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Articles

General Information

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The Role of Motivation in Language Learning

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This article provides a literature review that illustrates the importance of the role of motivation in learning in general and in language teaching and learning in particular. It elaborates on the various factors and conditions that affect learners' goals, and articulates the importance of various ways to enhance and sustain motivation. Dörnyei's (2003) suggestions are used as a framework for increasing motivation in the classroom while emphasizing that as teachers we should choose topics that are relevant to the learners' interests and to which they can relate on a personal level, such as culture, politics and social issues. I propose that following this framework in the classroom will contribute to, enhance, and sustain learner motivation.

The topic of learner motivation and its effect on the language learning process has been an important area of research in the second language acquisition (SLA) field. The desire to learn another language, and the interest and effort put forth throughout the process of achieving that goal constitute what can be described as motivation.

According to Dörnyei (2003), researchers have investigated how motivation affects different aspects of learning, including how material is taught (see the section about Maintaining and Protecting Motivation), learner interest in classroom tasks, and the methods used by teachers. Researchers have also considered how the teacher's own personality, and, teaching style, and the learners' cohesiveness as a class affect learning.

The following pages will shed light on what this body of literature provides concerning the importance of motivation in the process of language learning. This article will examine motivation in learning and then expand the discussion of the role of motivation in language learning and teaching. It will further discuss the different ways in which we can assess and then sustain learners' motivation, by employing awareness-raising activities, improving the classroom atmosphere, or encouraging learners to evaluate, regulate, and sustain their own motivation.

Motivation in Learning

Types of Motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that student motivation when learning a second language (L2) is a different kind of motivation from that of learning in general. They claim that to acquire a language, learners not only need to be motivated but they also need to engage with people of the target culture and learn their style of speech. They see a distinction between integrative and instrumental motivations. Showing an interest in the target language community is an example of the former and attempting to reach financial goals is an example of the latter.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), *intrinsic motivation* is present when a person has a natural, internal need to feel good about what they are doing, to feel socially satisfied as a part of their environment, and to feel autonomous. The authors state that rewards for an intrinsically motivated person "are inherent in the activity, and even though there may be secondary gains, the primary motivators are the spontaneous, internal experiences that accompany the behavior" (p. 11). They follow by suggesting that "the intrinsic needs for competence and self-determination motivate an ongoing process of seeking and attempting to conquer optimal challenges" (p. 32). For language learners, having a sense of accomplishment can bring great satisfaction when knowing that one's own investment in learning an L2 can be so rewarding. For example, the following quotation is from a former student at Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) :

> The opportunity to converse with somebody in Hebrew opens up before you. Being able to do that boosts your confidence…you can say 'Hey, I conversed with an instructor over one or two themes, and weeks ago I didn't even want to think of those topics in English.' To think I can do it in Hebrew is just unbelievable. (Hebrew student, personal communication, April 22, 2007)

This example supports William's (1997) argument that "individuals possess an innate drive towards mastery, which differs from the need to achieve, in that mastery involves succeeding in a task for its own sake, whereas a need to achieve entails succeeding in order to be better than other people" (p. l29). For language learners, a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction can result when they begin to see signs of mastery after investing so much in learning an L2. As shown above, intrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that will lead learners to success and help students' progress in learning the target language and culture. Next, is a discussion of extrinsic motivation, which, though it may help the learner achieve his/her goals and acquire the language, is different from intrinsic motivation in that it has different components that help the learner focus on learning the language as a mean to an end (Ushioda, 2008).

Extrinsic motivation, as described by Deci and Ryan (1985), is when a learner's actions take place in order to achieve something as a means to an end. Examples of extrinsic motivation include external factors such as the expectations of the workplace, society, family members, the culture in which one lives, and the rewards that are offered in return for achievement of a desired goal. Kamada (1987) argues that when learners have extrinsic motivation and the focus is on the end product and external rewards, they often do not invest in the learning process as much as students with intrinsic motivation. Learners with extrinsic motivation often take shortcuts by not using all the information they learn, and by doing so do not develop good learning strategies that will help them progress in the language. When focusing on the final goal and doing only the minimum needed to achieve it, learners often rush the process and thus may not retain what they have learned. An example of such a goal for DLIFLC students would be to a attain Level Two in Listening on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).

Learners' interest in acquiring a target language is uneven: some learners show a little interest in it, whereas others express a much deeper interest. Gardner (1985) argues that the primary reason people learn an L2 is to become members of a community. *Integrative motivation*, as mentioned earlier, is one in which the learners desire to interact and become members of the new community. To do this, learners have to adapt to and respect the new culture and identify themselves with the community and its members. In essence, the learners' liking of the target culture and its people in turn increases their desire to learn and speak the language, which is what Gardner and Lambert (1972) describe as "personal growth" (i.e., integrative motivation).

While the difference between these two types of motivation may seem clear, van Lier (1996b) argues that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are processes that begin separately and eventually become one force. For example, a DLIFLC student may ask to learn a certain language (such as Spanish) because they like the sound of the language or learn another language (such as Farsi). In such instances, their initial motivation is intrinsic. However, once learners begin their studies, their intrinsic motivation may merge with extrinsic motivation (as they can see the future benefits to their military and civilian career as well as the reward of helping their country). Such was the case with a former Hebrew student of mine, who, after he got out of the service, ended up working as a civilian utilizing the language skills he acquired at the Institute. As this example illustrates, van Lier's argument that the two processes can become intertwined is evident in this example as well as in other examples one can see in the DLIFLC classroom.

As discussed above, there are many factors that influence student motivation. The following section will elaborate on the role of different motivating factors in language learning and teaching.

Role of Motivation in Language Learning and Teaching

To help instructors understand how to use motivation in the classroom, Dörnyei (2003) devised a four-dimensional framework of motivational practices for teachers. These four dimensions are:

1. Creating the basic motivational conditions;
2. Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation;
3. Maintaining and protecting motivations;
4. Generating initial motivation.

The sections that follow will draw from the literature to outline different ways in which teachers can incorporate Dörnyei's four dimensions into their classrooms.

Creating the Basic Motivational Conditions

The first of Dörnyei's (2003) four dimensions ensures that teachers seek to create a positive learning environment in the classroom. The classroom should be a place where students can learn in groups and collaborate. Being in a supportive environment can impact learners' motivation to communicate and explore in the language in order to achieve communicative competence. How connected students feel to the language will determine their desire to keep working toward becoming proficient in the language and integrated in the culture. The classroom environment and the activities learners participate in can further influence how hard learners will work.

Regarding motivation and classroom atmosphere, Lightbown and Spada (1999) suggest that the classroom should be an environment in which students enjoy learning and the material taught meets their needs: In such an environment, "… [where] the learning goals are challenging yet manageable and clear, and where the atmosphere is supportive and non-threatening, we can make a positive contribution to students' motivation to learn" (p. 57).

Dörnyei and Clément (2001) argue that the ideal classroom environment is one where the teacher has good rapport with the students, the students have a good relationship with each other, learners feel safe and are tolerant of each other's differences, and there is humor as a tool to further improve the atmosphere. Dörnyei adds that it is not only the psychological aspect of the classroom that is important—the physical space of a classroom also makes a difference in how comfortable the learners feel. At the DLIFLC such an appropriate physical environment is provided as we hold small classes of six students on average and allow a spacious and comfortable setup for the learners to explore the language as well as have room to move around, and work in groups.

Dörnyei (2003) asserts that the quality of activities instructors choose also has an effect on the classroom atmosphere and can make a considerable difference in the attitudes of the students. It is important for teachers to design lessons that are reflective of real life in order for the learners to absorb new information. In such lessons we teachers can provide a sense of how fun, interesting, and different our language and culture can be, and by so doing generate an internal desire in the learners to learn more about them.

Encouraging Positive Retrospective Self-Evaluation

The second of Dörnyei's (2003) dimensions encourages instructors to provide learners with appropriate feedback and establish a grading and reward system as a motivating factor to perform, invest, and promote motivational attributes. Although one may not agree with Dörnyei's approach to forcing extrinsic motivation on students (as opposed to helping them discover the inner power that feeling intrinsically motivated about a language can provide), in some cases, such as with DLIFLC students, creating extrinsic conditions may indeed make a difference. The teacher's hope in these cases is that in the process of completing the class, some learners will discover the internal satisfaction of personal achievement.

The degree and level of a student's motivation can even vary within the time frame of one lesson. Dörnyei (2003) argues that "learners tend to demonstrate a fluctuating level of commitment within a single lesson, and the variation in their motivation over a long time period (e.g., a whole academic term) can be dramatic" (p. 17). This phenomenon is one that I have observed with Hebrew students at the DLIFLC. For example, if a teacher enters the class with the separation fence (Israeli West Bank barrier fence) as the lesson lead-in topic and tells students that they are going to form debate groups to discuss this topic. This teacher finds that the students are excited and motivated to take part in a discussion related to world events and daily news. However, halfway through the lesson, as discussion of the issue continues and students encounter new words (many of which require a grammatical explanation), the flow of the lesson might change, and some students might lose interest in the topic, thereby losing their motivation to participate. At times, the topic and the flow of the lesson may work for some students and not for others. One way to try and prevent this problem from happening is to help the learner find the activities in the lessons to which they can relate the most (or the one from which they feel they benefit the most) and focus on those activities. A teacher should then allow those particular students to work at their own pace if it means that they will not lose interest in the topic, and thereby not lose their motivation to invest in learning the language.

Dörnyei (2003) argues that the best way to observe these kinds of situations, the "ups and downs" in a learner's interest in the L2, is to have a better understanding of at what stage the learner is in the learning process. Where the learner sees him/herself in the process with regard to reaching his/her goal is what Dörnyei calls *temporal awareness* (p. 18). He proposes that a process model of motivation that is composed of three segments that all describe what the learner hopes for, leads the learner to specific goals that are then enacted and accomplished as the final part of the process. The first segment is the *Practical Stage*, which is when a learner generates motivation. This segment can also be referred to as *choice motivation,* because it is here that the learner selects particular goals/tasks to pursue. The second, or *Actional Stage*, is when motivation needs to be kept alive while the learner is actively engaged in a particular task. This can happen in the classroom, which often contains external distracting factors in the environment surrounding the learners such as peers, comments made by classmates or the teacher, the learner's own mental distractions, and/or stress about the task itself. The third, or *Postactional Stage*, involves the completion of the action and refers to the learner's self-evaluation of the process. In this phase, learners review their experience and evaluate how it went identifying which activities they took part in and how those activities provided motivation. In the example of the separation wall lesson, learners can reflect on the outcome of the lesson and what they believe did not work for them in relation to maintaining their interest and understanding the material. By the second semester of the course, learners are able to reflect on lessons and provide feedback on what they like or dislike in a lesson plan. Some teachers are open to this kind of feedback and use it to reassess their teaching methods and/or curriculum design. In my experience, any constructive criticism from students that I felt would benefit the overall success of the class and was within my ability to implement was welcomed. Once learners are able to review the outcomes of their learning experience in a particular unit or lesson, the teacher then can note these reflections, and evaluate with the students after the lesson what could have been done differently to prevent future barriers to success. At the same time, the teacher will also reflect with learners who chose to do independent work as they realize how and why they are losing interest, and whether they benefited more from working on their own as a result of feeling lost or disinterested in the lesson. In my experience, allotting time for these types of reflections (which can take from as little as the 10 minutes' break time between lessons, to as long as an office hour) does provide the instructors with in-depth insight into what they need to do to tailor a particular learner's instruction. By showing learners that we as teachers are willing to devote time and effort to address their individual needs, learners feel that their needs are validated, which, in turn, may recharge their motivation during the course.

Self-Regulation and Agency

As with the energy to do anything else in life, one's motivation to learn an L2 can decrease unless either the learner, or those around that learner, find ways of sustaining it and staying involved in the activity. Ushioda (2008) argues that for learners to sustain motivation in their language learning they need to acquire certain skills and strategies to help them stay on track. There are several ways of sustaining motivation, such as setting short-term goals/targets, carrying out self-motivated discussions, setting a self-reward system for achievements, organizing and learning productive time management, and employing strategies for multitasking. Going through these type of processes in order to help sustain motivation require the use of various strategies such as "self-motivating strategies" (Dörnyei, 2001b), "affective learning strategies" (Oxford, 1999), "affective strategies" and (Oxford, 1999), "efficacy management" (Wolters, 2003), and "effective motivational thinking" (Ushioda, 1996, as cited in Ushioda 2008, p. 26). For example, in order to encourage students to use these strategies, a teacher must have the knowledge of what each strategy can offer in order to help the learners evaluate their experiences in order to improve, adapt or change the way they assess themselves, and succeed. Helping students believe that they can accomplish a task, and that they have the ability to do so, is one way of implementing Ushioda's effective motivational thinking. I have often sat with students in my office and helped them find the different patterns for positive thinking that help them change their attitude about their learning habits and by doing so have helped them believe in themselves. By setting goals for themselves, they increased their confidence, and they became motivated to continue their learning.

Sustaining Student Motivation

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) point to three important areas related to motivation in the classroom. The first area is "motivating students into the lesson," which concerns how an instructor starts a lesson and the transitions from lesson to lesson influences student interest in specific activities within each lesson.

The second area includes the various tasks, activities, and materials that are used when preparing a lesson. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) argue that it is important to change the routine and format of lesson plans to increase the attention level and decrease boredom in the classroom. Providing rich and varied types of activities and tasks will also increase the level of interest in learning, which means increasing motivation as well.

The third area pointed out by Crookes and Schmidt is the use of cooperative learning activities rather than setting competitive goals for learners. When given cooperative activities, students have opportunities to collaborate in solving a task or completing an assignment and realize the importance of their role in the activity's completion, thereby increasing their self-confidence and motivation. However, it has been my experience that, often, an instructor will have to decide on whether to use competitive activities (such as word games) or collaborative activities (such as creating a project or working on a cultural presentation in groups), depending on the dynamic of the classroom and the type of learners (e.g., introverts, extroverts), and the makeup of the class.

Since sustaining and/or increasing learners' language motivation can be a difficult task for both learners and teachers, developing the skills to regulate one's motivation as previously discussed is an important and crucial element of the process. McCombs (1994) argues that when teachers provide positive, productive, supportive feedback, learners are ensured opportunities to reflect on their learning process and to use what they have learned to continue improvement. An instructor can help by guiding students through their self-reflection and evaluation of their learning process, experience, and achievements (Ushioda, 1996, as cited in Ushioda, 2008). The idea is to bring learners to see themselves as independent thinkers and to believe in their ability to do well not only on a daily basis but also to believe that they will achieve the knowledge required to help them succeed on the DLPT. This is what McCombs calls the social-interactive support system. Learners learn to identify and analyze problems as they encounter them and then follow by taking positive steps to address these problems. This is another way in which a teacher can help learners believe that they are in control of their learning. The teacher can include the learner when making decisions about the curriculum, and syllabus, thereby allowing the students to feel included in the process in order to support their initiative and motivation.

When a learner feels that he/she will be successful in learning, setting a positive frame of mind will predict their motivation level. In my classroom, I have seen motivation increase when students see that they are improving in a course, when they are "getting it" and things start to make more sense. However, I have also seen and worked with highly motivated students who came to class motivated and determined to do well; in spite of having difficulties with the process and needing extra help, they had a tremendous level of investment in the learning process. This perseverance and motivation helped them succeed. There are cases in which students come motivated, yet after a certain period of time in the course they find that learning a language is much more difficult than they previously thought and, therefore, they lose their motivation due to lack of performance on the weekly quizzes or monthly exams. These students need instructors to go the extra mile by attending to their individual needs and helping them figure out the best learning strategies to help them regain trust in themselves, in the learning process, and in their initial personal goals. By helping the learner figure out what works best for him or her to learn daily and feel a sense of accomplishment with every new word, a teacher helps the learner rebuild his/her motivation.

Maintaining and Protecting Motivation

Dörnyei's third dimension promotes finding ways to maintain learners' motivation. One way to do that is by designing stimulating and fun lessons, setting goals for students, helping learners build their self-confidence and self-esteem, promoting learner autonomy, and encouraging students to work together as a group and help each other. Lessons should be designed in such a way that the learners can try to imagine themselves in a given situation in the target country while doing a task. The activities in the lesson should attempt to support this dimension by allowing the learners to have fun imagining a particular activity as part of their daily life. The activities should also incorporate skills important for the job the learners will do once they graduate (i.e., focusing on listening and making meaning of new information, where learners discover that they can use their language skills to function in a productive way both in their assigned jobs and possibly in the target language community). Such activities allow learners to utilize their knowledge of new vocabulary in the real world by immersing themselves in the culture and negotiating with members of the target community. Lessons should also be designed to generate the drive that exists in the learner that they have not yet necessarily discovered in relation to language learning. When learners discover that they can achieve autonomy as they progress in the language and in their learning strategies, and once they are able to achieve communicative language teaching which focuses on meaning in interaction (Canale and Swain, 1980), learners are then able to feel autonomous, which will eventually serve to further motivate them. Simple topics like food, money, and people are essential elements of daily life and survival in any culture, and are thus included in lessons in the DLIFLC's first-semester programs. Well designed lessons on these topics can guide learners to find an inner desire to be able to express themselves in the language, learn the customs of native speakers, and understand cultural etiquette.

