Applied Language Learning

Volume 31, Numbers 1 & 2
2021

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Presidio of Monterey

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Applied Language Learning

PB 65-21-01-02

The mission of Professional Bulletin 65, *Applied Language Learning* (US ISSN 1041-679X and ISSN 2164-0912 for the online version), is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on instructional methods and techniques, curriculum and materials development, assessment of needs within the profession, testing and evaluation, and implications and applications of research from related fields such as linguistics, education, communications, psychology, and the social sciences.

Applied Language Learning, published semiannually by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey, presents professional information. The views expressed herein are those of the authors, not the Department of Defense or its elements. The content does not necessarily reflect the official US Army position and does not change or supersede any information in official US Army publications. *Applied Language Learning* reserves the right to edit material.

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THANK YOU REVIEWERS

Applied Language Learning relies on expert reviewers for quality of the journal. Special thanks go to the individuals listed below. The publication of *Applied Language Learning* was made possible with their generous support.

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ARTICLES

Regional Language and Culture Studies: Redefining the Discipline

Don Holman
University of Northern Colorado

Whereas major research universities may accommodate programs of study in Arabic, Chinese, or Persian, regional universities and liberal arts colleges have struggled to adapt to a wider and more complex array of world languages and literatures in the 21st century. Many have been forced to choose between radically restructuring or closing programs in some languages. This was the case at the University of Northern Colorado. When the Department of Modern Languages faced pressure to close its French and German majors due to low enrollment, the faculty examined a limited range of options. The result is a new BA program in European Languages and Cultures. Yet what arose from necessity has the earmarks of virtue. Since introduced, the new major has seen increased enrollment in upper-division French and German courses, even motivating several of our majors to minor in other European languages, in addition to their language of emphasis. In view of its sister programs, Asian Studies, Africana Studies, and Latin American Studies, the new program perpetuates a trend for the study of languages in their regional, geopolitical context. For scholars in what is now the Department of World Languages and Cultures, adapting the study of languages to geopolitics and economics in the 21st century has meant nothing less than redefining our discipline.

Keywords: *world languages and literatures, culture studies, area studies, curriculum reform. translingual and transcultural competence*

Scholars in world languages and literature are confronted with daunting trends in higher education. A Modern Language Association (MLA) study published in 2019 cited statistics that underscored the experience of new, job-seeking PhDs, who have found themselves scrambling for a shrinking number of tenure-track positions in foreign languages and literatures. According to the MLA report, college enrollment in courses for languages other than English dropped 9.2% from 2013 to 2016 (Looney & Lusin, 2019, p. 1). Consequently, degree programs in foreign languages have closed at dozens of colleges and universities, with those languages of longer standing in higher education, including French, German and Spanish, taking some of the hardest hits (Looney & Lusin, pp. 8-9). In view, moreover, of an expanded range of languages to be found in college catalogs since the end of the Cold War, individual language programs that managed to survive have seen their slice of the enrollment pie steadily shrinking.

The situation is especially grim at regional universities and liberal arts colleges, where program closures have been prevalent. When I joined the University of Northern Colorado in the Fall of 2017, as chair in what was then the Department of Modern Languages, it would have been no exaggeration to say that the department was in crisis. Both the German teaching preparation and liberal arts Bachelor of Arts (BA) degrees had been closed to new admissions due to low enrollment, especially in upper-division courses. This same fate was narrowly escaped by French, whereas the Asian Studies program, with concentrations in Chinese or Japanese had managed to stay off the radar screens of administrators responsible for enrollment management. It should be noted that, for the same reason that the MLA places Spanish "in a category all its own" in its study (Looney & Lusin, p. 14), Spanish was until recently housed in its own department at our university.

My start at the University of Northern Colorado was also a return to academe. For the previous ten years I had been with the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California, first on the German faculty and later in administrative roles. The experience with foreign language training and assessment in the U.S. government agencies, such as the Foreign Service, Department of Defense (DoD), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), made me aware of a growing demand for world language and intercultural competence in government, business, and international non-government organizations (NGOs). Indeed, it is possible that my optimism about the renewed relevance of world languages was a reason I was offered the position as the department chair.

Foreign languages as a scholarly discipline

Historically, however, the relationship between the federal government and academe with respect to foreign language and cultural education has been characterized since the 1950s more often by divergent rather than parallel priorities. Lowe, a scholar with the CIA language school, who played a key role in initiating United States Government (USG) partnerships with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and other bodies interested in measuring proficiency, attributed the independent path of language assessment in federal agencies to "academia, " which was in the 1950s and later, according to Lowe (1988), "focused heavily on literature" (p. 16). This bifurcation of language teaching, typically by adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants, and the scholarly interests of tenured researchers in literature, was taken to task by the MLA in a manifesto titled "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New

Structures for a Changed World" (Geisler, Kramsch, McGinnis, Patrikis, Pratt, Ryding, & Saussy, 2007). The authoring committee proposed reforms to curricula and governance in world language and literature programs at universities, stressing that the "new courses and programs [they] recommend should not be developed exclusively by tenure-track scholars trained primarily in literature" (p. 240). They suggest rather that linguists and language acquisition specialists, as well as scholars of literature and culture, should be involved in designing programs and courses that address an array of topics—as wide as possible—devoted to cultivating "translingual and transcultural competence" in American undergraduates (p. 237).

At the same time, the report contends that this "two-tiered" system in university language departments, the rule rather than the exception at leading research universities, is present to a lesser degree, if at all, in the "BA-granting departments" that are typical of liberal arts colleges and regional state universities, including the University of Northern Colorado (Geisler, et al., p. 237, p. 242). Indeed, since my arrival in 2017, I have taught all four years of German, as well as courses in literature and cultural subject matter. Our faculty are simultaneously teaching their language at all levels, as well as fiction, drama, poetry, and other cultural topics. So it should come as little surprise that, as we undertook curricular reforms in the European languages, most of the decisions made about updating our programs aligned closely with the priorities and suggestions articulated in the MLA report, even though faculty were at the outset unfamiliar with it. We were responding to pressures brought about by those same changes in geopolitics and economics that are reshaping the relevance of world languages and cultures to our students' academic priorities, which are considered in the MLA report. The drive to survive in an increasingly complex and competitive higher education market in foreign languages compelled us to consider how students' career goals might offer us guidance as we approached curricula redesign.

Market analyses, surveys of current and prospective students, and input from relevant industries and agencies would all have been very helpful as we undertook the overhaul of curricula. But time constraints and a shoestring budget limited our research to studies already available, as well as to looking at innovative new programs at other, comparable colleges and universities. It was never about putting together a faculty's own wish-list. Our goal, rather, was to ensure our viability for the university now and into the future. Consequently, we were guided by several important considerations. First, we inventoried the qualifications and areas of specialization among our present faculty, as well as the numbers of faculty available in each language. Also considered were past, present, and likely future enrollments in programs and courses. Finally, we took note of courses offered in other departments that are relevant to continental European countries and cultures, such as history and political science. As in the Asian Studies program, with concentrations in Chinese and Japanese, such courses may be taken as electives to meet part of their degree requirements. In addition to permitting in-depth study and discussion in English of the target society and culture, for students still learning the language, it requires fewer language faculty and mitigates the low enrollments endemic to highly specialized, upper-division courses.

As counterintuitive as it may seem for language educators to surrender cultural subject matter to their colleagues in other departments, strong forces have been pushing for some time to separate language acquisition and the study of culture. In fact, it is a development in which scholars in world languages and literatures have been complicit. The fact that large numbers of

graduate students in related Ph.D. programs at research universities in the United States hail from countries where those languages are spoken, indicates that undergraduate language programs have been less effective than their students were led to assume when it comes to producing graduates who are proficient enough in their language of study to engage demanding fiction, poetry, and theoretical discourse in the original. At the same time, the earlier imperative among many language educators that all content should be addressed in the language of study is being jettisoned in some undergraduate programs, especially in those with the word "Studies" attached to "Asian,", "Francophone", "Hispanic", or "German" in their program titles.

A related development can be seen in the private sector. As organizations on the global playing field have become aware of intercultural barriers to their business, indigenous culture is usually addressed and learned in translation. Accessing culture through the language is seen by many as too arduous, costly, and time-consuming, especially in regions of the world where English is the preferred lingua franca. As stakeholders weigh the costs of acquiring professional language and cultural proficiency, purism loses to pragmatism.

