means such assessments can more accurately portray the language learners' ability. Assessing what students can do may be measured through assembling a portfolio of work throughout the term, presenting orally to peers, displaying progress through a project, self-assessing as a method to become aware of one's progress, etc. Teachers are encouraged to assess language learners in ways that are more comprehensive and appropriate than traditional written tests. Considerations before administering assessments include informing students of the test schedule, providing an appropriate test location, compiling the test, and having an answer sheet ready if needed. During the test, the role of the instructor is to proctor and maintain a "friendly but stern demeanor".

Reaction

Prior to reading this book, my views on assessment were limited to the traditional methods. After reading this book, my understanding of assessment is much more clear and defined. I believe there is more potential for alternative assessment than what I am currently doing. Alternative assessments enable language learners to improve upon progress throughout the course instead of at the end of the unit or term. Alternative assessment can lower affective filters as well as provide a more accurate measurement of what language learners can do. This text explains that developing the curriculum with the assessment is key in creating reliable and effective assessments. In my teaching philosophy, this source compliments the 5 C's. Using the assessment guidelines from this text in light of the 5 C's, the quality and appropriateness of assessments provide superior feedback about students' language development than traditional written tests.

Brown, A.V. (2009). Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching: A comparison of ideals. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(1), 46-60.

Summary

Brown has explored teachers' and students' perceptions about foreign language teaching and learning. Although language learning follows similar principles of effective teaching, the goals, activities, and methods of instruction are quite different than those of a content area such as math or history. It is this difference that creates varying perceptions about language learning between

teachers and students. The participating teachers in the study agreed that teachers should understand the beliefs and perceptions of students in order to provide quality instruction. Initially the accepted theory was that students' beliefs play a minor role in language learning, however, current research illustrates that students' beliefs are central to SLA and thus affect language learning. Mutual beliefs about language learning and developing an understanding between students and teachers are positive to language learning. Examples of such understandings include realistic goals about language learning and how SLA theory applies in the classroom.

Brown posits three questions that compare teachers' and students' perceptions. Findings suggest that teachers prefer an overall communicative instruction approach with grammar in support of real-world communication. In contrast, students prefer a grammar intensive instructional method. However, over time, language learners' beliefs can change to match more closely those of the instructor.

Reaction

This article concerns understanding the viewpoints of students. If student beliefs about language learning differ from mine, teaching SLA principles that bring about the best language learning results may be effective. In this article language learners are characterized as wanting explicit grammar instruction. It seems natural for language learners to desire grammar-focused instruction because it may help them feel in control of their learning experience. However, language learning requires engaging in communication that involves negotiating meaning, which can make language learners feel like they are not in control. Communicative language

teaching may appear to language learners as not teaching needed grammar, however, instruction in SLA that explains how grammar is embedded in communication may motivate students to abandon their preference for explicit grammar instruction.

Adair-Hauk, B., & Donato, R. (2002). The PACE model: A story-based approach to meaning and form for standards-based language learning. *The French Review*, 76(2), 265-276.

Summary

Teaching grammar follows primarily one of two styles: a bottom-up style, or explicit instruction, and a top down style, or implicit instruction. While these traditional methods of grammar instruction emphasize grammatical competence, they do not necessarily enable the language learner to communicate in a manner expected by language instructors. Grammar instruction through PACE models provides opportunity for language learners to reflect on the language system by re-reading texts, and discussing the text with peers enables language learners to communicate effectively. Focus on form is beneficial to language learners and is required for language learners to develop L2 competence, however, the manner in which focus on form is traditionally taught tends not to contribute to proficiency development. The PACE instructional method for focus on form provides language learners with “meaningful practice, contextualization, and authentic language tasks”. PACE provides language instruction that enables learning from complete contexts. Language learners learn grammar, vocabulary, and communication through

instruction that is content-based. Authentic text and content-based instruction connect grammar and discourse because they provide meaningful language as opposed to isolated linguistic elements. In teaching PACE with authentic texts, instructors provide language learners with knowledge and skills to use when reading assigned texts. This story-based instructional method enables language learners to experience grammar in complete context.

Reaction

The PACE instructional method provides a learning experience in which language and grammar are represented in complete context, which involves a top-down approach instead of a bottom-up approach. Explicit and implicit grammar instruction are methods instructors can use to teach grammar, however, grammar in support of communication is taught well through PACE. In my teaching philosophy, I discuss the usefulness of PACE. I have experienced that PACE lessons improve reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This method, in combination with communicative language instruction, enables language learners to communicate in meaningful ways. The goal of communication is for the student to be successful in expressing, interpreting, and negotiating meaning. PACE provides the guidance that language learners need for appropriate and successful communication.

Lee, L. (2009). Scaffolding collaborative exchanges between expert and novice language teachers in threaded discussions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(2), 212-228.