Generating Initial Motivation

The fourth and last of Dörnyei's (2003) dimensions encourages teachers to find ways to help initiate learner motivation by enhancing attitudes toward the target culture, encouraging the drive toward success, pushing learners to achieve learning goals, creating authentic and relevant curricula, and helping learners figure out their personal beliefs about learning. To accomplish these ends a teacher needs to get to know the learners when they first arrive at the department. The following example illustrates one way of enhancing learners' attitudes toward the target culture. While teaching in the Hebrew department several years ago, at the start of each new class, my colleague and I wrote 10 to 15 personal names in Hebrew on the Smart Board for the students to choose from (a long time practice in the Hebrew department). The idea was for students to start from that moment to build an identity in the language. (Having a name, can be a powerful way to begin the construction of an identity. Usually the students, my colleague and I agreed that once they start the program, they will use their Hebrew name only). After the learners chose a name I spent an hour individually with each student getting to know them, asking them to tell me about who they were before they became a Hebrew learner. I wanted to know about their learning habits, learning skills (strengths and weakness) and what the best way for them to learn was. I asked them whether they were visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. (I often had to explain what these terms meant or give them written material to read so that they could acquaint themselves with the different types of learning styles). I also asked the students to tell me anything about themselves that would help me make productive and intelligent choices for how to help them. Building lessons around culture and offering numerous opportunities for learners to use the target language throughout the duration of the course is a way to enhance motivation and reinforce appreciation of the culture and the language.

Conclusion

All learners young and old have some type of motivation that drives them toward the goals they are trying to achieve. Having a better understanding of learners' motivation in learning language can help instructors be better prepared to help students in the classroom and find tools that help them increase their motivation. Exploring motivation as a long-term goal allows us to look at the extent of learners' motivation in the classroom, their willingness to communicate, their investment in the learning process, and how each of these factors can influence one's degree of motivation when learning an L2. Teachers should endeavor to maximize students' investment in their own language learning in as many ways as possible.

From the moment learners walk into the classroom until the course is over, educators should ensure that the learners will walk away feeling they know how to negotiate in the target language on different levels (starting, for example, with simple vocabulary used for basic survival skills to having an understanding of facts and more concrete topics). Learners can work with their peers to foster confidence, assess and help each other, and feel good and valued in the process of collaboration. Each class the learner attends during the course should leave the learner with a sense of community in the classroom and provide an opportunity to work with friends who share both language identity as well as an understanding of the effort and investment each person brings to the table. When the learner walks away from a year's work feeling confident and wanting to know more about the culture and the language, good about working with friends, and proud to report on accomplishments to parents and friends, s/he will feel empowered. The learner will feel the desire to learn a new language and the knowledge that s/he is able to accomplish a goal once s/he sets his/her mind to it and believes she or he can do it. The learner will know how it feels to accomplish a task that involves using the target language. When a learner feels accomplished and proud, a sense of belonging is reinforced as the learner knows s/he earned the knowledge. Ultimately, the learner will walk away better ready to continue on his/her language journey.

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Incorporating Task-Based Language Instruction into Curriculum
Issues and Classroom Applications

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Asian School One

This article features an overview and practical application of Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). The author first discusses the potential role of TBLI in the midst of curriculum changes at DLIFLC. Next, the author presents TBLI in response to certain questions and concerns raised by the foreign language teachers who attended the 20-hour TBLI workshops at DLIFLC in 2008. [1] *Their concerns were mainly about the definitions and applications of TBLI (i.e., what, how, why). This article is an attempt to address these concerns.*

Given that both drill-type exercises and tasks have their own advantages in foreign language learning process, the author proposes tailored-instructional strategies that successfully combine the best of both traditional teaching methods[2] *and TBLI. The author's goal is to provide a framework for faculty to help learners to simultaneously achieve communicative effectiveness*[3] *and mastery of linguistic skills.*

For the past few years, DLIFLC faculty and staff have made various attempts to improve learners' proficiency in foreign languages. These attempts aimed at reducing class sizes, requiring higher-aptitude entry scores,hiring more faculty, updating curricula, improving faculty training, and upgrading classroom technologies (DLIFLC, 2007*)*.[4] *Proficiency Enhancement Program* (*PEP*) and the *4 + 2* Curriculum (*4+2C*) were created as a result of these attempts.[5] The main goals of *PEP* are to reduce class size and teacher-learners ratios to ensure individualized and tailored instruction. The *4+2*C allows learners to take two hours of instruction per afternoon of their choice to apply and practice what they learned in the previous classes using authentic materials and intensive skill-focused activities (DLIFLC, 2007, p. 15).

Both *PEP* and *4+2*C were developed to help learners to move toward the raised proficiency goals with the implementation of the 5th version of Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). These requirements call for *2+* in listening, *2+* in reading, and *2* in speaking. Following introduction of DLPT5 in January 2007, there has been a growing recognition among teachers and staff that de-contextualized drills and exercises that focus on discrete linguistic features may not be sufficient to push learners to the higher levels of language proficiency. This surge towards proficiency-oriented curriculum has encouraged teachers to conduct individualized and learner-centered lessons using their own materials. Consequently, teachers create, select, or adapt materials to assist learners in their functional language needs.

Alongside this mantra, the concept of TBLI has been introduced and implemented across schools as an additional or alternative instructional method to push learners to the higher levels of language proficiency in all skill areas. The linguistic, cognitive, and interactional dimensions of tasks are particularly emphasized as core proficiency elements of teaching effectiveness in the pre-service and in-service teacher training courses at DLIFLC. These tasks focus on meaningful communication, higher-order thinking skills, and learner-centered activities.

Literature Review

In recent years, TBLI has gained popularity in the field of second and foreign language teaching. Ellis (2003) and Prabhu (1987) state that this method is based on the use of a communicative graded-task syllabus. According to Terrell (1982), TBLI keeps learners motivated, engaged, and interested. Brandl (2007), Ellis (2003), Pica (2005), Ridder et al. (2007), Willis and Willis (2007) have argued that TBLI improves learners' language production, automaticity, and retention.

With its focus on communicative aspects of language use, TBLI classroom activities are designed to help learners practice and use language through a variety of learner-centered activities relevant to real-life communication. Within the TBLI framework, learners are exposed to a variety of meaning-focused language messages, which can be "integrated into existing mental structures, retrieved and manipulated, and reapplied in other contexts" (Brandl, 2007, p. 183). Mackey (1999), Samuda and Bygate (2008) state that, from interactional perspectives, tasks are known to generate a considerable amount of learner talk during negotiation for meaning through interaction and participation. From cognitive perspectives, Nunan (1989) posits that tasks require learners to comprehend, manipulate, and produce information in order to reach expected outcomes. According to Ehrman (1996), this process enables language learners to process information at a deeper level, which, in turn, leads them to long-term learning. Learners' performance on the task is evaluated and monitored through both the process and the final observable outcome that they produce, rather than through discrete testing items that require short-term memory to extract nothing more than factual information from the text.

Recently, an increasing volume of research on TBLI have investigated learner performance in relation to task complexity (Bygate, 2001; Lynch & Maclean, 2001; Robinson, 2001), task familiarity (Plough & Gass, 1993), task repetition (Bygate, 1996, 2001; Bygate & Samuda, 2005; Lynch & Maclean, 2001), task types (Foster & Skehan, 1996), and task structure (Ortega, 2005; Skehan & Foster, 1999). The findings from these studies offer valuable insights on how to design and sequence tasks for different levels of learners within the TBLI framework in order to increase the amount of interaction and improve the quality of linguistic performance in the target language.

The Place of TBLI in DLIFLC

Faculty Development Division (FD) has been offering a five-day TBLI workshop for the teachers since February 2008 to promote comprehensive understanding and implementation of TBLI. Through discussions and activities in the workshops, teachers gain an appreciation and full understanding of TBLI. Cobb and Lovick (2007) emphasize that a task is not merely any activity that involves speaking or pair/group work nor an unrelated element to the lessons in the course. They also demonstrate ways of implementing of TBLI into target language curricula.

On the other hand, there are two issues that call for further research at the Institute. First, TBLI's seemingly exclusive focus on communicative aspects of language learning is, at a first glance, incompatible with accomplishing the DLIFLC mission—to train military linguists to be competent in multiple skill areas (e.g., reading, listening, and speaking). Second, DLIFLC still has no empirical evidence suggesting the relative effectiveness of TBLI over other approaches in terms of learner learning outcomes (measured by unit tests or DLPTs).

It should be noted, however, that what is crucial for learning language is the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in reaching the outcome (Ellis, 2003), and that the process of learners' manifestation of their inter-languages in performing activities needs to be taken into consideration. In this aspect, we cannot disregard the role of TBLI in accelerating this process by motivating learners and keeping them engaged in sustained interaction with peers in foreign language classrooms. Samuda and Bygate (2008) posit that tasks may serve "greater potential for flexibility in ways of introducing and exploiting the pedagogic focus of a task" (p. 61). They describe tasks in task-supported learning environment, within which they can be "used flexibly in different ways depending on purpose, setting and context" (p. 60) as tools to enrich syllabus and to provide additional or alternative learning opportunities for language learners.

Task-Supported Language Instruction (TSLI) is known to be a weak version of Communicative Language Teaching (Ellis, 2003). Tasks within the TSLI framework are used to provide free practice in the use of specific linguistic features that have been previously presented and practiced in a series of controlled activities (Ellis, 2003). Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) lesson plan format that is currently used in both Instructor Certification Course (ICC) and Instructor Recertification Course (IRC) at the Institute reflects the typical model of TSLI. Within the PPP lesson plan framework, tasks are implemented flexibly at the teacher's discretion after learners acquire and practice new language concepts through controlled activities in the previous phases of the lesson. In this way, teachers move learners gradually from controlled exercises to tasks, promoting autonomous use of new language features/concepts they learn.

The Purpose of the Article

The purpose of this article is to provide guidelines for successful use of TBLI at DLIFLC. For this, I would like to first introduce concepts and applications of TBLI Secondly, I would like to explore whether, and if so, how TBLI could become a powerful instructional tool to ensure a balanced development of the linguistic and communicative skills (Ellis, 2000) needed to fulfill both DLIFLC course requirements and job-related missions outside of the Institute for the military linguists.

In order to explore the role and application of TBLI at DLIFLC, one overarching question is posed: How can TBLI be incorporated into the existing curriculum to enrich learning?' In order to delve into this issue further, I would like to address some concerns and questions about TBLI raised by the teachers who attended the TBLI workshops in 2008.

Addressing Questions and Concerns

Since the TBLI workshop was initiated in February, 2008, for the DLIFLC teachers, there were seven iterations of the workshop in the year. One of the activities on the first day of the workshop was to ask the teachers to write three concerns or questions regarding TBLI. Those concerns were re-visited and re-discussed on the last day of the workshop to see whether all or some of these concerns were resolved. A majority of the concerns raised by the teachers were related to the following three questions:

•*What?* (which relates to clarifying the concept of tasks)
•*How?* (which relates to material design/development using TBLI)
•*Why?* (which relates to doubt about and/or resistance to the effectiveness of TBLI from both personal and institutional levels).

I will discuss each of these concerns in more detail vis-à-vis the concepts and classroom applications of TBLI in the following sections.

What is a Task?

The most fundamental concerns about TBLI were related to the question of *what?* Even though teachers were briefly introduced to the concept of TBLI through pre-service and in-service teacher training courses, a large number of teachers still did not have a clear concept of tasks within TBLI (Evans, 1996). The concept of task has been refined and elaborated for decades by many researchers in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996). First, Prabhu's (1987) conceptualization of tasks as "an activity which requires learners *to arrive at an outcome* from given information *through some process of thought"* (p. 24) emphasizes cognitive and goal-oriented aspect of a task. Next, Nunan's (1989) definition of a task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in *comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language* while their attention is principally *focused on meaning rather than form…* (p.10)" focuses on cognitive and meaning-focused nature of a task. Later, Skehan (1998) includes two additional features of a task--*problem solving and real life relevance*--in his definition of a task.

Consolidating the earlier definitions of a task from different researchers, Ellis (2003) conceptualized a task in terms of six criteria: a work plan; a primary focus on meaning; real-world processes of language use; a use of any of the four-language skills; cognitive process; a clearly defined communicative outcome (p. 9-10). Most recently, Samuda and Bygate (2008) define a task as "a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both" (p. 69).

In summary, a task is a goal-oriented activity involving linguistic, cognitive, and interactive dimensions that are different from an exercise in many ways. The following table presents the key characteristics of tasks and exercises, along with sample activities.

Table 1. How do tasks differ from exercises? Characteristics and sample activities

Exercises	**Tasks**
Characteristics	*Characteristics*
1. Focus on formal aspects of language	1.1.Focus on meaning/ information exchange
2. Requires Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS)	2.2. Requires Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTs)
3. Correct answer (s)	3.3. Observable outcome
4. Far from authentic	4.4. Authentic/real-life
5. Discrete skill focused	5.5. Skill integration
6. Look for right answers	6.6. Goal oriented work plan
7. Few rooms for negotiation of meaning	7.7. Rooms for negotiation of meaning
Sample Activities	*Sample Activities*
A. Read the automobile ads and put the key information (prices, bland names, colors, & types of the car) in the chart.	A.a. Read the automobile ads and choose 2-3 cars that you would like to buy the most and provide justification.
B. Read a news article and rewrite a passage in the future tense.	B.b. Read a news article and predict what will happen in the future.
C. Listen to the passage about a car accident and identify Essential Elements of Information(EEI) from the passage.	C.c. Listen to the passage about a car accident and come up with at least three suggestions on how this accident could have been prevented.
D. Review a train schedule to identify the departure/arrival time for a particular train.	D.d. Review a train schedule to decide options that best suit one's stated travel needs.
E. Listen to a weather forecast of several cities in Monterey area this weekend and put the key information (e.g., weather condition, temperature, etc.) in the chart.	E.e. Listen to a weather forecast of several cities in Monterey area this weekend and decide, in groups, which city to go and provide justification.
F. Read the text and trace the journey mentioned in the passage on the map.	F.f. Read the text and construct itineraries of 1 nights 2 day trip from descriptions of travel spots or from a statement of needs and time constraints.

As shown in Table 1, the activities on the left and right columns are juxtaposed under the two conceptual categories of exercises and tasks; the latter require different cognitive, linguistic, and interactional processing from the former. For example, the activities in the right column (tasks) require learners to perform tasks (Ellis, 2003) involving "goal setting, planning, conducting, and evaluating" (Oxford, 1990, p. 182) (6.6.). While carrying out the assigned activities, learners use higher-order thinking skills such as 'analyzing, evaluating, and/or creating information' (2.2.).[7] The activities require two or more skills (See 5.5., Table 1) and bear much resemblance to communication in real-life contexts (See 4.4., Table 1). Through meaningful exchange of information (1.1.) and negotiation of meaning (7.7.), learners are supposed to produce tangible outcome(s) at the end of the activity (3.3.).

When comparing and contrasting the sets of activities in both columns, it is evident that exercises and tasks are not two separate entities but are in a continuum. They can support each other to enrich learning. For example, teachers can first start with an exercise that emphasizes the surface level processing of information, followed by a task that requires learners to process the information at a higher level.

How? Task Design, Development, and Implementation

Once teachers are informed of the concepts and characteristics of tasks, the next step is to introduce TBLI into classroom instruction. The imminent challenge teachers may face using TBLI is regarding the question of "how"? How to design and implement tasks? Willis and Willis (2007) indicate that "a lack of time for preparing and doing tasks (p. 201)" is one of the biggest concerns among teachers in a TBLI classroom. The teachers who attended the previous TBLI workshops addressed the similar concerns. For teachers who have yet to develop tangible and specific task ideas, designing and implementing tasks targeting particular skill areas and different levels of learners may prove to be a daunting task. In fact, in the previous TBLI previous workshops, some teachers needed a school-wide TBLI materials pool from which they were able to pick relevant tasks to use or adapt for their own lessons. The following sections present sample design tips and alternative task ideas that teachers can apply to their classrooms.

Tweaking Exercises into Tasks from Current Textbook

The aforementioned concerns may have grown out of the perception that tasks are completely different from exercises; thus, teachers think they have to create brand new activities out of nothing. It should be noted, however, that many exercises can become tasks with a slight tweak, resulting in more purposeful and sustained interaction as follows.

Original Version (Exercise)

Step 1. Listen to six short narrations about routine activities. Identify the time of day when each takes place. Check the correct column in the grid.

	Morning (a.m.)	**Afternoon (p.m.)**	**Evening/night**
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
f.			