In the face of such headwinds, it is easy for faculty and university administrators to see their options reduced to a binary choice of pressing forward or turning back. Should one proceed with or against socioeconomic trends in the 21st century? Unlike some university administrators, world language faculty understand that the choice has implications for their discipline, the body of knowledge to which they have devoted years of study and research. Even at those regional colleges that retain faculty in world languages, they sometimes find themselves appended to the local Department of English or Communications.

To understand why so many world language programs are floundering, especially at midsize and smaller colleges, it is helpful to consider the origin and character of foreign languages as a discipline. The earlier name of our department at the University of Northern Colorado is instructive. For the study of the *modern languages* has been defined historically in relation to the classical languages, especially Latin. In the absence of modern media in ancient Greek or Latin, students were introduced to texts that were the only surviving models of authentic, correct, and effective communication in the language of study: the "classics" that were handed down as a civilization's cultural legacy. Hence, classical languages were studied through the centuries to understand Roman civilization, study the Christian church fathers, learn rhetoric, etc. Similarly, university studies in modern languages arose and multiplied in the 19th century as a foundation for studying the modern European literary canon, which was viewed as exemplary for Americans as members of Western civilization.

Though this is not the place to review in detail postmodern or postcolonial criticisms of the Eurocentric worldview and the intellectual norms that this approach to world languages and literatures assumed, it would be foolhardy to ignore their implications for language and culture studies in the multilateral, multicultural, globalized world of the 21st century. The nation states that have represented the benchmark of sovereignty and security since the Treaty of Westphalia in the 17th century also came to regulate which dialect was the gold standard of literacy in each country. Moreover, they produced the literature and other high cultural edifices that were the traditional objects of research for scholars in foreign language departments. Even if language boundaries did not always coincide exactly with national borders, *national* languages and

literatures were often reflected in the departments that have housed world language faculty at universities.

In the globalized economy, however, borders become porous, workers migrate, professionals collect passports, ethnic identities mutate, and multinational corporations dictate policy that was once the prerogative of kings, presidents, and legislatures. The question that should occupy anyone interested in the future of world language and culture studies in higher education must find an answer to the following question: *why are classes not fuller when there is a growing rather than diminished demand for second language and intercultural competence in business, government, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)*? Whereas this need is met at least in part in some organizations by educated immigrants proficient in both English and their native language, it is puzzling why more colleges and universities have not yet adapted their programs to current geopolitical and economic realities, thereby denying their world language graduates real opportunities open to bilingual (or multilingual) individuals with "transcultural competence" (Geisler et al., 2007, p. 237). It was precisely this goal that motivated a choice to combine the BA programs for the European languages into one undergraduate degree: European Languages and Cultures.

Why translingual or transcultural competence?

Consistent with yet another trend in college language education, both the new BA and its sister degree, Asian Studies, were designed to lend themselves to a double major for students in related fields such as history or political science, of whom we have several. This is consistent with the conclusions of another MLA study which found that, while numbers of world language majors are low among students that graduate with just one degree, world language BAs stood out as the most popular among all second majors (Steward, 2015). Notably, nearly half of our new majors have opted to minor in at least one other European language, in addition to their language of concentration, resulting in a win-win for our department. The same is true of a small number of students with a keen interest and aptitude for languages, who are studying both European and Asian languages. They include two students who have chosen a double major in Asian Studies and European Languages and Cultures.

What is striking about these programs, as well as for our colleagues in Latin American, Africana, and Middle East/North Africa Studies, is the interest they reflect in area studies, grouped by global region, language cluster, culture, or ethnicity. The earlier national focus of language programs in the past, most often divided among European countries and languages, is challenged now by growing numbers of programs in area studies, with or without a language requirement. One scholar who has for some time been known for stressing the importance of cultural regions of the world is the political scientist Samuel Huntington. Even if the pessimism of his well-known article and book, *Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington, 1993; 1996) has become forever linked in the minds of those familiar with it to recent acts of terror and military adventures of dubious merit and outcome, his argument about the importance of shared culture in geopolitical configurations (e.g. conflicts and alliances) includes constellations of countries (Huntington: "civilizations") that align to a high degree with culture studies programs that have challenged and sometimes replaced traditional language departments at colleges and universities.

Apart from his scholarly credentials and influential publications, what makes Huntington's thought and work relevant to conditions in academe is the tension that has arisen over the last 25 years between Huntington, who identified intercultural encounters as the chief source of conflict in the post-Cold War era, and the (presumably) larger scholarly community.[1] The heart of this tension may be illustrated with a contrast of Huntington's assumption of intercultural conflict among rival "civilizations" as natural and likely, and Fukuyama's (1989) premise that a universal spread of liberal democracy would bring about the "end of history"; in other words, "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (p. 4). Whereas other theories of conflict abound, it is no oversimplification to point out two camps or parties among the professoriate, including those who embrace multicultural dialogue as the new norm, threatened in the main by uneducated or malicious fundamentalists and fascists of various allegiances, and the pessimists (or "realists", see Orsi, 2018b), who point to frictions among and within regional cultures as inevitable sources of conflict that must be acknowledged and identified, if they are to be mitigated. Even if those within the respective camps sometimes disagree with one another as vigorously as they do with the other camp, one can still recognize a gulf, however opaque, that stands between scholars who embrace multicultural dialogue and exchange as essential, enriching, and (in the absence of political retrogrades) largely unproblematic, and those who view rivalries among "civilizations"––over territory, resources, influence, markets, security––as inevitable sources of conflict that demand our attention, if not intervention.

Understandably, the accolades showered on Huntington by his admirers for his "prophetic" anticipation of conflicts (e.g., 9/11, Ukraine), which appeared on the media radar only after the publication of *Clash*, have provoked angry, even dismissive responses from those who point to overgeneralizations and contradictions in his analysis.[2] Not being a political scientist, I do not presume to pass judgment here on Huntington's interpretive framework or the arguments of his critics. But the tone and pitch of this scholarly dispute over intercultural relations reflect the seeming paradox that world language and cultural programs are in decline just when, in a world tending toward closer economic integration, problems with translingual and transcultural communication cry out for resolution.

Students at Regional and Research Universities

Humanities programs at major research universities, including world languages and literatures, have been at the forefront of scholarship aimed at deconstructing the hegemonic national cultures, which achieved cohesive identity more often than not through discrimination, marginalization, apartheid, and even ethnic cleansing. Whereas these "Research 1" (R1) universities attract the largest share of the most talented and ambitious students––from diverse nations, races, and ethnicities, but also typically from the economically stronger social strata–– regional universities and community colleges draw their students not only from a more limited geography, but also from a much wider socioeconomic range, including semi-professional and working-class families, nearly all of whom rely on federal financial aid for tuition and expenses. Their degree of ethnic or racial diversity often depends on the relative numbers of urban and rural students. The avowed political leanings of these students tend to reflect a wider spectrum, too,

including large numbers who are politically ambiguous, even apathetic. Beyond those who earn merit scholarships for their high GPAs and standardized test scores, who might have chosen to study at a more reputable school but opted for a college closer to home, the vast majority of students at regional universities are there due to an open (or less rigorous) admission policy that accepts almost anyone with a high school diploma who can find a way to pay tuition.

According to Huntington (2004a), in a *National Interest* article that became a chapter in his last book, *Who are We?*, these two student clienteles stand farther apart than even their bank accounts and the seal on their diplomas would suggest. Rather than due to economic migration, the decision of domestic *and* international students to study at America's leading research universities is typically motivated by the reputation, both of international education and of a particular university. Scholarly excellence is presumably the first criterion for their choice of university. But the prestige points the university represents later (on their resumé or CV) are not far behind. In significantly higher numbers than at regional colleges, these students seek international experience and connections to prepare for the global job market. Whether or not they intend to settle close to home, they prefer to set their own limits rather than be bound by the borders of one state or country. More often than not, these students aspire to the "cosmopolitan elites" that Huntington (2004a) calls "Davos Man, as if they are not just richer and smarter but a more advanced species of humanity.[3] Whereas the same might presumably be said of most international students at R1 universities, Huntington (2004b) is interested chiefly in "America's business, professional, intellectual, and *academic elites*" (p. 264, my emphasis), the latter of whom stand in Huntington's analysis for "moral transnationalism;" that is, opposition, to all forms of exclusion (including national borders) to human ambition, ability, and self-improvement (p. 266).