Summary

Technology in the classroom has become more popular in recent years and has changed the manner in which students are instructed in second language acquisition. As technology-mediated (TM) instruction has shown positive outcomes thus far, instructors are expanding the use of TM instruction in current classrooms. Research has also shown that computer-mediated communication fosters language learning and increases reflection and cognitive growth. For example, through discussion boards students are able to engage autonomously in communication and social interaction in the target language.

Lee asks questions to investigate how students perceive their role in TM instruction and how discussion boards foster learning and reflection. Thirty-two students and eight teachers at the high school level participated in the study. Participants engaged in weekly fora, monthly reflection logs, a post-program survey, and a final review. Discussions and fora were provided to the participants through Black Board. Data was gathered from the surveys, online posts, and group interviews. Results indicated that students consider fora as a good warm-up for class. 21% of the students were skeptical at first because they were unsure of the course learning style and goals. 34% thought that the fora were time consuming, but ultimately found such activities useful. Half of the students agreed that the setting was comfortable and interactive and reported that they were better able to

learn during the fora activities. Students were able to interact socially in the target language and receive meaningful feedback because the instructor was able to organize responses through Black Board better than in class discussion.

Reaction

The idea that scaffolding doesn't have to happen in person is an eye opener to me. In the study the instructors reported that they were able to provide better feedback and scaffolding to students because of the mediation of technology. It required them to organize responses and be detailed enough that the students would understand the feedback clearly. Language learning is traditionally accomplished through face-to-face communication, which could raise the affective filter. TM instruction is an effective resource for low affective filter language development. Forum TM instruction reduces the human interaction of learning, but it requires the students to develop forms of appropriate communication other than oral communication.

Cullen, R. (2008). Teaching grammar as a liberating force. *ELT Journal*, 62(3), 221-230. doi:10.1093/elt/ccm042.

Summary

Based on Widdowson (1990), who said grammar frees one from dependency on context, Cullen examines grammar as a "liberating force". Teachers often relay grammar to students in a way that creates rules of operation and not tools to express one's self. In an opposing view on grammar, Cullen explains that a student is not restricted by grammar, but rather that the student is restricted by vocabulary

knowledge and context. This view contributes to using grammar as a tool of communication and not as the essence of communication. An example is used to explain the intention of grammar as a liberating force. By using the three-word phrase “dog eat meat”, Cullen teaches that without grammar as a tool, the student must rely on several other factors of context, environment, and lexis to understand three possible meanings of the example phrase. With grammar, the student is able to narrow the possible meanings for the correct one. If grammar is to be used as a liberating force, then students must have the attitude that grammar is “at the service of the language user” and does not limit the language speaker’s communication. Cullen suggests that making the transition from lexis to grammar in task-based activities will foster this attitude in students. He presents four types of tasks that could be useful in this ideal of language learning. First, grammaticization tasks require students to explore grammar independently. Second, synthesis tasks enable students to assemble sentences such as relative clauses, subordinations, etc. The third and fourth types of tasks direct students to reconstruct a sequence of events in written form that has been provided to them in audio or picture format.

Reaction

Grammar as a liberating force is a concept that could work well in my classroom. Initially this concept seemed false because the title presents it as too good to be true. However, in my experience, attitude is a large factor in education, especially in relation to motivation. Cullen describes the students as making a choice to use grammar as a liberating force, which indicates that the students are taking an extra active role in their language education. The ideas presented for

grammar instruction appear promising. I believe they may work well because of other theories that say that if a student notices grammar independently from instruction, it is learned better. In short, grammar as a liberating force and grammar in support of communication are essentially the same, however, the catch phrase of 'liberating force' may promote positive reactions from students about grammar.

Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective.

TESOL Quarterly, 40(1), 83-107.

Summary

Ellis defines what grammar teaching means. In the past, grammar instruction was thought most beneficial to language learners when it was explicitly taught and practiced through drills. Other theories suggested a "zero grammar" approach to language instruction. Arguing that there is sufficient evidence from recent research that grammar should be taught, Ellis explains that grammar instruction to provide both form and meaning for students to use. In his perspective, there are three form-focused styles of grammar teaching: focus on form, which is intensive instruction; planned focus on form, in which the primary focus is on meaning; and incidental focus on form, which focuses on meaning and can therefore be called extensive instruction. Teachers should concentrate on problematic areas of grammar later in language programs and emphasize grammar in support of communication during beginning stages of language learning.

Feedback in the form of recasting is important and needs to be mixed between implicit and explicit forms.