Step 2. Listen to each narration again focusing on time phrases containing "from…to." Identify the activity that takes place within each time period and the duration of each activity.

Activity	Duration
a. ____________________________	______________
b. ____________________________	______________
c. ____________________________	______________
d. ____________________________	______________
e. ____________________________	______________
f. ____________________________	______________

(Adapted from a Korean Textbook, DLIFLC, 1999*)*

As seen in the *Steps 1* and *2*, the learners are asked to listen to the passage and extract key information from the passage according to the instruction. The activities contain most of the exercise elements specified in *Table 1*. For example, the activity mainly focuses on form (i.e., focusing on capturing particular vocabulary words and grammatical features from the passage). Also, the activities require learners to remember, identify, and comprehend particular linguistic features and lexical items instead of having learners engage in creative and meaningful use of language. This activity, however, can be extended into a meaningful task with a slight tweak, as follows.

Extended Version (Task)

Step 3. Listen to six short sentences about routine activities and find the similarities and differences between their routines and yours. Put the information on Venn Diagram. In groups, compare your Venn diagram with others and choose one or two activities which are common among your group mates.

Beyond comprehending information in the passage, this activity requires learners to actively participate in meaningful exchange of information by comparing & analyzing the recorded information and creating new information. This activity can be conducted separately or in conjunction with the exercises (in steps 1 & 2) to facilitate deeper processing of information.

Comprehension Check Using Tasks

Another issue relating to task design/development/implementation through TBLI is regarding comprehension check - 'how to check learners' comprehension using TBLI?' Typically, teachers check learners' comprehension of reading or listening texts through various types of questions (e.g., content questions, yes-no questions, 'wh-'questions) or summarizing/gisting activities. These methods facilitate the surface processing of information by having learners extract both global meaning and supporting details from reading or listening texts. In many cases, however, the questions are taken from actual statements from the text, from which learners can simply locate and lift the information.

Brandl (2007) indicates the potential problems of 'wh-questions' (unless they are carefully designed) as follows. Brandl (2007, p. 335) writes; "Instead of demonstrating how ideas are connected within a text, learners end up merely copying isolated points of information. Whether learners have understood this information remains unclear."

The problems/limitations associated with '*wh..*' questions call for alternative methods to check learner comprehension at both surface and deeper levels. The following activities represent two different approaches to check learners' comprehension of a listening text about an accident.

Listening Script: Bus Accident (2004, July)

> **(Report)** The time of the accident was today at approximately 11:55 a.m. A bus carrying elementary learners who were on the way to visit Geumgang mountain overturned on Highway 44 at the entrance of Gangwon Province.
>
> Twelve-year-old Lee Ji-won from Gadong Elementary School in Seoul is one of the two who were severely injured in this accident, and 43 people including teachers were injured. They are now receiving medical treatment in the nearby hospitals.
>
> The field trip group consisted of Cub Scout members who are fifth and sixth graders. They were riding in six different buses and heading for Gosung in order to participate in the Unification Camp in Geumgang mountain for three days and two nights.
>
> It is reported that the bus in the accident hit a post on the Uhdoogyo Bridge, fell about one meter off the bridge, and then overturned. The police think the cause of the accident was that the driver dozed off, and they are investigating the exact details of the accident.

Activity 1
Comprehension check through 'wh-' and 'how' questions

1. Listen to the passage and answer the following information
   a. When did the accident happen? _________________
   b. Where did the accident happen? _________________
   c. How many casualties were reported in the accident? ___________________________________
   d. What was the cause of accident? _________________

2. Check your answers in groups/pairs.

Activity 2
Comprehension check through task-based activities

1. Listen to the passage and draw the picture of the accident scene.

2. In groups, come up with 3-4 prevention methods (regarding how the accident could have been prevented) based on the information in the passage. For example: The driver should have driven the car more cautiously when

passing the bridge.

3. Present your groups' findings.

4. Compare your groups' solution with others and vote for the best solution.

In *Activity 1*, *wh*-questions are used to check learners' comprehension. In general, these questions require learners to extract the essential elements of information from the passage. What learners are expected to do with these questions is to identify "strings of words from the text containing the answer to the questions" (Brandl, 2008, p. 335). The successful completion of this activity doesn't necessarily mean that the learners fully comprehend the passage and digested it through cognitive restructuring (Ehrman, 1996).

On the other hand, *Activity 2* enables learners to go beyond extracting factual information from the text to analyze, evaluate, and create information (e.g., analyze the text, evaluate the possible causes of the accident, and come up with preventive measures), and a full comprehension of the text is a prerequisite for the successful completion of an assigned task. *Activity 2* may be used alone, or in combination with activity 1 in order to bolster deeper processing of information.

Why? Dealing with Doubt and Resistance Associated with Iinstitutional Constraints

Another area of concern was related to the feeling of doubts and resistance from the teachers regarding the applicability and usefulness of TBLI. From personal perspectives, some experienced teachers who attended the TBLI workshops wondered why they should use TBLI when they felt that they were already successful with their own teaching methods. These teachers had already developed their own practical knowledge[8] (Ellis, 1998, see notes) of teaching which they used in both planned and improvised aspects of classroom teaching (van Lier, 1991). On the other hand, according to Ellis (1998), technical knowledge[9] that teachers acquire through training is not ready for an immediate use in the improvised phases of a lesson until they accumulate a sufficient understanding of the concept and experience with it. Accordingly, implementing TBLI (which is considered technical knowledge) into a classroom may be a daunting task for some teachers unless they are quite ready to use it immediately and appropriately in both planned and improvised phases of their lessons.

From institutional perspectives, drill-type exercises are still considered effective in practicing various sub-skills (e.g.: transcription, translation, interpretation, summary, etc.) in order to achieve the Final Learning Objectives (FLOs)[10] at DLIFLC. In other words, the effect of a test on teaching (Brandl, 2008) impacts the subsequent teaching behavior for teachers, and teachers often teach to the test[11] (Richard, et al., 1992). Considering that TBLI is certainly not designed to teach to the test (Willis & Willis, 2007), teachers may find a mismatch between TBLI and the format or contents of DLPT and FLO tests that measure learners' final learning outcomes. This is especially the case towards the end of the course, when learners need to practice particular language skills (e.g.,: listening, reading, translation, transcription, summary, answer to content questions, etc.) to be tested, as well as task taking skills.[12] Teachers have almost no room to implement learner centered, task-based activities into their classrooms (Evans, 1996) though they seem to acknowledge that TBLI would promote learners' creativity and authentic language use in a variety of social interactions (Willis & Willis, 2007). On the other hand, various FLO sub-skills can be practiced using tasks. The following activity shows an example of how to incorporate tasks in order to develop one of the FLO sub skills.

Practicing FLO Sub-Skills Using TBLI

FLO tests measure particular job related language skills in the target language in terms of several sub-skill areas[13] (e.g.: translation, transcription, summary, answering to content question on listening and reading texts, etc.). In general, these FLO skills are practiced daily as an integral part of regular curriculum in the classroom. By incorporating dictogloss and prediction tasks into a summary activity, teachers turn a monotonous drill type summary activity into an interactive and cognitively challenged task. Here is an example.

Incorporating dictogloss[14] and prediction tasks to practice a FLO sub skill: Produce an English summary of a news broadcast

Sample Reading Text: A shooting incident (2005)

1. Early Wednesday morning, a Palestinian citizen was killed while attempting to approach the security fense surrounding the Morag settlement in south Gaza Strip to detonate an explosive device.

2. Israeli military sources said three Palestinians tried to sneak into the mentioned settlement to detonate an explosive device. According to sources interviewed after the incident, the Israeli soldiers had exchanged fire with the Palestinians, which led to one Palestinian getting killed and the other two escaping.

3. On the other hand, eyewitnesses said they heard heavy shooting close to the Morag settlement. They said that it came from the Israeli soldiers stationed at one of the military observation towers in the Atatra region who started firing for no reason.

4. The eyewitnesses assured that there was no response to the shooting, which indicates that there were no clashes between the two sides in the region.

First, the teacher plays a recording of Parts 1 and 2 (which are bold-face) once or twice and asks learners to jot down any words or phrases that they hear. Next, in groups, learners discuss their notes with others and re-construct the text based on their notes and present the reconstructed text to the class. In this stage, the teacher needs to check learners' comprehension thoroughly[15] by looking at their final product (i.e., 're-constructed story'). Then, the teacher plays the initial phrase of the paragraph 3 ("on the other hand, the witnesses said (differently)….")[16] and asks learners to predict the story to come. Learners work in groups to come up with their predictions, comparing theirs with other groups and providing justification for their reasoning. Finally, learners are provided the written script of the passage to see how their predictions are similar to or different from the actual text.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have discussed the role of TBLI at DLIFLC with an overarching question of "How can TBLI be incorporated into the existing DLIFLC curriculum in order to enrich learning?'" This question was addressed with the discussion of the basic concepts and applications of TBLI vis-à-vis the concerns raised by the teachers who attended the seven iterations of the TBLI workshops in 2008. Interestingly, I found that most of their initial concerns related to the questions of *what?* and *how?* were resolved by the end of the workshop as the teachers learned the concepts and applications of TBLI and cleared up confusions or misconceptions about TBLI. This implies that frequent trainings on TBLI and other current foreign language teaching methodologies need to be conducted for the DLIFLC faculty in order to equip them with a solid theoretical foundation of knowledge in foreign language teaching which they can apply to their classrooms appropriately.

In regards to the question of *why?,* more classroom-based research that investigates the effectiveness of TBLI on learning outcomes is needed in order to gain more comprehensive insights into the role of TBLI at DLIFLC. Even though the reverse case (relative benefits of traditional teaching methods to TBLI) has not been empirically proven as well, teachers may need some tangible evidence regarding the effectiveness of TBLI on learners' short term or long term proficiency gains measured by the unit tests, DLPT, or FLOs. One of the advantages of TBLI over traditional teaching approaches is that it enables learners to stretch their inter-language to meet communicative goals through a variety of output-based activities. (Swain, 1995, 2000). Learners in TBLI classrooms are not so much passive receivers of information as active processors of information by actively engaging in language production and exchanging feedback, all of which will lead to learners' inter- language development (Ellis, 1995).

Considering that any fancy new instructional method can not be free from certain degrees of criticism and resistance (whether it is personal or institutional) until it is proven effective at particular educational contexts, some empirical research evidence on the effectiveness of TBLI is needed for the teachers who are still resistant to use TBLI in their classrooms. Some problems associated with methodological and institutional constraints exist; however, small scale studies that investigate the relationship between TBLI and short term proficiency gains could be possible. For example, teachers may investigate the role of information gap and reasoning gap activities in promoting the quantity and the quality of the target language output. A study that focuses on the relationship between task complexity and the quality of learners' target language output may be another alternative.

In discussing both pros and cons of the TBLI approach, Ellis (2000) mentions that TBLI promotes communicative effectiveness because it sets up interactive conditions in which learners try out various communication strategies and gain confidence in using the language. Conversely, however, the tasks that are directed to improve communicative effectiveness tend to put more emphasis on fluency than on accuracy, thus, may prevent learners from stretching their inter-language systems to develop particular linguistic skills (Ellis, 2000). In summary, TBLI may offer a necessary but not a sufficient condition for learners to simultaneously achieve two goals at DLIFLC - communicative effectiveness and mastery of linguistic skills - within time and contextual constraints.[17]

Task-Supported Language Instruction (TSLI) may be an alternative instructional method to be used for DLIFLC learners to achieve both communicative effectiveness and mastery of linguistic skills. Combining the best of both traditional approach and TBLI, this approach provides learners with opportunities to use the previously introduced linguistic concepts and structure in real communication, bridging the gap between traditional instruction and task-based instruction. Through a series of creative uses of language rules/concepts in the context of authentic communication (DeKeyser, 2003), learners will achieve automaticity, which in turn will help them demonstrate more effective, accurate, and stable performance in the foreign language (Segalowitz, 2003) as the semester proceeds.

As was shown in the sample activities in the previous sections, tasks and exercises are not two separate entities. They are closely related, and a slight tweak of a manipulative drill type exercise can make it into a meaningful communicative task. Therefore, a task can be used as an extension of an exercise in the course of lesson to enrich learning by bolstering deeper processing of information (Craik & Tulving, 1975) within task supported learning environment.

In order to successfully implement TBLI at DLIFLC teachers and staff need to take several things into consideration. First, teachers need to decide on how and when to use TBLI in the course of their lessons because it is almost unrealistic to implement tasks in every class hour. Second, teachers need to develop the skills, knowledge, and expertise to design and implement tasks that address various learner needs and gain automaticity in utilizing tasks in the classroom. All in all, TBLI can be an effective additional instructional method provided that it is implemented with careful discretion to different learners in different classroom situations and contexts.

Notes

[1.] Considering that the number of teachers who participated in the TBLI workshop is limited, the concerns/questions generated by these teachers may not be generalized to the larger population of DLI faculty. However, the teachers who attended the workshops represented a variety of languages taught in DLI and their concerns/questions were based on what they thought and experienced while teaching language(s) at DLIFLC.

[2.] In this paper, it is used as a broad term, encompassing a wide variety of second/foreign language teaching methods that are contrasted in some or many ways with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI).

[3.] The concept of 'communicative effectiveness' focuses on the aspect of effective language use in spontaneous interactions. It relates to the abilities to use language meaningfully and purposefully in order to achieve communicative goals by trying out various communication strategies. (For more explanation of this concept, see Ellis, 2000, Willis, 1996, & Yule, 1997).

[4.] As of 2007, the institute requires a 10-point higher Defense Language Aptitude Battery test score for prospective language learners, with the intent of receiving more academically inclined service members (DLIFLC, 2007).

[5.] There is not substantial empirical evidence as yet reporting the effectiveness of four plus two approach in terms of learning outcomes, however, the benefits of this program in terms of improving learners' short term proficiency gains (measured by unit tests) were informed.

[6] The activities such as extracting essential elements of information (EEIs) through *wh-* questions, answering multiple choice questions, filling in blanks, translating the target

language into English, and transcription' are the examples of drill type exercises.

[7.] Bloom (1956) defined six levels of mental process as follows: memorization, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, & evaluation. According to Bloom, the first two levels are in the realm of Low Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) while the last three relates to the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Application is in the middle of them, which encompasses both HOTS and LOTS. Bloom's taxonomy is one of the most widely applied models in the field of education in explaining individuals' cognitive process. Later, Anderson & Krathwohl (2001) proposed a revised model of Bloom's taxonomy with slight changes in naming and ordering of the taxonomy as follows: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. The current paper adopts this revised version of the taxonomy and considers HOTS as one of the important parameters to determine tasks (as opposed to exercises) in that, with the exception of some information gap tasks, most tasks require learners to analyze, evaluate, and/or create information in order to produce an outcome.

[8 & 9] Ellis (1998) made a distinction between practical knowledge and technical knowledge, the former relates to "preexisting schemata for teaching based on their experiences" (p. 41), whereas the latter relates to the knowledge that is theoretically proven effective.

[10] Final Learning Objectives include four different subject areas according to learning objectives: Proficiency FLOs, Performance FLOs, Regional Studies, and Ancillary. The FLOs mentioned in this article refers to the second category – performance FLOs – which include 16 different tasks in 6 different domains (speaking, interpreting, listening, transcribing, reading, & translating).

[11.] This is called 'washback effect,' or otherwise called 'backwash effect,' referring to the effect of a test on teaching. For example, the learners tend to ask teachers to practice particular skills when these skills are emphasized on tests (Brandl, 2008).

[12] They include 'identifying distracters in multiple choice questions,' 'time management skills' 'understand rhetorical structure of the passage,' 'guess the contents out of contexts,' etc.

[13.] For a comprehensive review of FLOs, please see FLO information packet (DLIFLC, 2008, June). The FLO sub-skills presented in this paper are related to performance FLO.

[14.] *Dictogloss* activity makes use of a short text or a song designed to have a structural focus. Fist, the text is read at normal speed, while the learners take notes key words and phrases. Next, learners work in groups to reconstruct the text based on their notes. According to Wajnryb (1996), the purpose of this task is not so much to generate an exact replica of the original text but rather to reproduce the contents based on the information they gained from listening. Ellis (2003) indicates that dictogloss meets the essential elements of a task as it primarily focuses on meaning. This dictogloss task can be also used in conjunction with other form-focused exercises (e.g.; fill-in blanks) in an attempt to reinforce the knowledge of particular grammar form(s).

[15] In order to conduct prediction activity successfully with this text, it is important to make sure if learners fully comprehended the parts 1 & 2 so that learners can provide plausible predictions in relation to the previous parts of the text.

[16] Because text does not always follow coherent thematic flows, it would be better to give learners contextual cue (e.g.: the first sentence of the following passage) in order to help learners predict the story as close to as the actual passage to come.

[17]They include 'limited time of study,' 'limited exposure to target language outside classroom,' 'test-oriented learning environment,' and 'a shared first language (English) among learners,' etc.