Students at universities like Northern Colorado are more likely to acknowledge limits to their ambitions, whether personal, familial, intellectual, social, or financial. With their eye on a secure job post-graduation, translingual and transcultural skills are far from the minds of most and may seem a luxury they cannot afford. Given the wide range of their social and ethnic origins, only a fraction of these students resemble Huntington's (2004b) portrait of the "patriotic public" (p. 273), whom he contrasts with the "cosmopolitan" and "transnational" elites (pp. 264-273). What they have in common is the hope of tolerable, if not meaningful, employment that will pay the bills and their student loans. Their wider world is the town and state where they live now, expanded perhaps by one or two past residences or vacation spots of which they have fond memories.

What Huntington's transnational elites would consider limitations are what is familiar and reliable to them, from which they hope to build a nest. In view of the preoccupations and barriers that stand between these students and the choice to study a world language and its culture, one might be surprised that we have any students at all enrolled in our courses and programs. Nevertheless, the new BA program and revised curricula have attracted growing numbers of majors and minors, including upper-division courses that have enjoyed the highest enrollments in years. While the cloud of pandemic has cast shadows on admission numbers for the 2020-2021 academic year (especially first year—101 and 102—course enrollments), the students already majoring or minoring in European Languages and Cultures have resumed their studies without exception.

Transforming Curricula

Shortly after I joined the University of Northern Colorado and became acquainted with the challenges that it was my job to address, it was made clear that the preferred solution should be interdisciplinary in nature and involve cooperation with other departments, where possible, to encourage efficiency and scholarly collaboration. Our own Asian Studies program was highlighted as a model. A survey of other programs of the university relevant to ours included, among others, the Department of Latin American Studies, where Spanish was taught; and the program in Africana Studies, whose faculty had proposed a new minor in Middle East/North Africa (MENA) studies. Some of these programs were already interdisciplinary, including as either requirements or electives courses taught by faculty in other departments, including art, music, history, and political science.

As French and German faculty weighed the options open to us in our curriculum revisions, all shared a belief that foreign languages and cultures are still viable, but that new realities had altered their relevance. After considering three options that included revised French and German degrees, on the one hand, or respective Francophone and German Studies programs, all faculty agreed on a single degree program, European Languages and Cultures, with three possible language tracks: French, German, and Spanish. The program consists of three areas: 1) European Language Studies, requiring at least 12 upper-division credits (third year and above) in the language of concentration; 2) European Culture Studies, including elective options in other departments, such as history, art, and political science, as well as fourth-year (400 level) subject matter courses in the language of study; and 3) Research and Synthesis, including courses in European literature, partially in translation, with more substantial research and writing requirements. The literature courses are taught by faculty whose degrees are in comparative literature. Those especially interested in research may take a course in which students each write a journal-length (minimum 25-page) study on a literary, cultural, or linguistic issue pertaining to their area and language of concentration. To verify that students are leaving our BA program proficient in their language of study, each student is required to take an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Whereas graduation requires for now only an OPI score in the Intermediate range, it is a point of pride, even competition, among our faculty, to track how many students graduate at one of the Advanced sublevels—he minimum proficiency for adult, workplace communication.

To accommodate students with multiple majors or minors, the second and third-year courses have been redesigned to make them less strictly sequential, so that students with a scheduling conflict might either take another course or resume their language studies the following semester. This has proven essential because we frequently offer only one section of courses each semester beyond the first year, leaving students with limited options. In the German program, it was found that textbooks and other course materials produced in Germany for foreign nationals living there (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, or DaF) lent themselves most readily to non-sequential study at each level. The absence of English in such course materials requires an adjustment in learning and teaching strategies for some faculty, but they lend themselves especially well to an immersive learning environment in the classroom. Moreover, the language in the textbooks is highly authentic, so that even passages that model grammatical structures and

vocabulary introduced or reviewed in each chapter are, with few exceptions, very natural and in no way adapted to learners who are native speakers of English.

In addition to Advanced German (GER 301 and 302), in which DaF textbooks are likewise used, other electives for the third year (300 level) electives include the following:

- GER 340, German for the Professions (new)
- GER 350, Introduction to German Literature (new)
- GER 311 and GER 312, German Civilization and Literature I & II (revised).[4]

Two fourth year courses on literature and linguistics, which are required for the German teaching (K-12) BA, may also be taken to meet requirements in Area 2, European Culture Studies.

Assessment: Does it work?

In order to track the language acquisition of students progressing through the new curriculum, the first cadre took a speaking test at the conclusion of their second, "intermediate" year (GER 202), to assess whether they are indeed somewhere in the ACTFL Intermediate range. This method of assessment was chosen because all courses beyond the first year stress all four skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening, yet more instructional time is devoted in the second year to speaking, due to a shift to listening, reading and writing in the third year.

In late April 2020 the speaking competence test was conducted with all 12 students at the conclusion of GER 202. The speaking tasks included in the test, as well as the accuracy criteria applied in rating, were chosen and calibrated by level with reference to the following metrics: the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for the Intermediate and Advanced levels and sublevels (low/mid/high) (ACTFL, 2012); the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Language Skill Level Descriptions—Speaking (2020), Levels 1, 1+ and 2; and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Language Proficiency Levels (STANAG 6001), Levels 1, 1+ and 2 (Military, 2010). As both the ACTFL and NATO scales were based on the ILR Skill Level Descriptions, they have much in common and, indeed, their levels align more or less exactly.[5] Hence, some speaking functions can be found in two or even all three scales; yet there are characteristic differences. For example, the NATO scale includes fewer descriptors related to linguistic accuracy, consisting largely of functional "can do" descriptors. A fourth important reference for speaking tasks was the ILR Speaking Self-Assessment (ILR, 2020) available on the Interagency Language Roundtable website.

Only two ACTFL Advanced (ILR Level 2) speaking tasks were required for students, who could perform them either not at all or in a manner inconsistent with the accuracy criteria for Intermediate High/Level 1+. A third Advanced/Level 2 task was elicited whenever a student's performance in the first two met Intermediate High/Level 1+ criteria. This third task provided testers with more data to determine whether and where the student's proficiency placed within the high/plus subrange.

The faculty administering the assessment took the following accuracy factors into account, based largely on relevant descriptive statements in the ACTFL and ILR scales for levels Intermediate Low/Mid/High and Level 1/1+ respectively.

1. degree of success in performing the speaking task
2. precision and breadth of the student's lexicon

3. accuracy of grammatical structures
4. rate of fluency
5. clarity of pronunciation
6. syntax, with an eye to compound sentences, as well as organization in Advanced/Level 2 tasks.

An Intermediate/Level 1 rating was assigned only if the student's performance of every speaking task corresponding to that level met all accuracy requirements. Inconsistent performance of these tasks earned an Intermediate Low/ Level 0+ rating. Intermediate High/Level 1+ was awarded only if the students' performance in all three Advanced/Level 2 tasks was consistent with the accuracy requirements for Intermediate High/ILR Level 1+.

Students were given a brief introduction to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines the week before the speaking test and were informed how their speaking competence score would relate to the letter grade they would receive for the test. Students were told on multiple occasions during the semester that speaking functions learned and practiced in the course would be included in the final speaking assessment, but they did not know in advance precisely which tasks or topics would be tested. The tasks were elicited in the following sequence (Table 1):

Table 1
Task Sequence in Speaking Assessment

Order	Speaking Task	Level
1.	*Warmup*	*N/A*
2.	Answer informational questions about family member	Intermediate/L1
3.	Give a detailed physical description (family member or home)	Advanced Mid/L2
4.	Answer informational questions about work or hobby	Intermediate/L1
5.	Tell about a day from most recent vacation or winter break	Advanced Mid/L2
6.	Role play: straightforward transaction (e.g. medical appt., book flight)	Intermediate/L1
(7.) *	(Give directions from building on campus to residence or favorite eatery)	Advanced Mid/L2
8.	Ask tester questions (e.g. about home, place of origin, or family)	Intermediate/L1

*Task elicited only if student met Intermediate High/ILR Level 1+ accuracy requirements in tasks 3 and 5.

The 12 students in GER 202 to whom the test was administered included the following:

- Seven (*n*=7) students had taken GER 201 the previous fall semester (2019).
- Two (*n*=2) students enrolled out of sequence; that is, they could not take GER 201 the previous fall semester due to a scheduling conflict.
- Two (*n*=2) students admitted to the university with transfer credit for GER 201. Both had last taken German the previous spring (2019).

- One (*n*=1) student admitted with transfer credit for GER 201 had taken the course in spring 2017. He had enrolled in no German courses in the interim.