Reaction

The more I delve into the topic of grammar instruction, the more I see grammar instruction as having a place in the classroom. This is contrary to my beliefs prior to reading this article. Initially I followed Krashen's ideas to present grammar in small chunks, believing that there was no need to explain grammar, just working on communicative forms. However, lesson plans can be organized to accomplish not only a task, but also the use of a grammar rule within the task. Since reading this article, I have made practicing grammar through communication an essential part of my instruction. I have noticed that initially grammar is learned implicitly through communicative tasks, then after completing communicative tasks, if language learners still struggle, the grammar rule can be explicitly explained.

Nobuyoshi, J., & Ellis, R. (1993). Focused communication tasks and second language acquisition. *ELT Journal*, 47(3), 203-210.

Summary

Nobuyoshi and Ellis begin by discussing communicative skills in the classroom activate the learners' linguistic foundations and develop strategic competence. This will contribute to accuracy by helping students gain control of their L2 by discovering linguistic features during meaningful application. The authors continue to broaden this idea by explaining that acquisition occurs when communication takes place. They carried out a study aimed at pushing students for

output, and tested whether forced output would increase communicative competence. Pushed output was implemented through pursuing clarification. The authors asked: if output were pushed versus unpushed, would there be an increase in output ability? Six participants were tested, three received an unpushed language activity, and three pushed. Two of the three pushed participants displayed increased linguistic ability in the L2. The authors established that pushed target language output is helpful in second language acquisition. They question if students that did not react well to pushed output can develop grammatical accuracy. However, they maintain that communicative competence is more useful than grammatical accuracy.

Reaction

This line of research has the potential to become more revealing than it is now. The authors mention that the study was only a peek into this theory of pushing output. The authors' explanations of the communicative approach and task-based activities are applicable to my teaching philosophy. The authors list features that an activity must contain in order to be considered a communicative task. Their view of tasks is slightly different from what I have read in the past, but it still follows the fundamentals of having a purpose, including some kind of 'gap', and providing opportunity for negotiation of meaning. This is a good starting point for exploring how tasks should be organized to foster student involvement that builds communicative competence.

Shrum, J.L., & Glisan, E.W. (2010). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction*. Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.

Summary

Shrum and Glisan's handbook covers a comprehensive range of topics and principles in second language teaching, as well as objectives, standards, and best practices currently available to the language teacher. The book begins with a chapter on second language teaching and learning theory. The foundation of language teaching is established and is frequently referred back to in later chapters. Also, a historical account of language instruction provides context and meaning for current instruction practices. Throughout the book, specific themes of language instruction are discussed: national standards for language instruction, methodologies for language teaching, modes of communication, and lesson planning. Each chapter focuses on instructional practices that provide real-world communication experience for language learners. One such instructional practice is story-based instruction and PACE lessons. Shrum and Glisan offer guidance on how to teach grammar as an embedded feature of language in support of communication. They emphasize that communication with L2 speakers and experience with authentic texts foster language and culture knowledge development. Shrum and Glisan's handbook also supports instructors when handling special needs of students and addressing diversity in the classroom. Last, the authors discuss meaningful assessments that are standards-based and provide useful feedback to language learners.

Reaction

The title of this book 'Teachers Handbook' accurately describes the purpose of this book. It is a guide and a "go-to" manual on language teaching. In my philosophy and artifacts, I frequently cite this source, as it is an accessible, comprehensive work on language teaching. Every chapter is beneficial to my teaching because each offers part of the blueprint for my instructional approach. Each chapter is composed in a fashion that is simple for the reader to understand. In addition to vast amounts of useful information, all chapters provide references that are helpful in finding additional research on teaching theories contained within that chapter.

Communicative Competence and Pragmatics

Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1995). A pedagogical framework for communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 5-35.

Summary

The authors propose that communicative language teaching should be based on a model of communicative competence. Until this paper, attempts at integrating communicative competence into the communicative approach have only addressed language proficiency and not language instruction. The authors discuss models of communicative competence advanced by Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), which include grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. After these models were developed, scholars identified aspects that could be improved,

particularly in the area of language knowledge regarding organization and pragmatics. In light of those advancements, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell suggest a new model of communicative competence consisting of five categories. They are: sociocultural competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Discourse competence sits in the center, interacting with the other competencies, while strategic competence is described as a feature running in the background and utilized when needed. The differences in the models are discussed. Linguistic competence replaces grammatical competence as it is proposed to include the lexis and the phonology in addition to grammar. Sociolinguistic competence is relabeled as sociocultural competence because it needs to be defined as separate from language functions and incorporates a more comprehensive culture feature separate from actional competence. The authors elaborate on all the competencies and explain their roles in the new proposal. Discourse competence is expanded to include conversational structures that are cohesive and coherent. Actional competence is detailed as “interlanguage pragmatics” and is separated from sociocultural competence.