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Seven Wonders of Russia
Student-Centered Project on Culture and Geography

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The purpose of this article is to familiarize DLI teachers with a highly-practical student-centered project in the target language that can assist with introducing the Area Studies (culture and geography) of the target-language country(s) in an interactive way by applying available technology.

The project is flexible and can be applied to any language being taught at DLI. It describes the selection of materials, step-by-step instructions on possible project organization, as well as scheduling.

Introduction

The project "Seven Wonders of Russia" carried out in the Russian Federation was a response, per se, to a popularity poll that was conducted by New Seven Wonders Foundation. The goal of the foundation was to select the new seven wonder of the modern world. More than 100 million votes, throughout the world, were cast via the Internet or by telephone. The winners of the contest were announced on 07.07.07 in Lisbon. However, none of the "wonders" from Russia were on the list of finalists. As a result, an official contest, similar to the one described above, started in Russia in the fall of 2007 and ended in June of 2008, after 26 million residents of the Russian Federation voted for the wonders of the country, choosing the final seven.

Our idea of this project was born out of desire to give students an opportunity to expand their knowledge about the country. More specifically, about beauties of the country, both natural and man-created.

During the implementation of this project, the developing team of the project observed that students work better and are more motivated when they are given more freedom in the choice of the presentation subject and materials they can use. This project provides students with an opportunity to perform their own research work, thus developing their critical thinking skills, which students will potentially need for their future language learning.

What separates this project from typical area-studies presentations is the fact that it includes an element of competition, as well as allows students to have a broader view of the specific part of the Russian Federation as opposed to one selected site.

The students are not only interested in preparation for their own project, but also are engaged and motivated to listen to the projects of their classmates in order to vote for the best presentations. Students are not only presenters of their own projects, but also judges of this competition.

In order to make students projects more interactive and involved,we decided to give students of Russian Department B a chance to choose their Seven Wonders of Russia.

Objective

The objective of the project was to introduce culture and geography of the Russian Federation in an interactive way. Such interaction would promote students' autonomy and creativity. Using current Area and Intercultural Studies within the Foreign Language Region (FL 340) would facilitate the integration of skills..

One of the pursued goals of this project was to promote self-regulated learning. It has been defined as a constructive process in which learners take an active part in their learning by setting goals, monitoring, regulating and controlling their cognition (Pintrich, 2000). Self-regulation has been an important factor in predicting achievement (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Therefore, promoting self-regulation is essential for increasing students' language performance.

The project was also aimed at increasing students' motivation to learning the language in order to assist the students with accomplishing their long-term language learning goals. Dornyei (2005) reported that "Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement" (p. 65). Autonomy is a very important factor in motivating students (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Autonomy implies that individuals have control over their actions.

The project provided an opportunity for the students to participate in the learning process by making choices to ensure success of their project. According to cognitive evaluation theory, along with autonomy, competence is an innate psychological need (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The sense of competence can be nourished through constructive feedback, which is an important part of this project. Students received feedback throughout the project. Also, in order to recognize the effort that students put forth into project development, the best presentations were awarded. In order to increase intrinsic motivation, it was necessary to provide a combination of feedback and facilitate autonomous learning. These elements were interwoven into the structure of the project.

The project was conducted at the beginning of the third semester and was set in a curriculum as a part of *4+2* program. The project was conducted in the target language, therefore increasing students' speaking competence.

How this Project Fits into Curriculum

Each Friday, during the *4+2* classes, two hours of instruction in the afternoon were allocated for this project in the span of four weeks. All the students of the class gathered together in a large classroom that had a SmartBoard and a projector. During these two hours, students delivered their presentations and the evaluation took place.

Materials

Project developers supplied students with links to the internet site that contained needed listening and reading materials. The project gave a chance for teachers and students to make the best use of available technology, utilizing iPods, SmartBoard, Internet, PowerPoint and software provided by DLI.

A map of Russia was included into the set of materials distributed for the students. This set did not preclude students from using any other available sources but rather was a way of assisting them with initial materials selection.

Instructions for the Students

The students were able to understand and follow the instructions below easily: They were divided into groups of three. Within each group, students had the same listening and reading materials for the area in Russia they selected. After reviewing the materials, students needed to come to consensus which three (out of four) sites they would work on because each student was going to make a presentation on one point of interest out of the three sites they have selected as a group. Students had two weeks to review the materials, provide their selection and decide on the order in which they were to present their projects. The projects were presented within the span of three weeks. Each week one student from each group made a presentation.

Each student had about 10 minutes to present. The presentation was conducted in the Russian language. Before each presention, the presenters met with their teacher-consultant at least twice to ensure the quality of the project in terms of content and structure. During consultations, the teacher acted as a consultant and a facilitator.

Project Development

1. A week or more before the start of the project, each student received a set of materials that included links to reading materials, video segments on four sights of a particular region/ federal district of Russia, as well as a map of Russia.

During initial orientation students were informed of the presentation process. Each student was scheduled to make one presentation in the course of four sessions.

The amount of sessions that a particular teaching team could allocate for the project was flexible. It depended on the students' needs and their number in class, current level of the students and schedule availability.

2. The students were divided into small groups, so that all federal districts of a country could be represented. In our project, the students were divided into seven groups, with three students in each group.

Within their group, the students decided who was going to make presentation on what point of interest. Out of four sights the students in each team were to select three points of interest that were most appealing to them. This was done in order to ensure that students review all the materials pertaining to their geographical area to become familiar with peculiarities of a particular region rather than only one place of interest. Each student made a presentation in the Russian language on the chosen point of interest. In our experience, a presentation took on average seven minutes, not including the time of preparing the media sources needed for the presentation.

Before the presentation, the students brought the draft of their presentation to teachers, for correction or improvement, if necessary. This was done to avoid mistakes. Moreover, a teacher-consultant was assigned to each student to assist him or her for the duration of the project .

Project Presentation

1. The students make about seven presentations for each session. Due to the fact that students differed in their speaking abilities and presentation skills, no more than five students were scheduled to present their project within one hour. To ensure full participation, students were encouraged to take notes, mark the location of the point of interest, and fill the chart. The latter tasks prepared them for the voting process that followed each presentation.

2. At the end of each class, the students evaluated language, technology, information, and delivery of each presentation. They used the point system, where one point represented below standard assessment, two points – meeting standards, and three points – above standards. It should be noted, that the scale was developed by the students of the class that were participants of the piloting project. At the end of each presentation session, evaluations are collected and calculated by a teaching team. Should certain presentations have the same amount of points; teachers would cast their vote as well.

3. During the final fourth session, the results of the students' voting process were announced and the results of the voting were introduced in Russian. The students were given a chance to compare the result and prove that their choice was the right one by providing supporting facts. For that purpose the students used the notes that they were taking throughout the course of presentations. Students' engagement in the process of supporting their opinions, made them better prepared to cope with the upcoming OPI.

4. The presentations that students delivered were not assigned an official grade, however, the students were able to see the voting results of the seven presentations One of the teaching teams decided to award the student who had the best project with a book.

Conclusion

In summary the project benefited the students not only from the perspective of enriching the knowledge about target language country and geography, but also in terms of their language proficiency. The project assisted the students with developing skills necessary for providing extended discourse, as well as other important skills required for successful performance during Oral Proficiency Interview. The student feedback confirms its value.

It should be restated that this project is flexible and can be adapted to any language taught at DLIFLC. It could be developed as *Seven Wonders of …Egypt/, Spain, China,Korea/ or France.* The number of sessions and presentations mentioned could be adjusted depending on students' and teaching team needs.

Appendix A
Students Feedback

After implementation of the project, students filled out a questionnaire. The total of thirty-six respondents from three different classes provided feedback by answering the following four questions:

1. Did the project help you to learn more about Russia? If yes, in what way/ areas. Please specify and provide details.

2. What was the most useful thing about the project?
3. If you could change one thing about the project, what would it be?
4. Additional Comments.

The overwhelming majority of students, 94.4 %, answered affirmatively to the first questions. They stated that the project helped them learn about:

- Geography of the country (14 students)
- Places of interest (12 students)
- History (9 students)
- People (4 students)
- Research skills (2 students)
- Target language application (2 students)
-Culture (2 students)
- Art (2 students)
- Topography (2 students)
- Weapons industry (2 students)
- Presentation skills (1 student)
- Critical thinking (1 student)
- Sociology (1 student)
- Cooking (1 student)

Sample answers were: “I was provided an insight into the varied spectrums of Russia’s history and sociology. The most prevalent were the actions of monarchs in Russia pertaining to are and museums”; “Each individual report communicated the regions of the Russian Federation in the detail needed to better understand news and history. I have a better understanding of geography. The reports communicated historical events. The project showers what natural and historical locations are important to the Russian people and why it was important. The project was excellent for teaching research and how to put a presentation together professionally while teaching how to identify and to select information for the report”; “It let me see the architecture of the churches, some of the art and the natural wonders that exist in Russia”, “It was very helpful in looking at the way the county is divided and some of the interesting landmarks…”; “Doing research will always help learn about anything”; “All reports taught me something about the Russian people and their country”; “The project was beneficial for me, as well as many other students. Only being allowed to speak in Russian was great for the presenter. It made the presenter have to fully research the information”; “I learnt a lot about Russia that I didn’t know before, the history behind everything was the most interesting for me”; “I learnt about many sites in Russia that are dear to Russians. It was also helpful in geography and topography”; “We knew about the main points, like Moscow, lake Baikal, but it was interesting to find out about Siberia and Mountains and how people live”.

All the students mentioned at least one positive thing about the project when answering the second question. They identified the following areas:

Geography (10 students)
Speaking (6 students)
Speaking in public (2 students)

Research skills development (4 students)
Presentation skills development (4 students)
Cultural knowledge (2 students)
Motivation (2 students)
Visuals (2 students)
Sociology (1 student)
Increased confidence in speaking skills (1 student)
New vocabulary acquisition and usage (1 student)
Autonomy (1 student)
Language ability (1 student)
Developing listening skills (1 student)
Developing reading skills (1 student)
History (1 student)

Sample answers for question two were: “Doing research to prepare my own project, and the translating what I found into Russian also the reading practice helped when I read about it in Russian”; “Using the language in all its facets and in as many ways as we know”; “Seeing unfamiliar places and re-igniting the spark of learning Russian again. It makes me want to travel”; “Doing it on your own, doing own work – this is the best way to learn”; “I was able to learn a lot of new vocabulary and use it in my presentation”; “The research and actual presentation - this is where the exposure occurred”; “Being forced to speak at length in Russian. Doing so successfully can boost one’s confidence when speaking”; “Learning a little more about the geography of Russia. Especially the location of cities. It helps to know geography and where cities are located when listening to texts”; “I got to learn about areas I didn’t have time to study on my own and ha to speak in front of everyone, which was scary, but very beneficial”; “Doing the research for my own project”; “Being imparted with a more dynamic scope into the facets of Russian ingenuity and sociology”.

Answering questions three, the suggestions included:

Giving more time (10 students)
More places/topics to choose (4 students)
Include class time for project preparation (2 students)
N/A (3 students)
Include test on the material (1 student)
Include sites that are located in Russian-speaking countries
More similar projects
Include military topics
Do not allow students to read
Provide a list of requirements for the project
“Don’t do it”
Move a project earlier in the course
A project should not be in target language
Include economy aspect
Increase importance of the project
Have all projects done on the same day
Provide more resources in English

Have all projects done on the same day
More group work
"Took time away from class"
No homework before the presentation

These suggestions were shared with teaching teams and some of them were implemented.

In additional comments section, twenty-three students did not leave any answers. Some sample answers were: "I really enjoyed it" (2 students), "Thanks" (2 students), "Distraction from learning mandatory course material" (1 student); "I enjoyed it" (2 students); "Neat Project" (1 student), "We could do without it" (1 student), "Make presentation by entire region" (1 student), and "It's better than homework" (1 student). It should be noted that project developers took some of the suggestions and recommendations with classes who participated in the project after the feedback had been received which is reflected in the proposed project.

Appendix B
Sample Presentation

This presentation is a sample that in project developers' opinion is a good representation of projects done by other students. All presentations were delivered in the target language. The actual presentation was in Russian and contained video, as well as a variety of pictures and graphs.

Seven Wonders of Russia Project
Far East Federal District

Introduction:
Far East Federal District (Дальневосточный Федеральный Округ)

Location:
This region is the most eastern region of Russia.

Borders
To the North it is bordered by the Arctic Ocean and the closest neighbor to the northeast is Alaska. Less that 3 miles away.
To the East it is bordered by the Pacific Ocean close to Japan
To the South Russia shares a border with China and North Korea
To the West is the Siberian Federal District.

Size:
The Far East District is the largest of the regions at: 6,215,900 km²

Population:
Although it is the biggest region, it has the smallest population with just over: 6,692,865 (Over 6.5 million)

Largest Cities:

Vladivostok is the Largest City with 600,000 residents and is close in size with Khabarovsk – 2d largest City and the Administrative Center

Field of Geysers:

The Field of Geysers located on the east coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula and is one of the
Finalist of the 7 Wonders of Russian Contest
At a total area of about four square miles are more than 200 thermal springs, including about 90 geysers,
The Cold Pole located in Yakutia holds the record for being
The Coldest Place on Earth with
Record Temps of –68 degrees C
Additionally, Private Block and I will be discussing the
Klyuchevskaya Sopka Volcano &
Diamond Hole
Klyuchevskaya Sopka Volcano
Located centrally on the Kamchatka Peninsula.
On the Peninsula there are 30 active and 300 extinct volcanos
At a height of 4,750 meters (15,584 ft) it is considered the largest active volcano in Eurasia
13th Largest Active in the World
Last activity in March, 2010
Last big eruption was in 1995
In the last year on the peninsula, 6 separate volcanoes were active with the potential for major eruptions.
Diamond Hole

Blocks Notes Here

Conclusion

It has been very interesting to study the Far East Federal District and to learn about the wonders that can be found there. The better we understand the land and the people of Russia, the better we all will understand their language. The better we understand the land and the people of Russia, the better we will understand the language.

Семь чудес России
Дальневосточный Федеральный Округ

Slide 1. Добрый день. Я рад, что сегодня я могу рассказать вам об одном из чудес России.

Slide 2. Вы знаете, что Россия разделена на федеральные округи.

Slide 3. Мы с ефрейтором расскажем о Дальневосточном Федеральном Округе.

Во-первых, я хочу рассказать о географическом положении Дальневосточного Округа

Положение<u>**:**</u> Дальневосточный Округ - самая восточная часть России. Он находится на восточном побережье страны.

Пожалуйста посмотритена карту**. Slide 4.**

На севере он граничит с Северно-ледовитым океаном, а на северо-востоке находится самый близкий сосед - Аляска, США

(?) Кто знает сколько миль от Аляски до России? Она находится только в трёх милях оттуда!!!

На востоке он граничит с Тихим океаном, недалеко от Японии.

На юге он граничит с Китаем и Северной Кореей

На западе он граничит с Сибирским федеральным округом.

На карте вы можете увидеть размер Дальневосточного округа

Размер: Дальневосточный Федеральный Округ не только самый восточный Округ, но также самый больший федеральный округ в России:

Дальневосточный Округ занимает територию более шести миллионов квадратных километров. **Slide 5.**

Населенность<u>**:**</u> Хотя это самый больш0й федеральный округ в России, он имеет самую малую населённость

Население региона составляет только шесть с половиной миллионов человек.

Это меньше, чем один человек на квадратных километр

Города<u>**:**</u>
Владивосток - самый большой город, который является главным портом на Тихом океане.

Я слышал, что во Владивостоке есть отличные русские учителя и что иногда они переезжают в США.

Хабаровск, который находится недалеко от Владивостока, является административным центром региона

В нашем курсе мы часто слышим о Камчатке. Камчатский полуостров находится здесь, на северо-востоке региона. Камчатка - очень интересное место, и я хочу рассказать об этом подробнее сейчас.

Чудеса в Дальневосточном Федеральном Округе

В Дальневосточном Федеральном Округе есть много чудес: Slide 6

Долина Гейзеров
Вулкан Ключевская Сопка
Полюс холода
Алмазный Карьер

Slide 7

Долина Гейзеров:

Находится на восточном побережье Камчатского полуострова и является одним из победителей в конкурсе “Семь чудес России”.

Долина гейзеров, в которой находится более двухсот термальных источников и более девяноста гейзеров, занимает около четырех квадратных километров.

Это место является очень популярным сейчас в экотуризме

Play Video;Slide 8.

Вулкан Ключевская Сопка

Находится в центре Камчатского полуострова

Также на полуострове тридцать активных вулканов и триста неактивных вулканов.

Slide 9

Высота вулкана, которая составляет четыре тысячи семьсот пятьдесят метров, (пятнадцать тысяч пятьсот восемьдесят четыре фута), делает его самым высоким активным вулканом в Евразии и тринадцатым по высоте во всём мире

Последнее извержение было недавно, в марте 2010 (две тысячи десятого года), две недели тому назад.