The results of the proficiency assessment were as follows:

- Seven (*n*=7) students were rated at ACTFL Intermediate Mid/ILR Level 1. 1 of those students was close to ACTFL Intermediate High/ILR 1+ but fell short in two of the accuracy criteria (lexicon and grammar).
- Two (*n*=2) students were rated at ACTFL Intermediate Low/ILR Level 0+. One of the students had taken GER 202 out of sequence (no GER 201). The other had taken GER 201 in Spring 2017 with no German in the interim.
- Three (*n*=3) students were rated at ACTFL Intermediate High/ILR Level 1+. Two had taken GER 201 the previous fall (2019), and one had transfer credit in GER 201, taken in spring 2019.

All students received detailed feedback following the assessment on their proficiency profile, based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the accuracy criteria. Although the fixed structure of the test lacks the flexibility/adaptability of an oral proficiency interview, it was deemed essential to ensure fairness for all students, in view of the fact that only one faculty tester had formal training as an oral proficiency tester. Precautions were taken to minimize opportunities for students who had already taken the test to communicate with their classmates who had not.

This is the first cadre of students who have taken second-year German since the curriculum changes were finalized; most are now enrolled in at least one of three upper-division courses offered in the Fall 2020 semester. The cadre from the previous academic year (2018-2019) were in the first iteration of the new GER 201/202 sequence. Whereas they did not take the final speaking assessment outlined above, their learning outcomes were considered in revisions made subsequently to the new second-year sequence. The success of the new curriculum will be assessed again when all in the newer cadre have completed at least 12 credits of German beyond 202, required of both German minors and those majoring in European Languages and Cultures. All students who are in the new BA program are required to take the ACTFL OPI before graduation. Additionally, students in the German minor program must take, as part of their required upper-division credits, GER 407, German for Oral Proficiency. At the end of German 407, these students will take another speaking competence test calibrated to ACTFL Advanced/ILR Level 2 at the end of the course. The insight that this affords is important since we have now only four courses (12 credits) with most students to move them from ACTFL Intermediate/ILR Level 1 to Advanced/Level 2.

Tracking the proficiency outcomes of our courses has become especially important, because the new BA in European Languages and Cultures no longer requires only courses taught in our department or in the target language. By taking seriously the words *intermediate* and *advanced* in the course titles, we are holding ourselves accountable for the learning outcomes listed in our course catalog descriptions and syllabi. This includes more purposeful academic advising and brings clarity to meetings with students during office hours. Additionally, speaking competence assessments based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and related scales help both faculty and students to identify those aspects of their speaking proficiency profile that need targeted intervention.

Even if one does not share Huntington's (2004b) nostalgia for flag-waving 4th of July parades (pp. 3-5), or his worries over the rise of Spanish as a second American language (pp. 150-170), global regions defined by a shared cultural and linguistic heritage are undeniably a major factor in geopolitics and global economics for the 21st century. For small language programs such as ours, this represents an opportunity to equip students from the Front Range in Colorado, who are often inclined to retreat from a world they are apt to perceive as too complex, even threatening, with the translingual and transcultural competence they need to embrace opportunities in a globalized economy. Last year three of our students opted to study at one of our two partner universities in Germany, the University of Oldenburg. Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted one to return before the semester had started, and another has been forced to postpone for now. Even so, they are the first students in several years to opt for a semester or year at that university. Motivating this choice in each instance was the program in European Languages and Cultures, which the students had configured to their own education and career goals.

Such examples remind us that, as important as MLA's goal of interlingual and intercultural competence is for public and higher education, even for our national well-being, each student from the "Heartland" has individual reasons for venturing beyond English and their hometown near the Rockies. None so far has expressed interest in graduate studies of linguistics or literature. For our students, many of whom are the first generation in their family to seek a BA degree, regionally aligned language and culture studies are intended to equip them with the competencies, and confidence, they need to engage a multicultural and multilateral world, from which they might otherwise have chosen to withdraw. For the faculty in what is now the Department of World Languages and Cultures at the University of Northern Colorado, it has redefined our discipline.

NOTES

1. See Orsi (2018b).
2. See for example Rose (2013), Ajami (2013), Binyan (2013), Orsi (2018a), and Ringmar (2018).
3. Davos refers here to the annual meeting place of the World Economic Forum, whose attendees include economists, global business players, government representatives and, in growing numbers, celebrities. The choice to meet in the posh and remote ski resort town in January, the height of ski season, affords more than security advantages for the attendees.
4. The 311/312 series, German Civilization and Literature recently underwent revision. The curriculum consists now only of authentic materials, including historiography, short literary works, and a historical documentary series, *Die Deutschen*, produced by the German television network ZDF.
5. Although the level ranges of the ILR Skill Level Descriptions and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines align, by design, more or less exactly, Lowe (1988) notes that the ILR Descriptions are conceived as a *threshold system*, such that the typical or average proficiency profile for the level is possible at the lower threshold of a level. He contrasts this with "midpoint" systems, in

which a functioning whole is still incomplete in the lower range. According to Lowe, midrange systems are much more common (Lowe, 1988: "ubiquitous", p. 23). While he does not include the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines among his examples, they certainly fit his description of a midpoint system. Hence, a rating in the Low subrange of an ACTFL level still belongs to the plus subrange of the lower equivalent level in the ILR Skill Level Descriptions. While the ILR Descriptions and STANAG 6001 language proficiency levels were the preferred choice for speaking tasks, due to their exclusive orientation on working adults, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were an especially helpful source of accuracy criteria, due to their finer distinction of for example, Novice High and Intermediate Low, both of which would fall into the ILR Level 0+ subrange.

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A Multimodal Literacy Approach to Foreign Language Instruction

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Multimodal approaches to second-language learning can boost language proficiency (Ajayi, 2009) by providing foreign-language learners with greater exposure to the target language's culture, enabling multiple-literacy competencies in the target language, and appealing to students' learning preferences. This article aims to present a multimodal-literacy approach that can provide foreign-language learners with a native-like classroom setting to experience the target discourse and culture, using authentic resources and different modes of meaning-making. The approach draws on the multimodal theory of meaning-making, multiliteracy pedagogies, and the current literature on instructional technology and language literacy. Recommendations for practitioners are provided, and examples of multimodal-based classroom activities are illustrated.

Keywords: *Multimodal, language literacy, foreign language, modes of meaning, target discourse*

Challenges of Foreign-Language Learning

Foreign-language instruction usually occurs in a country where the language is not widely spoken; that is, learners have little or no opportunity to practice the language outside of the classroom or immerse themselves in the target culture. Because the lack of social interaction with native speakers often disservices the development of communicative competence in the foreign language, a robust teaching approach that integrates the target discourse and culture is needed to address the limitations and challenges of foreign language learning in a non-native setting. The traditional monomodal approach to developing language fluency relies on linguistic meaning and focuses on the acquisition of phonological awareness of sounds, morphological awareness of word structure, vocabulary knowledge of word meanings, and syntactic knowledge of sentence structure (Bakhtiari, Greenberg, Patton-Terry, & Nightingale, 2015). These linguistic skills are used to enable fluency in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Nevertheless, knowing a language involves ways of talking, acting, and valuing (Gee, 1989a), and the linguistic mode alone may fail

to reflect the full meaning from culturally specific uses. Here, the *mode* refers to a means by which meaning is communicated or expressed; thus, it represents a communication need that applies to any meaning-making mode, such as written and spoken format or visual illustrations (Forceville, 2011).

For instance, idiomatic expressions often pose a challenge to foreign-language learners because they carry culture-specific meanings that could not be interpreted merely by vocabulary knowledge. Idioms are conventionalized expressions with a fixed-word order; therefore, their meaning cannot be composed of individual parts (Andarab, & Rouhi, 2014). Thus, understanding idioms is a type of literacy that goes beyond reading fluency to awareness of culture (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). For example, a second language learner of English may not grasp the intended meanings of *break a leg* or *head over heels*, even with the understanding of the literal meanings of the words in these idiomatic phrases. Only an interculturally competent learner knows that the first expression means wishing someone good luck in a performance, and the second describes a strong affection in a relationship. Also, the ability to choose the appropriate words according to the context of communication, which is essential for successful interaction with native speakers, requires intercultural literacy in the target discourse.