Reaction

Communicative language teaching requires that students learn language with the goal of conveying and interpreting messages in the target language. The new model proposed by the authors is accompanied by detailed explanations of why they changed the existing model. It makes sense that, as their diagram displays, discourse competence should be in the center of communication. While pursuing discourse competence, learners need to utilize other competencies and skills to

maintain communication. Strategic competence, for instance, is represented as a skill in the background that can be used at any time. This seems to be a reasonable depiction of how communication can occur.

Lantolf, J.P., & Poehner, M.E. (2008). *Sociocultural theory and the teaching of second languages*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.

Summary

Lantolf and Poehner assemble several authors' works on sociocultural theory and applications in the classroom. The book concentrates on L2 research that explores sociocultural theory in adult language learning. The book is divided into three sections that investigate the ZPD, content-based language learning, and learning beyond the classroom. The first section, 'Mediation and the Zone of Proximal Development' concentrates on types of mediation in the classroom that enable the student to develop language. Consideration is given to learners' contributions when learning in the ZPD and is described as a dance within a dialogic approach to learning. Included in this section are the benefits of role-playing, which encourages language learners to produce output beyond that which is already developed. Section two is grounded in content-based learning. In this section, the ZPD is discussed in terms of assisting pragmatics, encouraging self-modeling, and learning autonomously without receiving pre-packaged instruction. In the last section, development of communicative competence is thought to be unrealistic when learning in an L1 classroom environment. Language learning opportunities

through study abroad should be expanded in order to foster development of communicative competence.

Reaction

This book elegantly conveys many of my perceptions of language learning. Because language is a social means of communication, second languages should be taught in a social manner. In other research, scholars have stated that students learn languages because they want to speak. This book has helped me consider the ZPD in terms of sociocultural theory. When I teach German, I should create an environment through which language learners are engaged in social activities and not intensive memorization or drills. I believe this book is one of the most useful texts on language teaching theory because it combines language and sociocultural learning. Blending these foci of language learning creates a more complete method of language learning.

Soler, E.A., & Jordia, M.P.S.(2007). *Intercultural language use and language learning*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Summary

Intercultural language use is described in three parts. In part one, the authors define intercultural competence as the ability to operate in “one or more cultures and social identities”. When a speaker is interculturally competent, the requirements of native-like language production are not necessary. One such example is when English is used as a lingua franca between European countries, but native quality production is not essential. In part two, the concept of English as a

lingua franca is developed. It is proposed that English as a second language can assist third language learners. Therefore, many English language learners acquire English to interact and not to develop identity within English culture. Last, pragmatics competence is viewed as key in developing communicative competence. Language learners may struggle with pragmatic competence development because textbooks fail to provide sufficient examples of pragmatics and speech acts for language learners to adequately demonstrate appropriate pragmatic awareness. Alternatives to textbooks in pragmatic instruction are the incorporation of target culture films that exemplify desired speech acts.

Reaction

Language acquisition appears to be multifaceted and requires more learning than vocabulary and grammar. This book explores globalization, communicative competence, and detailed theory on pragmatic instruction and learning. This text is invaluable to any language teacher who wishes to enable students to learn a second language in terms of how language is actually used in the real world. This book also raises awareness of English as a lingua franca and how it is used as a tool for interaction and operational work in language courses in which a student is learning a third language, for example if a native German speaker studies Spanish in England. In my teaching, this information greatly improves the quality of my instruction. The recommendation that language teachers take from this book is to address language learning from multiple directions, including language, pragmatics, culture, etc. Intercultural language use is key in language learning. Soler and Jordia have compiled crucial language acquisition theory that assists me in coaching students to

become communicatively competent and able to function with pragmatic competence in the TL.

Tatsuki, D. H., & Houck, N. R. (Eds.). (2010). *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Summary

Tatsuki and Houck present articles and lesson plans that provide examples on how an instructor should teach L2 pragmatics. Offering examples from ESL learners of various L1 backgrounds, the chapters concentrate on strategies that are effective in teaching pragmatics. Detailed instructions are laid out for the reader, materials explained, and worksheets and transcripts provided. The lessons are complete and ready to use in classrooms. The first two chapters discuss pragmatic instruction, the research that supports learning pragmatics alongside language, and the misunderstandings that can occur if pragmatics are not learned in the second language classroom. Next are three sections that explore and describe how to teach requests, indirect speech acts, and responding to speech acts. In these three sections, methods on teaching specific speech acts are presented. Each chapter provides research that supports specific speech acts. At the end of the chapters are lesson plans accompanied by detailed instructions on implementation of the lesson plans. The last chapter covers assessment strategies that are designed to assess the student in pragmatics use and awareness. Assessment is intended to rate the student on appropriateness of pragmatic use, not on 'correct' answers. Examples of

pragmatic assessments incorporate strategies that provide language learners with meaningful feedback.