Последнее большое извержение было в 1995 (тысяча девятьсот девяносто пятом году).

В прошлом году на полуострове извергались шесть вулканов. Учёные опасаются, что скоро может быть большое извержение.

Play Video;Slide 10

Недалеко к западу от Камчатки, находится Якутия

Slide 11

Полюс холода:

Полюс холода Находится в Якутии. Якутия известна тем, что это самое холодное место на земле, где живут и работают люди.

Температура зимой - минус шестьдесят восемь градусов по Цельсию

(восемьдесят восемь градусов по Фаренгейту)

Теперь, ефрейтор расскажет о ещё одном чуде.

Slide 12

Алмазный Карьер

Blocks Notes Here

Slide 17 Заключение: Было очень интересно изучать Дальневосточный федеральный округ и узнать о чудесах, которые можно найти там. Чем лучше мы понимаем землю и народ России, тем лучше мы будем понимать их язык. Чем лучше мы понимаем язык, тем лучше мы будем понимать землю и народ.

Благодарю вас за внимание (ваше время)!

*Slide 18 Вопросы***:**

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Using Language Features in Teaching and Curriculum Development to Improve Language Proficiency

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The quest for improving foreign language proficiency continues to be the subject of heated debate in many foreign language-teaching programs. Recently, this issue has also been the focus of attention of many teachers, curriculum developers, and administrators at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). This concern has manifested itself in many professional meetings, training workshops, seminars, and conferences that are entirely devoted to discussing this issue and to making relevant decisions.

This paper attempts to shed light on some practical matters that might ultimately influence teaching and curriculum development practices and directly or indirectly contribute to achieving the desired outcome of improved language proficiency. The author provides a brief theoretical background and defines language features. Then, he illustrates how language features may be integrated in teaching or curriculum development in order to address the learners' needs and help improve their language proficiency. While understanding the complex nature of achieving better language proficiency outcomes and recognizing the efforts of concerned professionals in this regard, it should be stressed that fully resolving this matter is beyond the scope of this paper.

Theoretical Perspective

The author has argued elsewhere (Elghannam, 2008) that using the salient linguistic features of the target language (lexical, structural, or discourse characteristics that learners of a foreign language need to master at specific levels of proficiency) in meaningful communicative activities in classroom instruction or curriculum development may substantially contribute to improving their foreign language proficiency. This may be especially relevant in the fast-paced and intensive nature of the DLIFLC language teaching programs. Lightbown and Spada (2006) make a similar claim when they suggest including "language-focused learning" in addition to meaning-focused input and output, and fluency development (spaced practice) in an effective foreign language teaching program.

Other foreign language education professionals seem to support the above argument in their discussion of communicative language teaching in the past two decades (cf. Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrel, 1997; Leaver and Shekhtman, 2002, Campbell and Tovar, 2007). Campbell and Tovar (2007), for example, point out that "communicative language teaching proponents were not paying the proper attention to grammar instruction. This lack of attention typically translated to teacher avoidance of explicit grammar instruction in the classroom" (p. 70). Following Long and Crookes (1992), they propose combining pedagogic tasks with a systematic focus on form as the fundamental organizing principle in a syllabus or curriculum design.

Earlier, Canale and Swain (1980) analyze the concept of communicative competence and suggest that it minimally includes three main subcomponents: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. According to them, grammatical competence is the ability to understand and manipulate the lexical and grammatical structures to effectively communicate in a foreign language. Canale and Swain stress that "grammatical competence will be an important concern for any communicative approach whose goals include providing learners with the knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances" (p. 30).

They further contend that sociolinguistic competence includes two sets of rules: the socio-cultural rules of language use and the discourse rules of cohesion and coherence. In other words, discourse competence refers to the ability to apply cohesion and coherence rules to understand and produce appropriate language discourse. Similarly, Leaver and Shekhtman (2002) analyze the concept of communicative competence and indicate that it is not a unified whole. They concur that there are four subcomponents of communicative competence: linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic (or socio-cultural), and strategic.

Paulston (1974) also discusses the concept of communicative competence and its implications for language teaching. In light of Hymes' distinction between communicative and linguistic competence (Hymes, 1971), she thought it necessary to distinguish between communicative performance and communicative competence. In her opinion, the communicative activities that take place in the classroom are simply performance activities that lack the social significance that exists in the real world. She emphasizes that such activities would lead to achieving linguistic competence, rather than communicative competence.

Whereas Paulston advocates communicative competence as the ultimate goal of language teaching and learning, she implies that achieving linguistic competence is a more realistic objective within the confines of the classroom. She also contends that "the implications for language teaching that we can draw from the notions of communicative competence apply primarily to situations where the learners live in the country of the target language, where they are second language speakers or foreign students" (p. 354).

This paper holds that achieving linguistic competence is actually a more realistic goal to pursue in the classroom. As is argued by Paulston, it is presumed that linguistic competence may eventually lead to achieving communicative competence given the right circumstances (such as immersion or study abroad, etc.). Meanwhile, by acquiring the elements of linguistic competence, the learner is moving up through the levels of language proficiency.

Despite acknowledging that communicating in a language, oral or written, may usually involve the ability to manipulate the lexical, grammatical, discourse, and socio-cultural elements of a language simultaneously, the author believes that segmenting the concept of communicative competence in such a way can help professionals advance learners to higher levels of proficiency, and also facilitate foreign language education research and development efforts (cf. Leaver and Shekhtman, 2002, Canale and Swain, 1980, Hymes, 1971, Paulston, 1974).

It should be noted that the author does not advocate teaching abstract grammar concepts nor is he arguing against using meaningful communicative activities. Rather, it is argued that communicative activities that contextualize the prominent linguistic features of the target language at each level of proficiency must be the organizing principle in the design of foreign language syllabi or curricula. It is not a coincidence that all of the views discussed above emphasize lexical, grammatical (structural), and discourse competence of the target language as primary components of linguistic competence. These views further imply that mastering those components may be indispensable in achieving higher levels of proficiency.

The question then becomes: How do we systematically integrate those elements of linguistic competence, i.e. lexical, structural, and discourse features, into classroom teaching or curriculum development in order to achieve our objective of improved language proficiency? To illustrate how language features may be used in teaching or curriculum development, it is important to further define what these features are and explain how they can be integrated in teaching and curriculum development. Then, we will examine how activities can be developed based on these features.

Language Features and Proficiency Levels

As noted above, language features simply refer to the particular linguistic aspects that students must typically master, or might have difficulty mastering, in learning a foreign language to reach a certain proficiency level in that language. Given that language proficiency is described by levels based on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale, it is presumed that there are certain language features that characterize each of these levels of proficiency. Some of these features may also pose difficulty for students at each of those levels of proficiency. Students may typically find it hard to master the linguistic elements that contradict their native language system.

It is also presumed that for a student to attain a certain level of proficiency, he/she must master those language features at that level of proficiency. Activities that target acquiring the language features immediately higher than his/her current level of proficiency should contribute to improving this level of proficiency. In other words, developing activities that focus on level *2* language features will help improve the language proficiency of level *1+* students, and those activities that focus on level *3* language features will improve the proficiency level of students at *2+*, and so on. Therefore, systematically accounting for such features in curriculum and instruction might be a necessary condition for improving language proficiency.

For teaching and curriculum development purposes, language features may be distributed among three main competencies, structural, lexical, and discourse for each level of proficiency (*1* through *4*) with socio-cultural competence added at higher levels of proficiency (*2+* and above). Although it might seem a bit artificial to actually break down the components of a natural phenomenon like language in such a way, it would appear that focusing attention on level-specific linguistic components for the learner is what we really need to achieve desired outcomes.

Use of Language Features

Fortunately, by early 2002, significant work (see Note) was done at the DLIFLC and elsewhere to identify a number of language features at each level of proficiency in six of the Institute's foreign languages: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian Farsi, Russian, and Spanish. The purpose of this effort was to use these features in the design and development of self-contained, online reading learning objects (lessons) to help improve linguists' foreign language proficiency.

Since then, those language features, identified for each foreign language respectively, have been used effectively to design and develop hundreds of learning objects in these and many other foreign languages to populate what is currently known as the Global Language Online Support System or (GLOSS) at the DLIFLC. Specific language features which are typically challenging for foreign language learners are embedded in meaningful reading and listening activities.

The basic assumption in GLOSS is that activities that focus on language features at a level immediately higher than the student's current level of proficiency should contribute to improving his/her foreign language proficiency. The implicit assumption, of course, is that the student has already mastered the language features associated with his/her current proficiency level.

This assumption, which is built into the GLOSS design, is consistent with the language acquisition research cited earlier in this paper, and also with Krashen's classic *i+1* hypothesis (Krashen, 1981), in which he promotes comprehensible input that is a bit beyond the student's current level as an essential component of language acquisition. Whereas there is no empirical evidence that supports that underlying GLOSS assumption, primarily due to the lack of research and of systematically collecting feedback, anecdotal evidence that the author has collected over the last seven years appears to point towards the effectiveness of the GLOSS learning objects in tackling significant student language-learning problems. Next, the author provides examples of identified features and a sample activity that has been developed using one of these features within the context of a GLOSS learning object.

Examples of Language Features

For illustration purposes, the features that have been identified for Arabic levels *1*, *2* and *3* are listed in the following tables. Table 1 lists some prominent structural features of Arabic for proficiency levels *1* through *3*. Tables 2 and 3 list some lexical and discourse features for these levels, respectively. The suggested functional teaching objective for each of these features is also listed. It should be noted that these features are by no means exhaustive. They continue to be a work in progress and are meant to provide the reader with examples of some of the challenges that may face learners of Arabic as a foreign language at different levels of proficiency.

Features may be added, removed, or revised for each level, depending upon the nature of the target language and what constitutes functional proficiency for each level in that language. The listed features, primarily identified for use in developing Arabic reading learning objects, have been and are still being used to develop effective online learning objects for GLOSS. Some of them may have application with the listening skill, as well. Listening, however, may pose a unique set of challenges that may require further research (cf. Ortenberg & Bousalhi, 2007).

Table 1. *Arabic Structural Competence*

Proficiency Level	Language Feature	Functional Teaching Objective
L1	Simple verbal sentences "الجملة الفعلية"	To understand the structure of simple verbal sentences and relationships among the different elements within them, so as to understand the information conveyed in this type of sentence. An example of a verbal sentence is يعمل أحمد في بنك.
	Simple nominal sentences "الجملة الاسمية"	To understand the structure of simple nominal sentences (the equivalent of simple English sentences where the verb "to be" is used) and relationships between the two elements within them, so as to understand the information conveyed in this type of sentence. An example of a non-verbal sentence is أحمد مريض.
	Personal pronouns (Independent)	To understand the meaning and use of personal pronouns (e.g. أنا، أنت، هو) in simple sentences.
L2	Past Tense Verb Forms	To associate Arabic past tense verb forms to their appropriate time frame in a sequence of events in authentic texts about common concrete topics, as in the following example: و**قالت** إن الوفاة **حدثت** نتيجة إصابات متعددة بسبب السقوط. وتواصل الشرطة تحرياتها استكمالا لتقريرها النهائي، الذي سيقدم إلي المحكمة...
	Present Tense Verb Forms and Future Time Frame	To associate Arabic present tense verb forms to their appropriate time frame in a sequence of events and to recognize and understand the meaning of verbs in future time frame (present tense verb form + prefix) in authentic texts about common concrete topics, as in the following example: وقالت إن الوفاة حدثت نتيجة إصابات متعددة بسبب السقوط. و**تواصل** الشرطة تحرياتها استكمالا لتقريرها النهائي، الذي **سيقدم** إلي المحكمة...
	Noun-Adjective Agreement: Gender and Number	To recognize and use the gender and number markers in nouns and adjectives to understand details of sentences, and be able to relate adjectives to their referent nouns on the basis of gender and number. In the sentence, وأشارت المصادر إلى أن قوات عسكرية خاصة two adjectives عسكرية and خاصة that are marked third person feminine give more information about قوات (an inanimate plural noun).

Table 1. *Arabic Structural Competence, continued*

L3	(Unmarked) Passive Verb Form	To be able to recognize and understand extended written discourse where passive verb forms are used, and be able to anticipate passiveness (meaning and form) without having to re-read the clause/sentence. In the sentence ...إذ آخر من **عرف** متحدثا هذه اللغة هي ماري سميث... The verb عرف is not marked for passiveness, but the meaning of the sentence and the context lead to reading the verb in the passive.
	Tense Aspect	To be able to understand all aspect modifications to basic time references in verb forms and structures, and to relate that to other time references in the sentence. Examples, قد, كان, and كاد. - وقرَّبه منه **وكان يؤثره** بالرتبة الأولى بين مدعويه الأجانب. - **وقد انتشرت** هذه الفكرة انتشارا حتى أصبحت من المسلمات في فكرنا المعاصر.
	Relations between roots and derivations	To be able to obtain or predict the meaning of words from known roots, such as the relation between أدمج (to integrate) and مُدمَج (integrated) or between واكب (to keep pace with) and مُواكِب (keeping pace with).

Table 2. *Arabic Lexical Competence*

Proficiency Level	Language Feature	Functional Teaching Objective
L1	Common Consonantal Roots	To be able to recognize the consonantal roots of the most frequently used words in the most used derivations, such as ط ل ب, غ ل ق, ط ع م, and use that information to look up words in a dictionary.
	Vocabulary of short announcements and notices	To recognize and understand vocabulary commonly used in short announcements and notices, such as those found in newspapers, airports or railway stations or offices. Examples of such words are: يعلن، يبتدأ، ينتهي، الراغبين.
	Vocabulary of predictable, short news items	To recognize and understand vocabulary commonly used in predictable, short news items. Examples of such vocabulary are: استقبل، زيارة، تستغرق.
L2	The relationship between the consonantal root and "الفاعل" (Agent) and "المفعول" (Recipient) derivations	To relate the "الفاعل" and "المفعول" derivations to their consonantal roots in order to understand the meaning of the derivations/words on the basis of this relationship. The learner has to make the connection, for example, among كتب ،كاتب and مكتوب, and that كاتب is the performer of the verb and that مكتوب is the recipient of the action of the verb.
	Set (denotative) Phrases– Adverbial and Prepositional Phrases	To recognize and understand the use of common set denotative phrases in simple factual authentic texts. (بشكل رسمي، من المتوقع، بالإضافة إلى)
	Meaning and use of Titles	To recognize the meaning of the commonly used titles (specific words and phrases) for heads of states, relevant offices and other social titles, and to be able to isolate the titles from main elements of information in a paragraph (e.g. سمو الأمير، خادم الحرمين الشريفين).

Table 2. *Arabic Lexical Competence, continued*

L3	Lexical Collocation (Word Association), between verb/ verbal noun-subject/object	To understand and be able to predict the range of words triggered by the use of other words in factual and abstract authentic texts of general interest. The following are examples of what is meant by verbs/verbal nouns-object/ subject associations: تنفس الصعداء، تفاقم الأزمة، اقشعر البدن، زعزعة الأمن
	The Connotative Meaning of Common Words and Phrases	To understand the connotative meaning of common words and phrases in extended discourse that deals with general abstract and formal topics, such as those found in daily editorials or articles in popular magazines. Examples are: ينابيع (المعرفة)، مسرح (الأحداث)، تفجر (الوضع)، غزو(فكري).
	Common Fixed Phrases	To recognize and understand common fixed phrases, including idioms, proverbs, sayings etc., in extended discourse that deals with general abstract and formal topics, such as those found in newspaper columns or articles in popular magazines. Examples are: فتح الأبواب على مصراعيها، دق ناقوس الخطر، أكل عليه الدهر وشرب، حجر عثرة
	Register Shift	To recognize and understand words and phrases that trigger register shift at different levels of speech, such as a shift between واضح and جلي for "clear" or between بيد أن and غير أن for "except that."

Table 3. *Arabic Discourse Competence*

Proficiency Level	**Language Feature**	**Functional Teaching Objective**
L1	Using the particle "و" (and) to relate subsequent details to the main proposition in the paragraph	To use the particle "و" to understand simple texts that contain a main proposition and subsequent details connected by "و", as in جواز سفر صالح... ويكون به صفحات خالية...
	Using the subject marker in the verb	To use the subject marker embedded in the verb form to make connections among the parts of the paragraph. In the sentence: اشترى شقة... تتكون من طابقين... وتطل على... the learner has to use the third person marker in the verbs تتكون and تطل to trace them back to their subject شقة.
	Tracing "suffix" pronouns back to their referents	To make connections among parts of the text by tracing pronouns back to their referents. In the sentence نشأ في مصر ودرس فيها, the learner has to trace ها in فيها to مصر to properly relate the elements of the sentence.
L2	أنَّ "Anna" Clauses	To relate the أنَّ "anna" clauses to the verb in the main clause so as to understand sentences and clauses that are linked by أنَّ "anna," as in: أكد وزير الخارجية الاميركي في نهاية جولته الافريقية أن الولايات المتحدة ستبدأ قريبا...
	Relative Clauses: الذي/ التي "allathi"	To relate information in a relative clause to that in the main proposition as well as to any adjacent propositions so as to understand sentences in simple factual authentic paragraphs, as in: وغطت الندوة التي شارك فيها ٤٢ من المسؤولين والعاملون في الجهات الأمنية في كل من الأردن... موضوعات تناولت...