Likewise, the knowledge gap between an author (a native speaker) and a reader (a foreign-language learner) may pose a challenge. Because a native speaker composes spoken or written texts for a native audience, the author assumes that the recipient of the text has shared background knowledge. For example, in a discussion of gun violence in the U.S. news media, the Second Amendment is often mentioned, without any explanation or reference. The speaker assumes that the audience is familiar with the U.S. constitution and the debate over gun control laws. This expression, *the Second Amendment,* is an example of cultural references that may cause a comprehension breakdown for those who know nothing about gun control laws in the U.S. regardless of the extent of their vocabulary.

The examples of idiomatic phrases and cultural references demonstrate that linguistic knowledge is only one mode of meaning and meaning making requires more than one mode. Several assumptions could be made about the association of meaning-making with nonlinguistic variables. First, knowledge of cultural implications and the context in which the text is produced are essential to meaning making. Second, texts are understood by embodied experiences and not merely by words (DeWitt, Selfe, & Takayoshi, 2004). Third, meaning making is shaped by the learners' prior knowledge (Kelley, 2016). Fourth, the meaning is not only instantiated in the text but also in the context that makes sense to the learners (Education at Illinois, 2016). Finally, different learners can perceive meaning from the same text differently based on factors of their background knowledge, social and cultural upbringing, perceptions about the author or the source of the text, and the presentation mode of the text (print, audio, video, or image).

LANGUAGE LITERACY

Language, as a construct, is often viewed as a means of communication that takes place in a social context (Amberg & Vause, 2009), suggesting that foreign-language teaching should be responsive to the communication needs. The act of communication combines a linguistic component and an extra-linguistic component, that is, speech and situation (Richterich, 1972). The context of communication involves the communicators, the time, the place, the functions, and means of communication (Richterich, 1972). Effective communication necessitates an understanding of the universal meaning and culture-specific meaning, which includes the conventions used by language communities and the connection between language and its speakers (Amberg & Vause, 2009). Communication also requires dealing with linguistic variations or dialects spoken by different social and cultural groups within the same language (Bakhtiari et al., 2015). How we say something is more important than what we say (Gee, 1989b); thus, language literacy goes beyond reading, writing, or speaking. It involves the acquisition of multiple competencies: knowledge of linguistic meaning, culture-specific meaning, situational meaning, and visually communicated meaning (Amberg & Vause, 2009; Gee, 1989b; Kress, 1998; Luke; 2000; Richterich, 1972). This reality necessitates rethinking the definition of language literacy by approaching learning from a multiliteracy perspective. It also requires supplementing the language teaching models with an inclusive approach to enable the integration of language and culture with various modes of communication. The control of second language uses and discourses is crucial for language literacy, as this visible social practice of language reflects conceptualized literacy (Gee, 1989a; Luke, 2000).

Moreover, fluency in a language entails the attainment of communicative competencies that enable learners to use the language appropriately in a particular social context (Amberg & Vause, 2009) and participate effectively in the discourse of foreign-language communities. To do so, foreign-language learners need to master the essentials of meaning-making. As illustrated in Figure 1, in-depth comprehension of a spoken or a written text may require a learner to deal with four types of meaning: linguistic, culture-specific, situational, and visually communicated meaning (Amberg & Vause, 2009; Gee, 1989a; Kress, 1998; Luke; 2000; Richterich, 1972). In other words, a learner should (a) understand unfamiliar words, idiomatic phrases, and cultural reference, (b) have background knowledge about the topic and the context in which the text was produced and used, (c) draw inferences from printed or spoken words, and (d) interpret the illustrated meaning in pictures or gestures.

Types of meaning in the text	*Linguistic Meaning*	It requires knowledge of sounds, vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure to understand the meaning of written or spoken texts.
	Culture-Specific Meaning	It requires knowledge of idiomatic phrases, cultural references, and background information about the topic.
	Situational Meaning	It requires knowledge about the context and the setting in which the text is produced and used.
	Visually Communicated Meaning	It requires the ability to interpret the meaning communicated by visual illustrations, gestures, or kinesthetic modes.

Figure 1
Spoken and Written Text and Essentials of Language Competence for Meaning-Making
(Adapted from Amberg & Vause, 2009; Gee, 1989a; Kress, 1998; Luke; 2000; Richterich, 1972)

MULTIMODAL THEORY OF MEANING-MAKING

The multimodal theory in education was developed from the work of Hodge and Kress (1988) in social semiotics and involved multimodal perspectives on meaning-making. The theory emphasizes the communication of meaning and posits that meaning-making choices consist of interaction with language and a wide range of semiotic resources that people use to communicate; therefore, semiotic modes of meaning are essential resources for designing learning and instruction (Bezemer & Kress, 2015; Kress 1988). According to the multimodal principle (Collins, 2011; DeWitt, Selfe, & Takayoshi, 2004; Kress, 2010), printed texts are one mode of communication, and meaning can be communicated or constructed from different modalities, including visual illustrations and physical kinesthetic modes. Kress (1998) argues that the focus on language as a single mode of communication neglects other representational and communicational semiotic modes that offer different potentials for human expressions. The central assumption of the semiotic theory is that individuals choose the mode that communicates their ideas (Ajayi, 2009), which could be a language, sign, symbol, or any forms of visual illustration. For example, referees in sports use whistling, hand signals, and yellow and red cards to communicate meaning. Also, traffic signs and signals are universally accepted modes of communication, and driving literacy requires the ability to interpret the signs as well as knowledge of written rules.

Gee (1989a) also contributed to the social-semiotic theory of communication, introducing the concept of discourse acquisition. According to Gee (as cited in DeWitt, Selfe, & Takayoshi, 2004), semiotic domains and signs are core to learning experiences, and learning requires the mastering of semiotic domains and the ability to participate with the groups that use these domains. Kress's (1988, 1998, 2010, 2011) work on genre and modes of communication has shifted the focus of literacy from language as a sole means of communication (mono mode) to a

variety of semiotic modes of communication such as sounds and images. According to Bowen and Whithaus (2013), the genre can include an array of communication media such as film, video, games, speeches, photographs, visual graphics, and written and spoken words. Also, the New London Group (1996) offered an intertextual perspective, focusing on five modes of meaning (linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, and spatial) that can be recombined in a text. Songs and movies are examples of an intertextual design that includes "(a) linguistic elements in vocabulary, metaphor, and information structure, (b) audio meaning in music and sound effects, (c) visual meaning in backgrounding and foregrounding effects, (d) spatial meaning in geographic, exosystemic, and architectonic design, and (e) gestural meaning in body language, feeling, and behavior" (London Group, 1996, pp.23-24). However, the current multimedia learning model (Mayer, 2014) redefines modes of meaning as a verbal and visual format, that is, words and pictures. Pictures include "static graphics" such as photos, drawings, maps, charts, figures, and tables, or "dynamic graphics" such as video or animation (Mayer, 2002, p.2).

Multimodal Pedagogies

Multimodal pedagogies utilize various printed and digital resources and integrate verbal and visual modes, enabling the construction of meaning from different modalities (Arnott, Palaiologou, Gray, & Yelland, 2018; New London Group, 1996). The term *multimodality* refers to the representation of meaning in different forms of textual and digital modes, whereas *multiliteracy skills* indicate the ability to function in the target discourse using various modes of meaning-making (UWEC Center for Writing Excellence, 2015). However, the literature often uses multimodality and multiliteracy interchangeably or together to refer to the same concept (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). The multimodal theory of meaning-making informed several multitenancy pedagogies (e.g., CAST, 2019; Collins, 2011; Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2006; New London Group, 1996) that can be adapted to foreign-language instruction.

The New London Group (1996), for instance, introduced a multiliteracy learning design that takes into consideration all resources available for designing, reproducing, and transforming meaning. The group (1996, p. 29) developed a four-stage pedagogical model of instruction that includes (a) a situated practice in which instruction utilizes available discourses and resources in workplaces and public spaces to immerses students in the learning experience; (b) overt instruction that presents metalanguages using different modes of representation; (c) critical framing that allows learners to relate and interpret meaning to its social and cultural context; and (d) practice by which students transfer meaning and apply it to other cultural and social contexts.

Universal design for learning (UDL) is also a well-known approach that was built on multimodality. The UDL was developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST, 2019) on the assumption that classrooms are highly diverse, and curricula should be universally designed to meet the diversity by minimizing barriers and maximizing learning for all students. The UDL three principles of multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement provide a framework for a multimodal pedagogy that can be applied in various educational settings. Following the three principles, instruction provides a variety of

multimodal options to facilitate meaning and comprehension, allows multiple avenues for expressive skills, and fosters choices that recruit learner interests (CAST, 2019).