Reaction

This book is of great assistance to my instruction because it explains step by step the types of lessons that are effective in teaching pragmatics. Although I discuss assessment and touch on culture and pragmatics through the 5 C's in my teaching philosophy, the last chapter of this text is an expansion that creates better balance between assessing language and pragmatics. Currently when I teach German, I may concentrate on language more than pragmatic instruction, however, Tatsuki and Houck provide examples that enable me to incorporate pragmatics into my lesson plans in a manner that is natural and effective for the students. Pragmatics instruction in my classroom enables my students to become aware of language and culture aspects that will make speaking with native speakers meaningful.

Ballman, T.L., Liskin-Gasparro, J.E., & Mandell, P.B. (2001). *The communicative classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Thomas Learning.

Summary

The Communicative Classroom focuses on the communicative approach of second language teaching. Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication are presented as a foundation in language learning. An important feature of communication is negotiation of meaning, which is described as the methods and strategies undertaken by an L2 learner to function successfully in an

authentic situation. The role of the instructor is that of an architect of language development, providing direction and insight to how the final product should be structured. The student's role is that of a builder of language, meaning the student is responsible for language development. As an architect of language, the instructor gives direction on language learning elements such as grammar. Three perspectives of grammar instruction implemented by most instructors are described: that grammar has no place in the classroom, that grammar should be the main focus of instruction, or that grammar should be taught in support of communication. The last perspective on grammar is the preferred perspective for grammar instruction in the text. Grammar is described as a feature of language that should be taught in support of communication through task-based activities. Task-based activities should cater to the needs of language learners and provide opportunities for students to express, interpret, and negotiate meaning in the target language.

Reaction

This book is one of the most useful primers on the communicative approach. I have found that I keep returning to this text for insight. I found the first three chapters most beneficial because they clearly explain SLA, the communicative approach, and features of real communication. This text offers the standards against which I should compare what I do in my instruction. The authors caution teaching with a false communicative approach where the lesson design seems as though it is communicative, but doesn't provide the results that truly communicative activities would produce. As instructed by this text, if I keep my lessons goal-based, task-based, and meaningful with lots of opportunities for the

students to practice output, I remain within the realm of teaching communicatively. This text also encourages me to be more creative in my instruction than what the course textbook provides. I often find that textbooks contain drills that have no real value, so by following the guidelines of these chapters I can offer opportunities in which acquisition can occur.

Literacy in Language Learning

Carpenter, S.K., Sachs, R.E., Martin, B., Schmidt, K., & Looft, R. (2012). Learning new vocabulary in German: The effects of inferring word meanings, type of feedback, and time of test. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 19, 81-86.

Summary

The authors explore what L2 readers should do when they encounter new vocabulary: find the meaning of the word through a gloss or dictionary, or attempt to infer the meaning through context. The problem with inferring from context is that learners do not always infer the correct meaning. The authors ask: if a learner infers incorrectly, does it affect the learning? In the literature review, the authors investigate prior research about incorrect inferences by learners and find that some research has determined that learners skip unknown vocabulary and strive only for comprehension, especially if the unknown word is deemed unimportant.

Eighty students of German were divided into four groups of twenty. Participants learned new vocabulary through “(a) inferring + English feedback, (b) inferring+ German feedback, (c) inferring + no feedback, or (d) marginal gloss.”

Participants were given a short story to read that contained sixteen new vocabulary words. A comprehension test was given after students read the story twice. A delayed vocabulary test was given four days later. Participants in the marginal gloss group were found to comprehend less than the inference groups. On the vocabulary test researchers found that the marginal gloss and inference plus English feedback group performed higher than the other two groups. However, the inference plus no feedback group scored lowest. In short, as long as corrective feedback is given, an error in language learning does not impair language acquisition. In addition, feedback in English assisted performance in German.

Reaction

I was previously under the impression that instruction exclusively in German is the correct way to provide assistance to German language learners. Even after this article, I still believe in instruction in the L2. However, this article has taught me that some help from the L1 might be beneficial. After consideration of using English in German classes, I believe that, when appropriate, English can assist German language learners to acquire vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc., so long as it is used as a tool for feedback. Students can only use feedback so long as it is understandable. If I am truly coaching, I will become aware of students who do not understand feedback in German and provide it in a manner that they are sure to understand. This does not mean that instruction is to revert to English whenever there are struggles, but in order to avoid frustration, high affective filters, and loss of motivation, English can be used in feedback to ensure progress.

Meschyan, G., & Hernandez, A., (2002). Is native-language decoding skill related to second-language learning? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(1), 14-22. doi: 10.1037//0022-0663.94.1.14.