Table 3. *Arabic Discourse Competence, continued*

L2	Embedded Parenthetical Phrases: e.g. Adjectival, Prepositional, Noun-constructs “الإضافة”	To relate the noun in the main proposition to subsequent clauses in sentences containing embedded phrases modifying such a noun, a feature that is common in simple factual authentic texts. In the following sentence: أكد وزير خارجية السودان مصطفى عثمان اسماعيل عقب لقائه مع نظيره النرويجي تيوبورند ياغلاند في اوسلو امس ان السودان يسعى جاهدا لاحلال السلام والاستقرار، ... We have several parenthetical phrases (underlined) modifying الوزير before we get to the main message of the sentence. They include إضافة, apposition, two adverbial phrases, apposition, a prepositional phrase and an adverb respectively.
L3	Discourse Markers in Development of Arguments	To recognize and understand the effect of discourse markers, particularly phrases on the development of the main argument/s in authentic texts that deal with general abstract and formal topics. The following is an example of a chain of such markers from one text: ليس هذا فحسب صحيح أن لا يكفي إنَّ فإن
	General Arabic Cultural Schemata	To recognize the general cultural background that general abstract and formal authentic texts partly depend on to convey their intent. A typical Arabic text about a political issue, for example, assumes certain attitudes/ awareness on the part of the reader, such as the attitudes towards political leaders or towards the status quo. In the sentence هل التعميمات التي سيطرت علي حقل العلوم السياسية منذ عقود عن الدولة العربية ما بعد الاستقلال عن الاستعمار الغربي لاتزال صالحة لفهم تعقيدات واقعها الراهن في تحولاته؟ What are these تعميمات? What is ما بعد الاستقلال like? What are تعقيدات واقعها الراهن?

Table 3. *Arabic Discourse Competence, continued*

L3	Embeddings of Phrases and Clauses	To relate interdependent ideas expressed through multiple phrases or clauses in general concrete, abstract, and formal authentic texts, as in: وتوقع ياسر جنيد مدير التسويق والمبيعات في الشركة السعودية للتسويق والتوكيلات المحدودة وهى الموزع لشركة زامبيرلا الايطالية لصناعة العاب الترفيه في المنطقة أن ترتفع مبيعات الألعاب الترفيهية بنسبة كبيرة خلال هذا العام. where the main clause is: توقع ياسر جنيد أن ترتفع مبيعات الألعاب الترفيهية بنسبة كبيرة خلال هذا العام and the embedded phrases and one (nominal) clause are: مدير التسويق والمبيعات فى الشركة السعودية للتسويق والتوكيلات المحدودة وهي الموزع لشركة زامبيرلا الايطالية لصناعة العاب الترفيه في المنطقة.
	Ellipsis (of clauses)	To relate interdependent ideas where whole clauses are omitted in general abstract and formal authentic texts, as in فمثلا لا يستطيع الفقير أن يصبح غنيا! بل يستطيع بالاجتهاد والتفكير السليم والهمة... where أن يصبح غنيا is omitted after the second يستطيع.

Sample Activity

To demonstrate how these features may be used in developing activities to help improve students' proficiency level, the author first presents a description of the structure of a typical GLOSS learning object. Then, he provides an example of an activity that uses one of the listed features.

A typical learning object consists of an average of 4 to 6 activities that cover a wide range of purposes. Typically the first activity is a warm-up exercise that aims at easing the student into the reading or listening passage. Depending upon the approach of the developer, the second activity ensures comprehension of the authentic materials presented, including main ideas and supporting facts or details. The developer naturally may choose to cover the comprehension check in more than one activity.

Similarly, the particular language feature that may pose a challenge in a reading or listening passage could be covered in one activity or more depending again on the nature of information that needs to be covered. Finally, each learning object is concluded with a wrap-up activity that typically, but not necessarily focuses on summarizing the passage or identifying its essential elements of information. The reader may access these lessons online in many foreign languages at: http://gloss.dliflc.edu/.

The following sample activity uses one of the listed Arabic structural features for proficiency level 2, namely "Noun-Adjective Agreement." This activity is part of a GLOSS reading learning object. The author also provides the general information that precedes the lesson, the lesson activity descriptions, the authentic copyrighted text that is used, and its English translation for the reader's reference. The teacher's note that explains this particular feature to the student is included, as well.

It should be noted that different lessons cover a variety of features at different proficiency levels. Typically, the reading or listening passage dictates the feature that should be covered in each lesson. The example provided below is only for demonstration purposes. The reader is encouraged to access this entire learning object online through the following link: http://gloss.dliflc.edu/products/gloss/ad_tec003/default.html.

General Lesson Information

Skill Modality:	Reading
Level:	2
Topic:	Technology
Language Feature:	Noun-Adjective Phrases
Objective(s):	Recognize the noun-adjective phrase structure and understand the function of such a phrase in authentic texts.
Competence:	Structural
Copyright Info:	Asharqalawsat, 2003, Hanan Al-Zayr

Description of Activities

1. Predict the content of the text.
2. Grasp the facts and details of the text.
3. Recognize the noun-adjective phrase and understand its function in an authentic text.
4. Summarize essential information in the text.

The Authentic Reading Text

في عملية رائدة: طبيبة سعودية تستخدم الروبوت في العمليات الجراحية

حققت طبيبة سعودية انجازاً كبيراً في المجال الجراحي بكونها أول طبيبة على مستوى العالم تقوم باستخدام تقنية الإنسان الآلي في العمليات الجراحية. وقد قامت الدكتورة امال العبدالكريم الأستاذة المساعدة بكلية الطب بجامعة الملك سعود واستشارية الجراحة العامة اخيرا بإجراء عدة عمليات جراحية بواسطة الروبوت.

وعبر عميد كلية الطب والمشرف على المستشفيات الجامعية الدكتور محمد بن مقرن المقيرن عن سعادته الغامرة بهذه الخطوة التي تؤكد المستوى المتقدم الذي وصلت اليه الطبيبة السعودية في مختلف التخصصات، ولاسيما التخصصات الطبية الدقيقة، مؤكدا ان هذا يعكس الدعم اللامحدود الذي توليه الحكومة في مجال تعليم المرأة والسعي للوصول بها الى أعلى المستويات وفي مختلف التخصصات.

وقال الدكتور رياض بن فؤاد تالك رئيس قسم الجراحة بكلية الطب جامعه الملك سعود في بيان وزع أمس، ان الدكتورة امال العبدالكريم تقوم باجراء كافة عمليات الجراحة العامة بكفاءة مشهورة، مما أهلها لتكون ضمن أوائل الجراحين الذين تم تدريبهم حديثا على استخدام هذه التقنية في مجال الجراحة. ويشار ان السعودية تنوي إجراء ١٠٠ عملية جراحية مختلفة خلال العام الحالي بواسطة الجراح الإلكتروني، مما يعد تحولاً في استخدام التقنية الحديثة في مجال الجراحة بتخصصاتها المختلفة.

ويذكر بأن جهاز الانسان الآلي له القدرة على القيام بكافة العمليات وبدقة بالغة اذ انه يقوم بترجمة حركة يد الجراح على جهاز المحاكاة إلى حركات جراحية فعلية من خلال فتحات صغيرة بالجسم، تسمح بإدخال الاذرعة الجراحية للانسان الآلي بالاضافة إلى المنظار الذي يسمح للجراح برؤية تفاصيل العملية داخل جسم المريض، كما يتميز الجهاز بقدرته على اعطاء الجراح مدى واسعا للعناية من الحركة المفصلية تفوق حقيقة الحركة المفصلية ليد الجراح ويقوم ايضا بالغاء أية ارتعاشات قد تكون مصاحبة لحركة يد الجراح عن طريق مرشحات خاصة بذلك مما يؤدي إلى القيام بكافة العمليات في وقت قصير وبدقة بالغة.

Translation of the Reading Text

A Saudi woman doctor has accomplished a great feat in the surgical field, being the first woman doctor on a global scale to use robotic technology in surgical operations. Dr. Amal Al-Abd-Al-Karim, assistant professor at the College of Medicine of King Saud University and expert general surgeon, recently carried out several surgical operations by means of robotics.

Dr. Muhammad Bin Maqran al-Muqayran, Dean of the College of Medicine and Director of University Hospitals, expressed his great happiness with this step, which affirms the advanced level that Saudi women doctors have reached in various specializations, especially critical medical specializations. He affirmed that this reflects the unlimited support that the government is providing in the field of women's education, and the effort to bring it to the highest level in various specializations.

In a statement distributed yesterday, Dr. Riyadh Bin Fu'ad Tallek, head of the Department of Surgery at the College of Medicine of King Saud University, said that Dr. Amal Al-Abd-Al-Karim undertakes all general surgical operations with well-known competence, which has qualified her to be among the first surgeons to be trained recently in using this technique in the field of surgery. It may be pointed out that Saudi Arabia plans to perform 100 different surgical operations during the current year by means of an electronic surgeon, which is considered a sudden change in the use of modern techniques in the field of surgery in different specializations.

It may be mentioned that the robotic device has the capability of performing all operations with profound accuracy since it uses a simulation device to translate the movement of the surgeon's hand into surgical movements through small openings in the body, allowing the insertion of the surgical arms of the robot in addition to the endoscope, which allows the surgeon to see the details of the operation inside the body of the patient. The device is also characterized by its capacity to give the surgeon a wide range of joint motion, which exceeds the actual joint motion of the surgeon's hand. It also helps the surgeon to avoid any shaking that may accompany the movement of his hand, by way of special filters for that, which leads to the performance of all operations in a short time and with great precision.

Teacher's Note

The **noun-adjective phrase** is a combination of a noun and one or more adjectives that modify or provide descriptive information about that noun. Such phrases can be found in almost every authentic Arabic text. However, the rules of using adjectives in Arabic are different from those in English.

In Arabic, the adjective follows the noun it describes in a sentence, and agrees with it in <u>gender</u>, <u>number</u>, <u>definiteness</u>, and <u>case</u>. For example:

English	**Arabic**
I saw the **new student** (*the new f. student*).	رأيت **الطالبَ الجديدَ** (<u>الطالبةَ الجديدةَ</u>).
I saw **two new students** (*two new f. students*).	رأيت **الطالبين الجديدين** (<u>الطالبتين الجديدتين</u>).
I saw **the new students** (*the new f. students*).	رأيت **الطلابَ الجددَ** (<u>الطالبات الجديدات</u>).

In the first examples, the masculine singular noun (الطالب) is followed by a masculine singular adjective (الجديد) that describes it as new. If the noun is feminine, the adjective should also be feminine. Note that using an adjective may not be essential to the basic idea of the sentence (رأيت الطالب). However, it provides important descriptive information that clarifies and elaborates the sentence.

The same rule applies to the second and third examples. If the noun is a masculine or feminine dual (الطالبين or الطالبتين), the adjectives are also masculine or feminine duals (الجديدين or الجديدتين). Similarly, if the noun is masculine or feminine plural (الطلاب or الطالبات), the adjectives are also masculine or feminine plural (الجدد or الجديدات).

Note that the adjectives also agree with the nouns they describe in definiteness and case. In the previous examples, the nouns are definite and in the accusative case, and so are the adjectives.

An exception to the rule is the **inanimate plural noun**, which is always treated as singular feminine noun in the Arabic noun-adjective phrase. For example:

English	Arabic
The students visited several famous, Arab **museums**.	زار الطلاب عدة **متاحف** عربية مشهورة.

In this example, there are two singular feminine adjectives (عربية and مشهورة) modifying the inanimate plural noun (متاحف).

The text you are reading includes several noun-adjective phrases that clarify and elaborate the essential information in the text. In the title of the text for example, there are three noun-adjective phrases highlighted below:

في **عملية رائدة**: **طبيبة سعودية** تستخدم الروبوت في **العمليات الجراحية**.

The first adjective (رائدة) modifies the noun (عملية) or operation as pioneering, the second adjective (سعودية) describes the noun (طبيبة) or doctor as Saudi, and the third adjective (الجراحية) clarifies the type of operations (العمليات) performed. Note that the inanimate plural (العمليات) is treated as singular feminine in the third noun-adjective phrase, which is the exception to the agreement rules explained earlier.

Being aware of the rules and function of such phrases in a sentence will facilitate your reading and comprehension of the text.

Language Feature Activity

اختر الجواب المناسب لكل من الأسئلة التالية.

Select the appropriate response for each question.

1. Two of the noun-adjective phrases in the following sentence are ________.

وقد قامت الأستاذة المساعدة بكلية الطب بجامعة الملك سعود واستشارية الجراحة العامة اخيرا بإجراء عدة عمليات جراحية بواسطة الروبوت.

a) الأستاذة المساعدة and كلية الطب.
b) الجراحة العامة and جامعة الملك.
c) الجراحة العامة and عمليات جراحية.

2. How would you describe the function of the highlighted noun-adjective phrase in the following sentence?

وعبر عميد كلية الطب عن سعادته الغامرة بالمستوى المتقدم الذي وصلت اليه الطبيبة السعودية في مختلف التخصصات، ولاسيما **التخصصات الطبية الدقيقة**.

a) It is part of the basic point of the sentence.
b) It provides specific information about the specialties.
c) It explains why the dean is happy.

3. Which noun is modified by the highlighted adjective in the following sentence?

وقال رئيس قسم الجراحة في بيان وزع أمس، ان الدكتورة امال العبد الكريم تقوم بإجراء كافة عمليات الجراحة **العامة** بكفاءة مشهورة.

a) كافة
b) عمليات
c) الجراحة

4. Identify the noun that is modified by the highlighted adjective in the following phrase.

يقوم الإنسان الآلي بترجمة حركة يد الجراح إلى حركات جراحية فعلية **دقيقة**.

a) فعلية
b) جراحية
c) حركات

Conclusion

In this paper, the author has framed a new approach and offered some suggestions that may have a positive impact on the outcomes of the dedicated efforts of professionals in teaching and curriculum development at the DLIFLC and elsewhere. The paper discusses some relevant issues for improving the foreign language proficiency of learners in general and of government linguists in particular.

The objective is to highlight an approach to teaching and curriculum development that promises to contribute to the development of learners' foreign language proficiency. The fast-paced and intensive nature of the Institute's teaching programs dictated the necessity of investigating innovative approaches to teaching and curriculum development that may yield significant results.

It is argued that sound learning opportunities that focus on level-specific language features can contribute significantly to improving the learners' foreign language proficiency. It is, therefore, suggested that language features should be the organizing principle in the design and development of syllabi and curricula. The paper describes how these features may be systematically integrated into teaching and curriculum development to help students reach the desired goal of improved proficiency.

The paper also cites significant work that has been done in some foreign languages to identify and use these features to achieve desired outcomes. Whereas more research and development may be needed in other foreign languages and/or skill areas, it is imperative that teachers, curriculum developers, and learners be made aware of the nature and structure of the target language and of the particular difficulties it poses at each level of proficiency in order to successfully implement this approach.

Also, the suggested approach should help channel the efforts of professionals in teaching and curriculum development and focus their attention on the challenges that students typically face in becoming proficient in the target language. Additionally, it promises to increase students' motivation since the materials used directly address their needs and focus on the challenges they face in learning the target language. Hence, developing their linguistic competence and thereby achieving higher levels of proficiency is more tenable.

If the goal is to improve the foreign language proficiency of our linguists, then identifying the particular language challenges that they face and systematically targeting them in teaching and curriculum development is an indispensable step toward reaching this goal. The author believes that this or similar approaches directly tackle the most fundamental dimension of improving foreign language proficiency, namely developing linguistic competence.

Note

The author would like to acknowledge the contributions of other Arabic subject matter experts at the DLIFLC with whom he collaborated to identify those language features. Also, experts from the National Foreign Language Centers (NFLC) at Washington, D.C. provided valuable feedback during the process. Additionally, the NFLC experts identified language features for Arabic proficiency level *4* in partnership with the DLIFLC Arabic experts.

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Evaluating Arabic by the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale

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This article discusses the sufficiency of using Modern Standard Arabic exclusively to evaluate abilities in Arabic by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. The concepts of diglossia and polyglossia are revisited by reviewing the latest literature to identify the different varieties of Arabic and its regional and social dialects. Also, the different factors of communicative competence are discussed in connecting reality to the ILR scale. Hopefully, establishing a clearer reflection of Arabic in real-life situations will aid in deciding the best approach to teaching realistic Arabic effectively.