Like UDL, Collins' (2011) approach intends to create an inclusive classroom environment where every learner plays a role in the group using his or her preferred mode of interaction and communication. The goal is to motivate and engage learners in a classroom by providing them with an opportunity to establish their social identities and become active participants in the learning process (Collins, 2011).

Another multiliteracy perspective is the authentic literacy activities approach (Duke et al., 2006), which focuses on reading and writing and proposes that classroom activities should have real-life relevance and purpose. The authentic literacy approach aims to relate reading and writing activities to the natural use of language. According to Duke et al. (2006), authentic reading and writing have a real audience, and classroom activities should replicate what the students can read and write outside of the learning context. Therefore, teachers should provide students with reading texts written for real audiences and assign work tasks for real readers (Duke et al., 2006).

Although these multiliteracy approaches are intended for K-12 students, they offer a prospective framework for a foreign-language teaching model. The upcoming sections examine the impact of technology on multimodality and foreign-language instruction and the adaptation of these pedagogies to develop a multimodal-literacy approach that facilitates competencies in the target language using authentic resources and different modes of meaning-making.

Effect of Technology Integration

Technology has significantly impacted the multimodal discourse by expanding the range of media by which people communicate (O'Halloran & Smith, 2012). It has also shifted the focus of language literacy to the communication requirements of modern ways of life (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). Similarly, the integration of technology in foreign-language teaching offers essential tools for (a) integrating multiple modes of meaning, (b) providing authentic learning experiences, and (c) motivating language learners. First, the use of technology and digital resources in foreign-language teaching made it easier to illustrate the relationship between different meaning modes (Freebody & Luke, 1990). These include embedding sound and image with a written text or displaying on-screen words with videos and audios. Integration of multimodal forms such as words, pictures, sounds, videos, and actions in vocabulary teaching of a foreign language is found not only to motivate students but also to improve their understanding of the target discourse (Guan, 2019). Also, the integration of multimedia learning may help information processing and promote students' engagement with texts. Researchers (Mestres & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2019) demonstrate that foreign-language learners can process virtual input (storybook with audio support or video) faster than the written text.

Second, digital resources and social media platforms may expose foreign-language learners to the target discourse. One study (Jung, Kim, Lee, Cathey, Carver, & Skalicky, 2019) investigates the use of computer-mediated communication to facilitate the development of linguistic and

intercultural competence of second-language learners by interacting online with native peers from different cultures. The findings indicate that students' attention to language and cultural issues during the online discussion is positively associated with technology-mediated communication. Another study (Lim & Pun, 2019) examines the impact of Internet-based videoconferencing on intercultural and linguistic exchanges of Korean foreign-language learners at a university in the United States and their counterparts at a South Korean college. The results suggest that video-chat increases language learners' self-rated proficiency in their target language. A third study (Schaefer, Salbego, & Lorenset, 2019) shows that digital resources such as web conferencing, digital games, digital stories, and telecollaboration contribute to the enhancement of second-language learning. Another study reports that Facebook discussion forum is created for foreign-language learners to interact with their native-speaking teachers, providing authentic settings for language practice (Börekci & Aydin, 2019).

Third, instructional technology is associated with learner motivation and engagement. Research indicates that using virtual tutoring such as chatbot and turning reading material into an interactive conversation-based lesson have significantly promoted interest and engagement of second-language learners (Ruan, Willis, Xu, Davis, Jiang, Brunskill, & Landay, 2019). Students are also found to perceive multimodal tasks positively, as multimodal tasks enhance intrinsic motivation and foster learner autonomy (Varaporn, & Sitthitikul, 2019). Furthermore, a systemic review of 75 empirical studies and 13 descriptive studies (published between 2000 and 2018) find that the use of technology in foreign-language learning has positive effects on the affective, linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive domains (Lee, 2019).

The synthesis of the literature cited above demonstrate that the integration of technology and social media activities can provide exposure to the target discourse, allow multiple representations of meaning, and appeal to the digital generation of language learners. Despite the overwhelming support for different uses of technology in foreign-language learning, a systematic model for classroom teaching has not been presented. The next section discusses how the integration of technology resources with current multiliteracy pedagogies can provide a teaching approach that enables the acquisition of the target discourse when the language is taught in a non-native setting.

Developing a Model for Foreign-Language Instruction

If the goal of learning a foreign language is to participate in the target discourse, successful acquisition necessitates exposure to the natural use of language and culture. Although there are always limitations to language learning that takes place apart from immersion in the cultural setting, a multimodal-literacy approach to language learning, which is more dynamic and complex than traditional language-learning methods, can help learners develop multiliteracy skills that are essential to function effectively in a variety of contexts (Arnott et al., 2018; Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). The multimodal-literacy approach presented here for foreign-language instruction aims to create a native-like setting and provide an opportunity for language as a social practice using

different modes of meaning and authentic recourses. This approach is informed by research on language literacy, instructional technology, the multimodal principle, and multiliteracy pedagogies that were introduced by K-12 educators, namely, the UDL principles (CAST, 2019), the situated practice (New London Group, 1996), and authentic literacy (Duke et al., 2006). For instance, the UDL principles (multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement) can form the groundwork for a language instruction approach that accommodates different learning styles and abilities, and most importantly, different modes of meaning. To do so, teachers initiate the learning topic and recommend different resources, whereas students work collaboratively to explore various aspects of the topic utilizing different modes of representation and communication. Collins (2011) proposes that students can participate according to their preferences and skills and select their preferred modes of meaning-making.

The authentic literacy model (Duke et al., 2006) suggests that classroom activities mimic real-life purposes. Authentic activities can expose foreign-language learners to the use of language in a semi-natural setting. That is, students can be exposed to authentic texts created by native speakers to a native audience and tasked with language activities that apply to what they will do outside of the classroom. Additionally, students can be assigned to watch *YouTube* videos, movies, or reality shows in the target language and report on the use of specific linguistic features by native speakers.

The situated practice approach (New London Group, 1996) suggests that instruction should include immersion experiences that utilize available discourses and resources in the workplace and public spaces. Because immersion experiences are crucial for the acquisition of language and culture, the situated practice may offer a solution for language instruction in non-native settings. Available resources of technology can be utilized to create an authentic and native-like environment for language practice where learners relate to the target language culture and its native speakers. Teachers can seize upon students' quest for social media to maximize learning by encouraging them to interact with native speakers through social media platforms. Such digital resources include, but are not limited to, *Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Face Time, Web chat, Skype, Google Hangout, Google Earth, Google Tour, Zoom Video conferencing, Microsoft Teams,* and other messaging and networking apps. Also, available resources may include native speakers of the target language who reside in a country where the language is taught.

Students are encouraged to seek other venues of authentic learning opportunities outside the classroom, such as interacting with native speakers in their towns. A field trip can be arranged for students to visit places where native speakers of the target language live and work, allowing students to chat with them, overhear their conversations, and observe their interactions. Figure 2 provides a mind map for the multimodal-literacy approach to create native-like settings for learners.

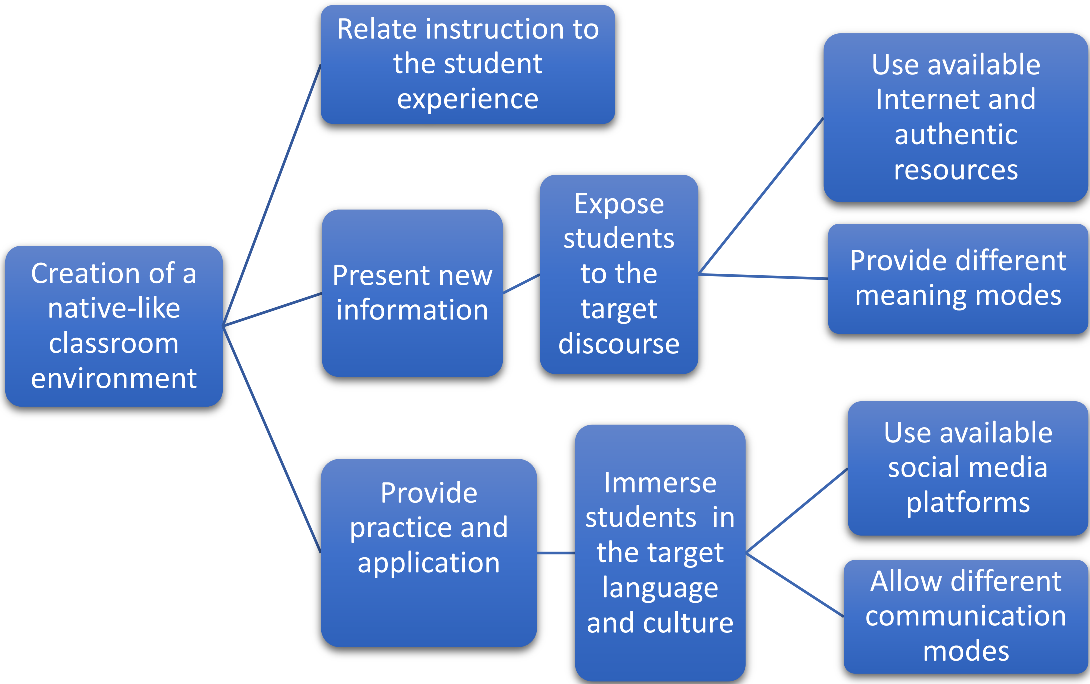

Figure 2
Main Elements of Multimodal-Literacy Approach for Foreign-language Teaching
(Adapted from CAST, 2019; Duke et al., 2006; New London Group, 1996)