Summary

Meschyan and Hernandez hypothesize that native-language decoding skills are directly related to second language skills and proficiency. The authors investigated the correlation between English pseudo-word decoding skills and Spanish language learning. They posited that if a student is a good reader in the L1, the student is better able to store new and unfamiliar vocabulary in memory. They further hypothesized that this ability is predictive of second language learning and decoding ability, as phonological and orthographical awareness in the L1 are known to be foundational for L2 learning.

The study consisted of six measures. Participants were measured for native-language pseudo-word decoding ability, second-language real-word decoding, native-language vocabulary skills, second-language vocabulary skills, second-language competency, and non-verbal intelligence. The non-verbal intelligence was measured through pattern recognition and completion. Results supported the claim that L1 ability for decoding and vocabulary can predict L2 proficiency. As hypothesized, L1 students who demonstrated higher L1 pseudo-word decoding ability developed better L2 language ability and possessed a greater L2 vocabulary knowledge. The test results support the theory that learners with higher L1 abilities are more likely to become competent in L2 grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Reaction

This article is valuable to L2 instructors with students struggling to learn L2 due to issues in L1. Learners' struggles with L2 vocabulary and reading may be due to low decoding abilities in the L1. An L2 instructor may have more time to address general language comprehension and skills transfer than an FL instructor.

Meschyan and Hernandez have identified a possible solution to L2 reading and language learning problems. If it can be determined that the reason learners are experiencing difficulty in L2 learning and retention, the possible cause may be low L1 decoding ability. Correctly diagnosing low L1 decoding abilities enables instructors to more effectively coach language learners.

Alvermann, D.E., Phelps, S.F., & Gilles, V.R. (2010). *Content area reading and literacy: Succeeding in today's diverse classrooms*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Summary

Reading for understanding is more than simply reading through a text. Rather, it involves pre-reading activities, metacognitive processes during reading that include recognizing when to employ specific reading strategies, and reflecting on the text after reading. Reading is typically required in all content areas, not just languages. In order to provide adequate instruction, reading instructors should address diverse needs of students as well as provide an environment that is conducive to low anxiety during reading. Reading comprehension requires students to prepare to read by reviewing prior knowledge about an assigned text, which is

key in assisting the student to construct meaning from the text in order to develop fluency and comprehension. Strategies for introducing vocabulary include pre-reading modeling, recognizing and properly inferring meaning of new vocabulary during reading, and post-reading discussion. Post-reading discussion can include full class participation, however, text comprehension may be most benefited by small group and peer-led discussions. Application of a text in unit activities solidifies newly acquired knowledge and reading skills.

Reaction

This book provides a foundation of proper reading instruction, and helped me find additional research in literacy and reading instruction. Similar to many of the books that I have chosen as beneficial to SLA, this text is a tool for defining the basics of language, literacy, and reading. Throughout this book, the reading process is central to how reading instruction is implemented. When choosing texts for students, teachers must carefully consider the difficulty level of the text and prepare learning tasks that will accompany the text to enable students to approach reading confidently. One principle from this book that I find especially useful in teaching German is peer-led discussions. Frequently, I find that if I provide a German text to students and pose a few questions that encourage peer-led discussion, students are more apt to understand the text and become motivated to read German texts outside of class.

Wood, K.D., & Blanton, W.E. (2009). *Literacy instruction for adolescents*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Summary

This book is divided into two sections. The first section is a compilation of articles about adolescent readers and their struggles with reading. Commentary is given on trends in statistics of readers and reading over the past forty years. Based on research findings it is recommended that a more rigorous approach to reading instruction be applied. The authors propose two needs of readers: first, readers need advanced, or i+1 material in order to achieve levels of reading that are required by content areas, and second, readers need to be instructed in reading fundamentals. Diversity of language in the classroom is becoming more common and requires instructors to prepare for instructing first and second language readers.

The second section of the book covers research that can be applied to reading instruction for language and content areas. Students become motivated to read content area texts through self-efficacy and social benefits. Comprehension instruction of content area texts before, during, and after reading ensures students actually understand what is read. Considerations must be taken into account when teaching reading, such as: ability of the reader, motivation, text variables, and purpose of the reading. Students are encouraged to follow the following steps: pre-reading preparation, reading, re-reading, responding, and reacting.

Reaction

In my teaching philosophy I state that my aim is to teach adult language learners at the college level. However, this book targets adolescent readers. I have chosen this book as one of my top publications on second language learning because many incoming college students that I will encounter may still respond to adolescent instruction methods. I address incoming students in my literacy artifact whose age and cognitive development stage may require teaching methods that are detailed in this book. As a language teacher, I believe that I should be ready for many circumstances that I will encounter. Although my experience is with teaching adults, I should also be ready to teach young adults. The more I understand how people learn language throughout a lifetime, the better I will be able to teach language to students of all ages.