The United States government in general and the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC, 2007) in particular use the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale to evaluate the foreign language abilities of federal employees and military servicemen and servicewomen. The ILR describes the abilities of using a target language in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The ILR scale includes five proficiency levels (ILR, 2007) where the highest, Level 5, is awarded to learners who attain the abilities of well-educated natives of the target language (TL). Level 0 is the lowest on the above-mentioned scale, and it reflects no functional ability in the TL. In the ILR evaluation of the Arabic speaking skill, the diglossic character of Arabic is overlooked for the sake of practicality.

Therefore, this paper will reopen this subject to contribute to a more accurate assessment of Arabic speaking abilities. Hopefully, this will be a step towards redirecting the way Arabic is evaluated and taught so that its learners become able to use it effectively, suitably, properly, and appropriately in its different native countries. Currently in conducting DLIFLC's Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), Arabic proficiency in speaking is measured as if Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) were the only variety of Arabic used in real-life situations and by the different "speech communities" (Wardhaugh, 2006) in the different Arabic countries.

The ILR proficiency-level descriptions include the following accuracy factors: (1) lexical control, (2) grammatical control, (3) sociocultural competence, (4) delivery, (5) text type (length of utterances), and (6) global tasks. These accuracy factors reflect the following factors of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Canale and Swain, 1980): (1) grammatical competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, and (3) strategic competence. Sociolinguistic competence, in turn, can be broken down into sociocultural competence and discourse competence.

The ILR scale is a proficiency-based scale that reflects the above-mentioned factors of communicative competence. The term "proficiency" (Child, Clifford, & Lowe, 1993) is defined as the ability to function with the target language in a real-life situation. Using pure MSA as the only variety to execute all required real-life tasks for each proficiency level is never realistically conducive to meeting the sociocultural criteria of the ILR scale. In the coming section, I will revisit Ferguson's "diglossia" (1959) as a starting point in understanding the different dialects of Arabic, and I will use Egypt as an example of what also exists in other Arabic-speaking countries.

The Arabic Varieties between Diglossia and Polyglossia

In Ferguson's seminal article of 1959, he described "diglossia" as follows:

> In many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions. Perhaps the most familiar example is the standard language and regional dialect as used, say, in Italian or Persian, where many speakers speak their local dialect at home or among family or friends of the same dialect area but use the standard language in communicating with speakers of the other dialects or on public occasions. (p 325)

Many Arab and non-Arab linguists and applied linguists agree with Ferguson on the existence of a dichotomy of formal "high (H)" and informal "low (L)" varieties of language in many societies. Yet, they add that these two forms constitute the two ends of a continuum between which other mixed forms of the H and L varieties are used in many other places. Ferguson himself criticizes his own original work in his article "Diglossia Revisited" in the book *Understanding Arabic*. (Badawi & Elgibali, 1996). It is a collection of essays in honor of El Said Badawi who was a prominent Arabic linguist and an applied linguist at the American University, Cairo.

In expressing that his original intention was to only delineate a language situation and to elaborate further on his term diglossia, Ferguson (1996) writes:

> In every one of the four cases the researcher can document a continuum of forms between the H and L varieties, and some linguists have denied the validity of my identification of the diglossia situation on this account. I recognize the existence of intermediate forms and mentioned them briefly in the article, but I felt then and still feel that in the diglossia case the analyst finds two poles in terms of which the intermediate varieties can be described; there is no third pole. (p. 226)

The local use of Arabic in Egypt matches Ferguson's clarification in the above-mentioned quotation. Not only is the local Egyptian form of Arabic a "regional dialect" by Wardhaugh's definition (2006), it also has several forms that can be on a continuum between most formal to most informal. To explain this point, I will elaborate on the different varieties of the Egyptian dialect that are used by Egyptians suitably for daily-life situations. Those different forms of the Egyptian dialect are indicative of the speaker's geographical region, religion, level of education, and socioeconomic status.

Wardahaugh shows that speech communities are not defined solely on linguistic grounds; the term is used loosely to indicate those who share certain regional "speech markers." There are several regional dialects, each of which is used within certain geographical boundaries in the country, and they are marked by differences in phonology and lexicon. The most prestigious of these dialects is the one spoken in Cairo, and it is perceived by the majority of Egyptians as the standard regional dialect for the country. The previous statement indicates also that the different dialects used in Egypt not only constitute regional dialects, they are also “social dialects” (Wardhaugh, 2006) on most occasions. Egyptians add a social value to several of their regional sub-dialects that also reflect certain values and attributes for their speech communities. For example, a certain regional or social dialect might reflect a certain level of intelligence, cunningness, sincerity, or high level of education, etc.

The same applies to the dialects used in Cairo, where people who belong to different social groups speak differently depending on their level of education, socioeconomic status, or even religion. For example, Egyptian Copts speak differently among themselves than publicly with the Muslim majority. For example, they prefer to use the phrase “believe me” to avoid using the Lord’s name in vain. Also Muslims adjust their register when speaking with their Coptic interlocutors to avoid overusing idiomatic expressions that are exclusively Islamic.

Ferguson (1959) describes a similar situation in Iraq: “In Baghdad the Christian Arabs speak a “Christian Arabic” dialect when talking among themselves but speak the general Baghdad dialect, “Muslim Arabic,” when talking in a mixed group. The Coptic or Islamic communities as speech communities in Egypt are similar to the Iraqi example given by Ferguson. Their main speech marker is the register, as explained above, they use in conveying their messages during a conversation with other people from either faith. The accent, pronunciation, and selection of vocabulary items of both Christian and Muslims depend on their Egyptian regional dialect. In other words, both of them always belong to two different speech communities as Wardhaugh (2006) explains. They are not alone in this matter; most people in any community belong to more than one speech community, as will be demonstrated later. Speech communities are used in this paper as the main factor of “social dialects” (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Although Wardahaugh shows that speech communities are not defined solely on linguistic grounds, the term is used loosely to indicate those who share certain regional “speech markers.” Those speech markers are associated with certain values of sophistication, stubbornness, genuineness, simplicity, wittiness, etc. Those indicative speech markers not only characterize the different regions of Egypt, but also exist in dynamic and overlapping speech communities in Cairo.

This article will focus on the Arabic used in Cairo where Egyptians use different forms of Arabic that vary from Classical as the highest of the “H” forms to a “vernacular” (Labov, 1972a) to the most informal of the “L” forms. Usually the L forms are used more often in Egyptian daily-life situations.

The following lines are written by Elgibali (Badawi & Elgibali, 1996), “Badawi in his article Mustawayat al-ᶜārabiyya al-muᶜāsira fi Misr argues for the presence of five discrete yet interrelated sociolinguistic levels, which he characterizes in terms of identifiable linguistic properties, conditions of acquisition by speakers, and rules of discourse usage (for succinct exposes, see Stoetzer 1977 and Harry in this volume)” Badawi’s five levels, which will be used for the remainder of this paper, are: (1) fusha al-turath (Classical Arabic of the heritage), (2) fusha al-ᶜāsr (Modern Standard Arabic, the modern literary language), (3) ᶜāammiyyat al-muthaqqafin (high standard colloquial, used in high discourse), (4) ᶜāammiyyat al-mutanawwirin (middle standard colloquial, used by the educated for everyday topics), and (5) ᶜāammiyyat al-ummiyyin (low standard colloquial, the everyday language of the uneducated). The first two levels are considered the Egyptian H varieties, and the levels from three to five are considered different levels of the Egyptian L forms. Consequently, I will discuss the presence of these five levels and their use in addition to the presence of other ranks of formality that might be employed by certain speech communities.

The highest level, which is considered the most formal, is Classic Arabic. It is most revered for its religious adherence to the Qur'anic script and Islam in general, and it usually refers to the diction and language used in the pre-Islamic literature. I would argue that this variety is still used, at least to a certain extent, and even conversationally, by clergymen at mosques or in the different kinds of media. Also, legislators in general, and those of jurisprudence in particular, in addition to law makers and professors, use Classical Arabic in their literature, discussions, or when interviewed by TV stations. Often, they debate political, social, and economical issues from an Islamic perspective. Moreover, they use it in all their writings on religious and legal publications. This variety is also used in producing literature or drama pertinent to the history of Islam. For example, authors use it in writing the dialogue for movies on the emergence of Islam. This language variety was introduced to Egypt with the advent of Islam at a time when other languages were used in Egypt, such as: African languages, Coptic, Greek, as well as pidgins and Creoles of the above.

Arabic interacted with these existing languages as the dominant one going through a process of pidginization, creolization, and decreolization. Even later on, the existing forms of Arabic changed when they came in contact with Sabir during the extended presence of the Crusades. Sabir was the lingua franca used by them in the Mediterranean area (Wardhaugh, 2006). After this period and up until the 19th century, Arabic came in contact with many European languages via European colonization, and the language continued to undergo modifications to cope with the emerging necessities of each time period. A separate paper would be needed to cover the history behind the development of the different Arabic varieties used in the Arab countries in general and in Egypt in particular; Elgibali (Badawi & Elgibali, 1996) touches briefly upon this topic as follows:

> Several mechanisms of language change were proposed to explain how contemporary dialects emerged and developed, including latency or internal development, drift, contact-induced change, and pidginization followed by creolization and decreolization –that are not always mutually exclusive. In some cases, the evolution of certain type of dialects (for instance religious) is, relatively speaking, easily accounted for. In other cases, such as regional dialects, the conditions of development and their instruments of implementation remain only hazily identified: scarcity of documents, their fragmentation, and the fact that such documents provide us only with indirect evidence make this an arduous task. Confirmation of the complexity of the task can be found in Dionisius Agius's stimulating study (Chapter 2) of the development of Siculo-Arabic (p. 4)

Those changes caused the dilution of Classic Arabic into what is known today as MSA. MSA is the second level described by Badawi and Elgibali (1996), which is mainly the language of the media, the change occurred over time by accepting several writing mechanics, organizational styles, and punctuation rules through contact with European languages. These changes have been accepted and used as the standard in most Arab countries, and this is the reason for using MSA as the lingua franca when communication fails between two Arabs from two different countries. This variety is mainly used in literature, formal, and legal writings, but also conversationally in limited situations and speech acts. But according to observations, MSA is losing ground rapidly due to the growing dominance of Badawi's L varieties of Arabic used in Egypt's daily life.

Galal Amin (2006), Professor of Economics at the American University in Cairo, writes:

> Anyone who still remembers the respect and esteem with which Egyptians regarded the Arabic language forty or fifty years ago, cannot help but be grieved by the treatment it receives today. People used to take pride in being able to write good Arabic, in being well acquainted with the rules of Arabic grammar and in observing them even in writing an ordinary letter, let alone in giving a speech in public. This was made possible for our generation by the teachers we had, themselves masters of the language. It was taken for granted that a journalist, an announcer, should have a perfect command of Classical Arabic. When ministers and politicians delivered speeches, they did so in polished Classical Arabic, and one of the standards by which this or that politician was judged was the force of his eloquence and the beauty of his language. (p. 86)

However, I argue that the emergence of the Arabic news satellite channels is a phenomenon that has been causing the reversing of this process in Egypt and other Arabic speaking countries. At least, one can safely say that it is leading to the growth of MSA back into some of its lost territories even in covering sports events.

Many Egyptian intellectuals, politicians, and artists feel compelled, first, to soon enjoy interacting almost exclusively in MSA when interviewed by non-Egyptian news channels. This new standard of journalism causes a wash back effect on many other situations in Egypt where MSA has lost ground to Badawi's L forms of Egyptian Arabic. It is worth mentioning that those satellite channels that use western style journalism definitely impact the use of MSA. In addition to MSA, it is very common during many interviews, formal situations, or even in private discussions to observe a speaker skillfully mixing the top three forms (the H forms and the top L form) of Badawi's classification to maximize their impact on the audience.

Moreover, some speakers who are highly capable of using Classic Arabic, MSA, and the highest variety of the ᶜāammiyya (dialect) selectively insert English or French phrases or words while being interviewed to insinuate their high level of sophistication. Also, it is a status symbol that prompts many celebrities or TV anchors to intentionally slip into the use of words from English.

In referring to this phenomenon, Ferguson (1996) writes:

> For example, in Lebanon, there are many who make use of the H variety of Arabic as well as their local Lebanese dialect, and in addition speak French and/or English in their daily lives. These languages fit into different places in the communicative functions of the society,

> and this complexity is not at all unusual in the various types of speech communities in the world. (p. 224).

A good example of using code switching and mixing is the growing speech community of students attending the American University in Cairo. They come from the elitist Egyptian social class and have the highest socioeconomic status in the country. Although they often received the best education in MSA at private schools, they mix American English with Badawi's third and fourth levels in most daily situations. Of course, they would do that only in appropriate contexts with others who belong to the same speech community, which makes them members of several speech communities as mentioned above. English has become very influential in Egypt, and has become a tool to gain employment with one of the well compensating American or foreign companies that do business in the country.

English in general and its American variety in particular has gained enormous prestige in Egypt since 1979 when President Sadat signed the peace treaty with Israel under American sponsorship. Since then, the American foreign aid to Egypt became second only to Israel's among all recipients of the U.S. economic assistance to any country in the world. That Pact impacted employment and the hiring qualifications of American businesses at any level. Also, politicians who had better command in American English became more influential in Egypt. Therefore, I argue that there is a growing community of bilingual Egyptians who have received excellent education in both Arabic and English. Although the majority of people from this speech community go to the US only to visit for a short time, many of them have an attitude equivalent to those who are dual citizens of both countries. Also, this speech community is similar to Fishman's (1967) type A for the presence of bilingualism in addition to diglossia. In the coming section, I will explore Badawi's three L varieties in Egypt.

The most formal form of Badawi's three L varieties is ᶜāammiyyat al-muthaqqafin (high standard colloquial, used in high discourse). This type of variety is the one most used by well-educated Egyptians in most formal situations to include most public functions. This variety is the closest to MSA; actually, it is mostly MSA mixed with Egyptian speech markers. The speaker would utter some phrases completely in MSA and then switch to pronouncing his fillers and uttering some words sporadically with the Egyptian phonological markers. Depending on how formal or serious the intended message is the more MSA the speaker uses. In this variety, even the dialect used is composed of proper MSA words pronounced with Egyptian sounds. I must say that the speaker of this form selectively and deliberately bounces between pure MSA and the Egyptian markers skillfully to communicate most effectively the intended message.

The fourth variety, ᶜāammiyyat al-mutanawwirin -middle standard colloquial, is used by educated Egyptians for everyday informal topics. They use more Egyptian fillers, vocabulary, pronunciation, less polite forms, and less MSA code switching or mixing. This form is used with friends and family in discussing linguistically demanding topics in informal contexts, at informal talk shows, working environments, restaurants, coffee shops, or social visits. This is the language used most often by the Egyptian upper class in daily speech acts. They mix this variety with the more formal L variety in more formal situations. The listener to a speaker of this variety understands automatically that this person is educated and middle-class or higher. To emphasize, this is the variety used the most by educated Egyptians in their daily lives.

The least formal variety of Said Badawi is ᶜāammiyyat al-ummiyyin (low standard colloquial, the everyday language of the uneducated). While the educated and most middle-class people use the middle standard colloquial for their everyday functions, the uneducated populace uses the ᶜāammiyyat al-ummiyyin variety to meet their daily communication needs. The interlocutor can easily detect mispronunciations of MSA words, the maximum reduction of the MSA sounds, and grammatical structures usually found in pidgin and creole (Wardhaugh, 2006). Probably this is a form that has not completed the decreolization process into the contemporary full fledged Egyptian dialect. Occasionally, people who use this variety try to raise their register to a higher level to sound respectful, like educated people, or to make a better impression on their interlocutors. This is accomplished by using polite forms from the higher variety, but they really cannot sustain it to opinionate, for example, on linguistically demanding topics.

The five levels of Egyptian Arabic discussed above are more reflective of reality than how simplistically Arabic diglossia was initially understood by interpreting Ferguson's H and L forms. However in Egypt and the other Arabic-speaking countries, well-educated speakers of each country navigate their speech through all the available varieties of Arabic, used in their country, to cause the desired effect on their interlocutors and to make it suitable and proper for each speech act. This ability to tailor Arabic matches the descriptors for ILR-Level 5. For example, a well-educated Egyptian is capable of using all five forms in addition to English or French to convey a thought most effectively in every particular context.

Such a person suitably and properly uses all the above-mentioned varieties as tools, each of which is only effective for certain situations. This flexible usage of the different forms is common for any Arabic-speaking person in his native country and also in other Arab countries. For example, a Lebanese who is in Egypt for the first time is able to carry out most of the needed functions by using the most formal L variety of Lebanese in addition to MSA. The proficiency level by which an Arab individual is capable of functioning in another Arab country depends on the mutual intelligibility of both regional dialects of Arabic and the person's level of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990, Hymes, 1972).