Classroom Application

Here are two examples of classroom activities, created by the author, that illustrate the use of a multimodal-literacy approach to immerse students in a foreign-language discourse through different modes of meaning and authentic resources.

Example 1

Teacher A, a foreign-language instructor in the United States, selected a voice message in the target language as a text for teaching listening to her introductory class. She received this recorded message from a relative in her home country who invited her to his daughter's wedding.

The teacher began the class by asking students to share experiences—if they had ever been invited to a wedding but could not attend, and how they offered congratulations to the wedding couple in their own culture. After students had reflected on their experiences, the teacher provided a vocabulary presentation using verbal and visual illustrations to convey the meanings of unfamiliar words and cultural phrases in the authentic voice message. She supported the written definitions of the words with visuals such as pictures, animated images, or videos. So, the students had the opportunity to read the written definitions of the new words and see the

pictures or animations that depicted the words, which helped them formulate mental images of them.

Following the vocabulary practice, the students listened to the voice message and demonstrated their understanding of the content and the purpose of the call. For discourse analysis, the teacher gave the students the written script of the voice message and asked them to reflect on 1) how the message's language structure, organization, and delivery style differed from their cultural tradition, and 2) what extra-linguistic meanings could be inferred from the text.

In a follow-up practice, after providing students with a Facebook page link (in the target language) containing responses and congratulations for the newlyweds, the teacher asked them to view the responses and take notes of common phrases used by native speakers to offer congratulations.

After that, the students played the role of invitees. They were asked to come up with responses to the voice message in small groups. Their response must include an apology for not being able to attend the wedding and congratulations to the newly-weds. Each group must compose two responses: one for the bride and the groom and the other for the parents of the bride (the one who invited the teacher). The students were instructed to use the modality of their choice. Subsequently, the students sent their congratulations in various modes, such as composing wedding wishes cards, writing an email, sending text messages, recording voice messages, posting wedding wishes messages on their Facebook page, or creating and posting congratulation videos on Instagram or Facebook.

Example 2

Teacher B, also a foreign-language instructor in the United States, provided his advanced class with three idiomatic phrases having specific cultural implications for speakers of the target language.

Students worked in three groups, and each one was tasked with research of a single idiomatic expression, to include the expression's historical background, sociocultural context, and implied meaning. The students used Internet resources, interviewed native speakers in the community, or via social media.

To prepare presentations, the students in each group picked roles according to their interests and skills (e.g., drawing, writing, videotaping, recording). During the class, the three groups shared their presentations using different modes to illustrate the meaning of the idiomatic expressions, including written explanations, drawings, cartoons, images, videotaped gestures, acting or modeling the meaning, and examples and contextual settings in which the expression is used.

Next, the teacher provided three newspaper articles containing these idiomatic expressions and asked the students to explain how the expressions and their cultural implications were related to the writer's argument.

The students, in groups, discussed the purpose and the message that the writer tried to convey in each article. Then, they shared their understanding of how the authors used these expressions to support the argument. The students also evaluated whether the use of these

cultural references or idiomatic expressions strengthened or weakened the writer's argument based on what they learned from the research findings they had done before the class.

As a follow-up task, the teacher asked students to write an Internet blog or create a *YouTube* video to share their individual learning experience with the native audience of the target language. Students were encouraged to enhance their videos or blogs with pictures, symbols, drawing, audio, and/or animation. Using their preferred mode of communication, the students were encouraged to compare and share the historical and sociocultural implications of similar idiomatic expressions from their own culture.

As mentioned above, these two examples demonstrate some features of a multimodal-literacy approach for supporting foreign-language instruction. Students have the opportunity to utilize various meaning modes and resources to acquire the target discourse, including: 1) students experience the choice of different modes of representation and different means of communication; 2) students are exposed to the target discourse and culture through authentic texts created by native speakers for native speakers; 3) available technology and social media resources are used to immerse students in real-life settings of the target culture; 4) students have the opportunity to relate the target discourse to their personal experiences; 5) the activities are given an authentic purpose, facilitating language learning as a social practice; and 6) these activities allow the integration of receptive and productive skills where students practice reading, listening, speaking, and writing with exposure to the target culture and authentic discourse. In sum, these examples suggest that a multimodal approach not only enhances language proficiency in the four language skills but also provides an authentic setting for interaction with the target culture and the use of language as a social practice.

Conclusion

In this article, the author presents a multimodal-literacy approach to foreign-language instruction to enable language learning as social practice and meaning-making through different modes of representation and expression. This approach calls for the use of authentic resources and available technology to create a native-like classroom environment that immerses students in the target language and culture. Language instructors can implement multimodal-literacy pedagogy in the classroom through lesson planning and designing authentic classroom activities that mimic real-life settings. Whereas the model presented in this article is supplementary to current linguistic approaches and not an alternative, it offers many possibilities to integrate classroom learning with authentic resources, tasks, and settings.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or the position of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank Dr. Nicola McClung of the University of San Francisco for her valuable feedback as well as the editors and anonymous reviewers whose insights contributed to the improvement of this article.

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S-PACE to Teach L2 Grammar: Adding Structure to the PACE Model

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A new technique to teach language grammar is proposed. It consists of the blending of two previously existing techniques—VanPatten's (1996) Processing Instruction (PI) and Adair-Hauck and Donato's (2002) Presentation, Attention, Co-construct, and Extension (PACE) Model. The result is the S-PACE Model, which incorporates the whole-language elements of PACE and the structured (S) exercises of PI. By combining crucial elements of both techniques, learners will have a better chance to integrate and retain the new knowledge in their implicit linguistic system.

Keywords: *Grammar, PACE Model, processing instruction, input, output, intake*

Introduction

The foreign language teaching profession has seen, in the last few decades, an exploration of the complexities inherent in the teaching and learning of a foreign language. Great progress has been made since grammar-focused methods such as Grammar-Translation and the audio-lingual method (ALM), in which the main goal was to develop grammatical competence by analyzing grammar to exhaustion in order to translate a language or to imitate it via endless repetition and substitution drills. In the 80s Canale and Swain introduced the concept of communicative competence, acknowledging that pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competences play relevant roles in communication in addition to grammatical competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). This changed the main goal for teaching and learning a foreign language to authentic, real-life communication.

Nevertheless, grammatical competence is still an integral part of communicative competence. And that includes not only rules of morphology and syntax, but also rules of phonology (Canale & Swain, 1980). As Nassaji and Fotos (2011) put it, "[…] the advent of communicative approaches not only weakened the status of grammar teaching, but also led to negative reaction to grammar teaching […]" and continue to insist that "teaching approaches that put the primary focus on meaning with no attention to grammatical forms are inadequate" (p. 8).

Addressing the Comparison Goal of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages involves comparing the target language and culture with the learners' own: "Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the

language studied and their own" (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Comparing languages implies paying attention to the various ways in which two languages express certain functions. Learners notice and learn the target language structure by comparing it with that of their own. Furthermore, by taking into consideration the various interests and learning styles of foreign language learners, we could assist those students who might be field-independent[1] and prefer learning grammatical rules in order to apply them in communication (Briewin, Naidu, & Embi, 2013).