German Language Learning

Culman, H., Henry, N., & VanPatten, L. (2009). The role of explicit and information in instructed SLA: An on-line study with processing instruction and German accusative case inflections. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German, 42(1), 19-31.*

Summary

Culman, Henry, and VanPatten study explicit grammar instruction. In their literature review, the authors define a common trend among language learners called First Noun Principle (FNP). FNP refers to the tendency of a language learner, whose L1, such as English, has a subject-verb-object (SVO) sentence structure, to

assign the first noun as the subject of the sentence, which causes errors when the L2 does not have SVO order. Learners of German are an example of such word order confusion as German allows for SVO and OVS structures by way of signifiers on the accusative masculine articles. The authors hypothesize that explicit instruction on German accusative articles and word orders for SVO and OVS enables language learners to appropriately determine who is doing what to whom.

The study required participants to listen to several sentences that contained SVO and OVS structure. After listening to the sentence, participants were to choose one of two pictures that accurately depicted the example sentences. Results of the study indicated that students who received explicit instruction were better able to choose the correct pictures. This study contradicts a study by Fernandez (2007), which was the same except for the target language was Spanish. Culman, Henry, and VanPatten postulate that these results could be due to the nature and complexity of German. The authors credit explicit instruction as an enabler for learners to appropriately identify German accusative forms.

Reaction

The authors claim that language learners will attempt to use English rules when learning German and therefore require explicit instruction in grammar. In my teaching philosophy, my preferred method of grammar instruction avoids frequent explicit instruction. However, because language learners can confuse SVO and OVS structures, it is wise to weave some explicit instruction into communicative lessons. From this study I have learned that I must recognize when students are struggling with communication because of a lack of control of grammar and I must be prepared

to address those struggles by means that may not be part of my standard teaching repertoire.

Chavez, M. (2011). German grammar in the students' words: The essentialization of German grammar by American college-level learners. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German*, 44(2), 83-97.

Summary

In her literature review, Chavez investigates traditional opinions on how German is taught. She discusses that previous research concentrated on core grammar in order for students to learn to speak German “correctly”. Students who enroll in German courses are also frequently of this opinion. When a potential German learner contemplates enrolling in a German course, most pre-conceptions about the language are that German is hard and the grammar is difficult. Other pre-conceptions are that German can be equated to English, and that the rules that govern German are similar enough to English that learning German could be simple.

Chavez’s surveys German language learners about their opinions of how English and German are similar or dissimilar. More than half of the participants reported comparing English to German. Participants commonly commented on word order, morphology, and complexity of grammar. Word order accounted for the majority of problems that language learners have with German. Morphology confused language learners because they were unable to “recognize the essential difference[s] between German and English.” Language learners also reported struggles with case. Chavez postulates that disregard for case encourages imagined

similarities between the two languages. Last, language learners describe general worry about German, that they are consumers of the language, do not actually use the language, and in order to speak German one must “play by the rules”.

Reaction

This article is indispensable in understanding what L2 learners are experiencing when learning German. It is critical that I understand the perceptions of my German language students and aid them to overcome difficulties when learning German. Even though I have encountered similar language learning struggles, my memory of them has dimmed over time. Therefore, remembering the frustration that these struggles cause, continually assessing my teaching effectiveness, evaluating current language learner difficulties, and recognizing when students are equating German to English will create learning environments in which German is readily acquired. In addition to being aware of students’ struggles, teaching German language learners about SLA can assist in overcoming language comparing. A lesson learned from Chavez’s article is that language learning and teaching is about the students, it is about becoming aware of the students’ needs, and it is about addressing those needs.

O’Brien, M.G. (2004). Pronunciation matters. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 37(10), 1-9.

Summary

O’Brien conducted a study with American students and investigated their accents as they were learning German. She focused on the prosodic features of

pronunciation: stress, rhythm, intonation, and how native-like the students' German pronunciation became throughout the study. O'Brien researched which features a native German-speaker concentrates on when listening to students of German, and what factors promote native-like pronunciation. Raters, who were native speakers of German, rated if speech from students of German sounded native or foreign. O'Brien observed that raters concentrated on stress, rhythm, and intonation rather than individual word pronunciation. O'Brien argues that pronunciation should be given more weight than grammar when learning a language. At the end of the article she calls for training in pronunciation and a request for the ACTFL guidelines and OPI evaluations to include pronunciation as an indicator of how well a learner can function in the L2.

Reaction

I find it interesting that O'Brien uses pronunciation as a guide to determine language learner output quality. I view her claims as valid in exploring communication in the L2 because her evidence suggests that a native speaker will pay more attention to the accent, including stress, rhythm and intonation, rather than grammar or individual word pronunciation. I find this article an interesting addition to sociolinguistic and strategic competency development theories. O'Brien prompts me to ask: Is it possible that the quality of L2 output will increase as the learner's accent is developed? If so, could this be applied to increase a learner's sociolinguistic competence and acceptance by the TL community? Such acceptance may produce quicker strategic implementation and responses by the student,

because communication would not be inhibited by embarrassment from an accent in the L2.