Consequently, measuring the proficiency level of an Arab's functional ability in a different Arab country depends on the individual's level of discourse competence and sociocultural awareness of the host country. In this juncture, I argue that if an Arab visitor were efficient in his or her sociocultural awareness and discourse competence, he or she would be able to function up to L 4 by using his native dialect. Accordingly, to consider that every Arabic dialect is a different language for the purpose of assessing someone's Arabic proficiency level in other Arab countries is simplistic and unrealistic.

This diversity of Arabic forms in every country shows that a person learning only MSA will never be able to understand most of what is said in most situations. Let alone that using MSA to converse with native speakers will never be as effective as required by the ILR proficiency levels. The polyglossic Arabic used in every one of its countries requires us to reconsider the way we assess learners' Arabic proficiency using the ILR descriptors, and consequently teaching programs should be redesigned accordingly. In the coming section, I will revisit the ILR descriptors at each level to determine at which level MSA will cease to function effectively. MSA is only one form of Arabic that has many other regional and social dialects; "regions" here include not only countries but also the different geographical areas in each country. Arabic is Arabic wherever it is used.

To evaluate speakers' functional abilities by measuring their communicative competence (Bachman, 1990) wherever they are in the Arab countries is the key here.

Evaluating MSA Speakers by the ILR

The ILR descriptors for Level 4 (L 4) and Level 5 (ILR, 2007) require speakers to tailor their language formally and informally as needed for every situation. Moreover, Level 5 (L 5) in particular is unattainable unless a person is capable of using all the different varieties of a language, to include its colloquial forms, to cause the maximum effect on listeners. These two requirements exclude speakers who are limited only to MSA from ever reaching L 4 or L 5. I will therefore only discuss the effectiveness of MSA alone in reaching levels 1, 2, and 3.

Speakers at L 1 are required to carry out the following tasks in the OPI: (1) conducting a simple short conversation, (2) asking questions, and (3) participating in a role-play for a survival situation. A speaker of only MSA will be able to carry those tasks out successfully with educated natives who use the top four levels of Badawi's forms. Uneducated people who only use the most informal form might not be able to participate fully with the MSA speaker in a conversation. However, the standards of Level 1 prescribe that the speaker is understood only by those who are used to dealing with foreigners (ILR, 2007). Then only in similar situations, a speaker who uses MSA exclusively might be able to satisfy the ILR descriptors for L 1.

Speakers of MSA at L 2 should be understood by anyone in the country to include those who "are not used to dealing with foreigners" (ILR, 2007). Many of the uneducated natives who speak only Badawi's lowest level will not understand nor will they be encouraged to interact with a speaker of MSA in carrying out the following prescribed tasks for an OPI: (1) narrating in all time frames, (2) reporting facts on current events, (3) giving instructions or directions, (4) executing a role-play for a survival situation with a complication, and (5) providing a physical descriptions of an object. Yet, success in carrying out these tasks is expected with native educated speakers at any level, and they don't have to be college graduates.

L 3 requires the learner to: (1) cope with an unfamiliar situation, (2) talk about an abstract topic, (3) hypothesize in the TL, and (4) to support her or his opinion on an abstract societal topic. For sure, one-on-one communication with a native speaker in carrying out these tasks is doable in MSA, if all goes well. Carrying out the first task mentioned above, dealing with noisy neighbors, for example, probably requires more sociocultural awareness and higher discourse competence than probably needed in performing the other tasks.

As for discourse competence, is the MSA code alone sufficient in phrasing the intended thought effectively in solving social disputes? In general, communicative competence becomes more crucial the higher a learner progresses on the ILR scale. In social disputes, the speaker needs all the components mentioned above in the introductory section of the paper. Therefore, the question above remains; how effective is the MSA code in solving social disputes? It is very doubtful in many unfamiliar situations that using a pure MSA code is efficient enough to meet the expected "discourse" requirements in solving many societal disputes.

Also, it is questionable for a speaker who uses only MSA to participate in a group discussion about policies, for example in a firm, a company, a school, etc. Most of the discussions will be in Badawi's highest L variety. So, an MSA speaker needs to have listening comprehension abilities minimally at L 3 in this L variety to understand what others are saying around the table. If this is the case, the speaker in her or his MSA response might come across as a foreigner who does not really know the underpinning issues of the topic being discussed. Unless a clear understanding of the sociocultural foundations related to the topic being discussed is constantly reflected in the MSA speaker's discourse, the interlocutors will not consider the speaker's different opinion. After reviewing the performance of a speaker who uses MSA exclusively against the ILR scale, it is clear that Arabic learners need to build their competency in both MSA and any commonly understood regional dialect. It is a lifetime task for those who pursue continuous growth in the target language; so it is imperative that they start the journey on the right path.

Conclusion

As indicated above, using only the MSA code is not sufficient to meet the ILR descriptors beyond L 1. Therefore, learners must learn one regional dialect such as that of Egyptian, Gulf, or Levantine in addition to MSA to successfully progress up the ILR scale. This matter of combining a dialect and MSA in facilitating the learning of Arabic isn't as easy as it might sound. It poses yet another heavily loaded question: which form of Arabic should students learn first? Many scholars believe that students should learn MSA first, because it includes all the needed Arabic sounds. Many teachers, unlike Wardhaugh (2006), believe that any dialect is a reduced form of Classic Arabic and MSA, and therefore MSA is a better starting point. At the same time, other scholars believe that learning a regional dialect first follows the natural order of learning Arabic by its own native speakers.

The author's position is that students need to be exposed first to MSA, and then both curriculum and classroom activities should be developed with a combination of both the standard language mixed suitably with a major dialect. The appropriate level of introducing the dialect should be based on the ILR requirements for each proficiency level. A full immersion in the prospective target country should be built into the program for students to gain sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence. The immersion should consist of classroom sessions and excursions to execute specific dialect assignments that are guided by the ILR scale. Classroom task-based activities are for continuing progression in MSA and for discussing dialect assignments. I must add that the program should be guided by measuring learner's potential development by progressively identifying each student's zone for proximal development (Poehner, 2005). Also, activities should be tailored to each learner's learning styles. This suggested approach needs to be expounded in a separate article.

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General Information

Index

Authors and Articles

Dutertre, Ayca. (1999). *Officers and Enlisted Personnel Success in Foreign Language Learning in DLIFLC's 25-Week Spanish Basic Program. 13*(1 & 2), p. 117.
Eighannan, Alaa. (2004). *Putting Principles of Interactive Language Teaching Into Your Classroom Practice. 16*(1 & 2). p. 67.
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Fay-Magiera, Patricia. (2007). *Notes from an OPI Tester Trainer to DLIFLC Instructors Why Can't They Describe? 18*(1 & 2) p. 77
Feghali, Maksoud. (1989). *Interactive Video Authoring in Teaching Foreign Languages. 5*(1), p. 68.
Ferguson, Umit. (2005). *Improving Proficiency Through Learner-Centered Instruction. 17*(1&), p. 1.
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Fox, Lisette. (1999). *Reflections on Culture. 13*(1 & 2), p. 89.
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Iaremenko, Grigori. (2004). *Conditionally Communicative Exercises. 16*(1 & 2). p. 41.
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Kalgreen, Thomas M. (2008). *Learner: Perceptions of an Arabic Student at DLIFLC. 19*(1 & 2). p. 23.
Kaneda, Yoshiko. (1999). *An Experiment in Listening Material: Is Packaging More Important Than Its Content? 13*(1 & 2), p. 131.
Khoshaba, Matti Philliops. (2004). *The Integrative Test of Arabic (IAT). 16*(1 & 2) p. 53.
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Kordecki, Ann. (1989). *Dealing with Underachievers in a Classroom. 5*(1), p. 63.

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Authors of Reports

Editorials

Interviewees

Correspondence

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General Information

Calendar of Events

2010

Internationaler Germanistenkongress (IVG), 30 July – 7 August, Warsaw, Poland. Contact: IVG; Email: ivg@uw.edu.pl Web: www.ivg.uw.edu.pl

Traditions and Transitions: German Curricula, 26–28 August, University of Waterloo, Canada. Contact: John Plews, Email: jplews@smu.ca; Barbara Schmenk, Email: bschmenk@uwaterloo.ca.

British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL), 9–11 September, Aberdeen, UK. Contact: Web: www.baal.org.uk

African Studies Association (ASA), 18–21 November, San Francisco, CA. Contact: Kimme Carlos, Annual Meeting Coordinator, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, 132 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400; (732) 932-8173, Fax (732) 932-3394; Email: annualmeeting@africanstudies.org Web: www.africanstudies.org

American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; (856) 795-5553, Fax (856) 795-9398; Email: headquarters@aatg.org Web: www.aatg.org

American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI), 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: Edoardo Lebano, Executive Director, AATI, Department of French and Italian, Indiana University, Ballentine 642, Bloomington, IN 47405; (812) 855-2508, Fax (812) 855-8877; Email: elebano@hotmail.com Web: www.aati-online.org/

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: ACTFL, 1001 N. Fairfax St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 894-2900, Fax (703) 894-2905; Email: headquarters@actfl.org Web: www.actfl.org

Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA), 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: CLTA, Cynthia Ning, Executive Director, 416 Moore Hall, 1890 East-West Road, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 956-2692, Fax (808) 956-2682; Email: clta@clta-us.org Web: clta-us.org

National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: NNELL, PO Box 7266, B 201 Tribble Hall, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109; Email: nnell@wfu.edu Web: www.nnell.org

3rd International Conference on Applied Linguistics, 27–28 November, Minhsiung, Taiwan. Contact: National Chiayi University, Department of Foreign Languages; Email: ical2010.ncyu@gmail.com Web: sites.google.com/site/ical2010/Home

2011

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), 6-9 January, Los Angeles, CA. Contact: Patricia L. Zody, Executive Director, AATSEEL, PO Box 569, Beloit ,WI 53512-0569; (608) 361-9697, Fax: (608) 363-7129; Email: aatseel@sbcglobal.net Web: www.aatseel.org

Linguistic Society of America (LSA), 6–9 January, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: LSA, 1325 18th St. NW, # 211, Washington, DC 20036-6501; (202) 835-1714, Fax (202) 835-1717; Web: www.lsadc.org

Modern Language Association (MLA), 6–9 January, Los Angeles, CA. Contact: MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789; (646) 576-5000, Fax (646) 458-0030; Web: www.mla.org

Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL), 3–5 March, Indianapolis, IN. Contact: Patrick T. Raven, Executive Director, CSCTFL, PO Box 251, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0251; (414) 405-4645, Fax (414) 276-4650; Email: CSCTFL@aol.com Web: www.csctfl.org

Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), 10–12 March, Baton Rouge, LA. Contact: Lynne McClendon, Executive Director, SCOLT, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; (770) 992-1256, Fax (770) 992-3464; Email: lynnemcc@mindspring.com Web: www.scolt.org

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 17–19 March, New Orleans, LA. Contact: TESOL, 700 S. Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864; Email: info@tesol.org Web: www.tesol.org

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), 2–4 April, Baltimore, MD. Contact: Rebecca Kline, Executive Director, NECTFL, c/o Dickinson College, PO Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; (717) 245-1977, Fax (717) 245-1976; Email: nectfl@dickinson.edu Web: www.nectfl.org

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT), 7–9 April, Dallas, TX. Contact: Contact: Jody Klopp, Executive Director, SWCOLT; Email: jklopp@cox.net Web: www.swcolt.org

American Educational Research Association (AERA), 8–12 April, New Orleans, LA. Contact: AERA, 1430 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 238-3200, Fax (202) 238-3250; Web: www.aera.net

International Reading Association (IRA), 56th Annual Convention, 8–12 May, Orlando, FL. Contact: International Reading Association, Headquarters Office, 800 Barksdale Rd., PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139; Email: pubinfo@reading.org Web: www.reading.org

Linguistic Society of America 2011 Institute, 5 July – 5 August, University of Colorado-Boulder. Contact: Email: lsa2011@colorado.edu Web: verbs.colorado.edu/LSA2011/

British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL), 1–3 September, Bristol, UK. Contact: Web: www.baal.org.uk

African Studies Association (ASA), 17–20 November, Washington, DC. Contact: Kimme Carlos, Annual Meeting Coordinator, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, 132 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400; (732) 932-8173, Fax (732) 932-3394; Email: annualmeeting@africanstudies.org Web: www.africanstudies.org

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Purpose

The purpose of this internal publication is to increase and share professional knowledge among DLIFLC faculty and staff, as well as to promote professional communication within the Defense Foreign Language Program.
The success of *Dialog on Language Instruction* depends on your cooperation and support.

Submission of Manuscripts

All materials submitted for publication should conform to the guidance in this section. For additional guidance, refer to *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th Ed., 1994), available from the American Psychological Association, P. O. Box 2710, Hyattsville, MD 20784.
We encourage you to submit a previously unpublished manuscript, a review, a description of innovative classroom activities, a news item, or even a comment on language instruction. Express your ideas on all aspects of language instruction including teaching, learning, and research. Present your findings on language teaching, learning, classroom strategies and techniques, and applied research.
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Articles

Manuscripts should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages. Divide your manuscript into the following sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Method or Organizing Construct
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Appendices
- Notes
- References
- Acknowledgments
- Author

Abstract

Provide a brief overview of your manuscript in 75 to 100 words. First, identify the topic of your manuscript in one sentence. Next state the purpose and the scope of your manuscript in a couple of sentences. Next name the sources used, for example personal observation, published books and articles. Finally, state your conclusion in the last sentence of the abstract.

Introduction

Describe the purpose of the manuscript. Relate it to the content of the recently, within the last two to three years, published literature. Describe work that had a direct impact on your study. Avoid general references. Cite only pertinent research findings and relevant methodological issues. Provide the logical continuity between previous and present work. Identify the main issues of your study. Point out the implications of your study.

Introduction should not exceed 20 percent of the body of your manuscript.

Method or Organizing Construct

Method

Describe how you conducted the study. Give a brief synopsis of the method. Next develop the subsections pertaining to the *participants*, the *materials*, and the *procedure*.

Participants. Identify the number and types of participants. Specify how they were selected and how many participated in each experiment. Provide major demographic characteristics such as age, sex, geographic location, and institutional affiliation. Identify the number of experiment dropouts and the reasons they did not continue.

Materials. Describe briefly the materials used and their function in the experiment.

Procedure. Describe each step in the conduct of the research. Include the instructions to the participants, the formation of the groups, and the specific experimental manipulations.

Organizing Construct

Divide this part into subsections. Focus each subsection on a specific issue identified in the introduction. In each subsection, identify the issue, describe it, and present your finding.

Discussion

Respond to the following questions guide: (1) What I have contributed here? (2) How has my study helped to resolve the original problem? (3) What conclusions and theoretical implications can I draw from my study?

Conclusion

Summarize your findings.

References

The list of references should be submitted on a separate page of the manuscript with the centered heading: *References.* The entries should be arranged alphabetically by surnames of authors. The sample list of references below illustrates format for bibliographic entries:

Doe, H., & Burt, M. (2008). Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly, 16*(1), 93-95.
Long, D. P. (2007). *Testing English as a foreign language.* New York: Putnam. 2007.

Reference citations in the text of the manuscript should include the name of the author of the work cited, the date of the work, and when quoting, the page numbers on which the material that is being quoted originally appeared, e.g., (Jones, 2001, pp. 235-238). All works cited in the manuscript must appear in the list of references, and conversely, all works included in the list of references must be cited in the manuscript.

Notes

They should be used for substantive information only, and they should be numbered serially throughout the manuscript. Subsequently, they all should be listed on a separate page titled *Notes.*

Faculty Exchange

This section provides an opportunity for faculty to share ideas through brief articles up to two double-spaced pages on innovative classroom practices, such as suggestions on communicative activities, team teaching, use of media and realia, and adaptation of authentic materials. Each sample of a model classroom activity should state the purpose, provide instructions and, if applicable, give supporting texts or illustrations.

Reviews

Manuscripts should not exceed two double-spaced pages. Reviews of textbooks, scholarly works related to foreign language education, dictionaries, tests, computer software, video tapes, and other non-print materials will be considered for publication. Both positive and negative aspects of the work(s) being considered should be pointed out. The review should give a clear but brief statement of the works contents and a critical assessment of contribution to the profession. Quotations should be kept short. Do not use footnotes. Reviews that are merely descriptive will not be accepted for publication.

News and Views

Manuscripts should not exceed one double-spaced page. Items related to language instruction such as reports on conferences, official trips, official visitors, special events, new instructional techniques, training aids or materials, research findings, news items, etc., will be considered for publication.

Specifications for Manuscripts

Manuscripts should double-spaced, with margins of about 1.25 in. on all four sides and should be numbered consecutively. The first page should include only the title and the text. Only black and white should be used throughout the manuscript including for graphics and tables.
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Author

JANE C. DOE, Assistant Professor, Foreign Language Education, University of America, 226 N. Madison St., Madison, WI 55306. Specializations: foreign language acquisition, curriculum studies.

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The editor duly informs the author that the manuscript is unacceptable for publication. Normally this finding ends the revision process.

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