Hall, C. (2003). *Modern German pronunciation: An introduction for speakers of English*, (2nd ed). New York: Manchester University Press.

Summary

Hall provides a comprehensive guide to German phonology. He begins by explaining that pronunciation varies because of regional, social, and individual preferences. Variations and standard pronunciations are addressed and their phonological distinctions discussed. The organs of the mouth are described in detail, with explanations on which parts of the mouth are used for specific speech sounds. Each letter, sound, and phoneme of the German language is described according to standard German pronunciation. A concise description of plosives, fricatives, nasals, lateral, affricates, and vowels, both monophthong and diphthongs along with nasal vowels, is provided. Next, Hall addresses native-like pronunciation under the tone groups and tone structure of words and sentences. He concludes with pronunciation differences between formal and conversational speech.

Hall offers an explanation why an English speaker would have difficulty with German vowels despite the vowels appearing similar in print compared to English. He provides assistance for speakers of standard British English and standard American English.

Reaction

Hall's explanations of German phonology provide clear instruction for German learners to fine-tune pronunciation. The information in this book is an asset for me in teaching all German learners of various proficiency levels, however, for beginners, I believe German phonology should be taught in small quantities as not to frustrate students. Based on current research and my own experience, I find that students of German commonly become frustrated with German phonology because they attempt to compare English to German. With help from Hall's pronunciation guide, German phonology becomes clearer for students to understand. German students can also develop competency in regional accents and acceptable pronunciation of new vocabulary.

Belz, J.A., & Kinginger, C. (2003). Discourse options and the development of pragmatic competence by classroom learners of German: The case of address forms. *Language Learning*, 53(4), 591-647.

Summary

Belz and Kinginger investigate German formal (V) and informal (T) forms of address. The authors attempt to define exactly when German correspondence and conversation require V and T pronouns. The authors define two sociolinguistic systems within German address forms. The first system assumes “deference and hierarchy”. This means that V-forms are the default form, or unmarked, signifying power differences, and T-forms are marked signifying intimacy. However, in the

second system, V-forms signify non-membership. The second system treats T-forms as unmarked, functioning as the default form.

Belz and Kinginger's study on language learners' German V and T pronoun use asks participants to engage in communication with expert-speaking German peers through emails and synchronous chat. The first segment of correspondence required the exchange of personal information in order to establish a social foundation. During the second segment, speakers conversed about books and films supplied for the study as a topic of discussion. During the electronic correspondence, novice German-speakers received explicit instruction from expert German-speakers on the appropriate use of T- and V-pronouns. Novice German-speakers would notice inappropriate V usage and switch to T pronouns. German-speakers were not observed using V pronouns during conversations. However, novice German-speakers erred on the side of caution and would revert to V pronouns when they were unsure of appropriate pragmatic requirements. Belz and Kinginger determined that T-forms are not an indicator of familiarity, rather an indicator for similar age, belonging to the same group, and as a softener for becoming acquainted with someone. The authors viewed their results as contradictory to traditional formal address instruction in textbooks.

Reaction

German learners usually become acquainted with formal address early in language programs, however, according to Belz and Kinginger, the information provided in beginner textbooks may not always agree with real-world application. In order for students of German to be considered by German-speakers as

socioculturally competent, appropriate use of V and T pronouns is crucial.

Appropriate usage of V and T in German is an example of how language and culture should be taught together. When teaching German, I should address not only the linguistics of German, but also how to function within German culture. When teaching formal address, I should make instruction explicit, and provide opportunities for students to practice with native speakers of German.

Looking Forward

Looking Forward

The MSLT program has enabled me to pursue a career in the second language education community. I look forward to a career with study abroad programs. I believe that my training in the MSLT program has best enabled me to help aspiring language students to learn new languages, experience new cultures, and become part of the global community. Although a career in study abroad programs is not directly a teaching position, I will be part of the language learning experience. Therefore, it is vital that I continue to research current practices in second language acquisition. Keeping up to date in second language research will enable me to recognize and provide the finest study abroad programs that offer appropriate language learning instruction available to study abroad students. In addition to keeping current in second language research, I would like to continue learning foreign languages. I believe that the more languages I know, the greater asset I will be for developing additional program opportunities for study abroad students.

My goals for continued professional development will be made possible through subscriptions to professional publications such as journals, website information, and newsletters. I can also stay current through my local university's SLA databases. Continuing my education in foreign languages will be accomplished by three primary means: first, I will enroll in my local university's language programs; second, I will seek out community language programs; and third, I will pursue opportunities to study and travel abroad.

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