Form-focus pedagogies have been explored in the past decades by scholars such as Ellis (1993), Fotos (1993), Williams (1995), Larsen-Freeman (1997), Spada (1997), and Long (2000). Larsen-Freeman (1997) coined the term grammaring, which is defined as the ability "to make use of grammar communicatively (i.e., to use it not only accurately but also meaningfully and appropriately)" (as cited in Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Ellis (1993) suggests that grammar teaching should focus on consciousness raising. Spada (1997) finds empirical support for the view that form-focused instruction is beneficial for second language acquisition. Long (2000) provides examples of how focus-on-form activities can be implemented within a communicative framework. The body of this literature is extensive and concepts such as input, output, interaction enhancement, negotiation, recast, and input processing, among others, are invoked by authors as form-focused procedures that can be implemented in a communicative classroom.

There are two specific form-focused procedures associated with the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching approach: VanPatten's (1996) Processing Instruction (PI) and Adair-Hauck and Donato's (2002) Presentation, Attention, Co-Construct, and Extension (PACE) Model. These two procedures suggest that the attention of learners should be drawn to the form without losing sight of the general meaning. Most importantly, they highlight the significance of form in accurate communication. The two procedures focus on the grammatical form from two different perspectives: PI, from a discrete-form, or bottom-up perspective, and PACE, from a whole-language, or top-down perspective. Both techniques have been received with mixed but mainly positive reactions by the foreign language teaching profession (Shrum & Glisan, 2016; ACTFL, 2019).

However, both PI and PACE have shortcomings. The former lacks extensive contextualized practice (VanPatten, 2002), which PACE provides; the latter lacks structured exercises, which are part of PI. In a brief article, Gonzalez-Bueno (2018a) proposes a Structured-PACE (S-PACE) model, a "hybrid" technique that incorporates the structured form-focused exercises of PI and the extension phase of PACE, during which learners have opportunities to practice the target form in an open-ended, contextualized manner. The S-PACE Model combines aspects of both PI and PACE, so the two procedures complement each other. It is believed that this combination might lead to better learning outcomes than PI and PACE would separately.

Although PI and PACE were initially conceived to teach foreign language grammar, a study implementing PI to the teaching of pronunciation was presented by Gonzalez-Bueno and Quintana-Lara (2011), showing advantages of PI versus a traditional method. In a consequential publication, Gonzalez-Bueno (2019) combined PI and PACE to suggest the use of S-PACE to teach pronunciation.

The focus of this article is the application of S-PACE to the teaching of grammar. A literature review on PI and PACE is offered, together with relevant research to investigate their respective

success in obtaining positive results. The strengths and weaknesses of PI and PACE will be highlighted separately to better understand how a combination of the two, i.e., the S-PACE Model, may yield better results. Finally, two examples of S-PACE lessons are offered in the appendices.

Two Procedures: Processing Instruction and the Pace Model

Processing Instruction

Processing Instruction (PI) is an instructional approach based on the Input Processing model (VanPatten, 1996), which has successfully been tested in teaching foreign language grammar in a classroom setting (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten & Oikennon, 1996). PI essentially consists of exposing learners to strategically controlled exercises that require their active attention to the form of the input in order to attach meaning to it. The model assumes that by intentionally delaying production of the target language, the learner will have already processed its grammatical system and will then be capable of accurately producing grammatically correct language. As can be seen in Figure 1, practice is provided immediately after the input to facilitate intake, whereas output is not required until after intake has happened.

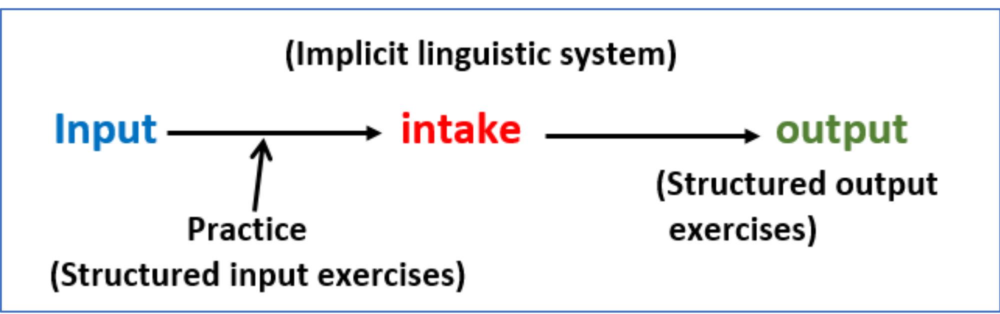

Figure 1
Input Processing

PI is a bottom-up approach. It starts with concrete instances of the target grammar which are previously presented in the form of explicit instruction together with an explanation of why that grammar is particularly difficult for learners. This last idea nicely aligns with the Comparison Goal of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, as mentioned earlier. It is then that structured input exercises ensue, which allows for intake to happen and be integrated in the learner's implicit linguistic system (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1993). As Van Patten (2002) states, "Processing Instruction is not a comprehension-based approach to language teaching such as TPR, the Natural Approach, and so on. Since the point of PI is to assist the learner in making form-meaning connections during PI, it is more appropriate to view it as a type of focus-on-form or input enhancement" (Smith, 1993, as cited by Van Patten, 2002, p. 764). Although PI contemplates the element of output to verify whether learners have internalized the new grammar, output is not an essential element of PI:

> [...] during the instructional phase, learners never produce the target form in question. This does not obviate a role for output, as noted previously, since

> production may be useful for the development of fluency and accuracy as well as of other aspects of language development […] Nonetheless, during PI the learner's job is to process sentences and interpret them correctly while attending to form as well (Van Patten, 2002, p. 764).

PI is not without controversies. Van Patten (2002) re-examines his original model by reviewing several studies that replicate it with and without design modifications when applying it to grammatical constructions in various languages. Some studies confirm Van Patten's and Cadierno's (1993) conclusions; i.e., the superiority of PI over more traditional teaching approaches; but other studies offer divergent results (Cheng, 1995; Benati, 2001). The general conclusion is that PI is superior to both traditional approaches and to several variations of PI but only in interpretive tasks, not in production. Van Patten (2002) explains the lack of more positive results in production by alluding to the lack of opportunities for learners to develop the newly acquired skill, and refers to the idea that "skills develop when skills are practiced" (p. 791). Although PI uses output exercises, these exercises may not constitute enough practice for the skill to fully develop. However, even in earlier conceptualizations of PI, more open-ended exercises were suggested to follow the structured output exercises (Lee and VanPatten, 1995). This idea nicely ties PI with the next procedure, the PACE Model.

The PACE Model

Adair-Hauck and Donato's (2002a) PACE Model, on the other hand, is a top-down approach in that it starts with the presentation of a whole text that incorporates many instances of the target grammar, to later focus on the specific grammar instances: "By introducing the lesson with a whole text, the teacher foreshadows the grammar explanation through the use of integrated discourse that will highlight the critical grammar structures to be taught" (p. 270). The notion of "a whole text" was initially conceptualized as a story, particularly in the format of "storytelling," as stories provide the ideal episodic organization that contributes to attention and retention (Oller, 1985). "Since it is natural to tell stories orally, storytelling is particularly adaptable to second language instruction, stressing listening comprehension […]" (Adair-Hauck and Donato, 2002b, p. 271). However, the notion of story as a text type is broadened to encompass different text types such as news and magazine articles on topics both related to the lesson or unit at hand and to the students' interests (Blad, Ryan, & Serafin, 2011).

Moreover, written input might be more effective than oral input in making the target grammar form more noticeable to learners. Even if the text is of an oral mode of communication (a dialogue, a speech, a song, etc.), once the meaning has been established, students should be presented afterwards with the script (or lyrics, if the input is a song) in a written form. After the target grammar has been visually noticed, aural exercises should follow so learners get used to perceive the new grammar in oral speech.

The PACE Model presents four phases: 1) Presentation: Students interact first with the text by exploring the meaning of the text in various passes; 2) Attention: The teacher then, in a Vygotskian manner, calls students' attention to the specific target grammar on the text; 3) Co-construction: The teacher tries to elicit the rule from the students, with the help of the teacher only if necessary; and 4) Extension: Students engage in open-ended activities featuring the newly

learned grammar, bringing the activity full circle. The Attention and Co-construction phases are the real innovation of PACE to address the inductive and deductive learning controversy. According to Blad, Ryan, and Serafin (2011), the PACE Model "aims to unsettle the rigid dichotomy between implicit and explicit grammar instruction by offering a third option that focuses on collaboration between teachers and learners …" (p. 3). See Figure 2 for a visual representation of this model.

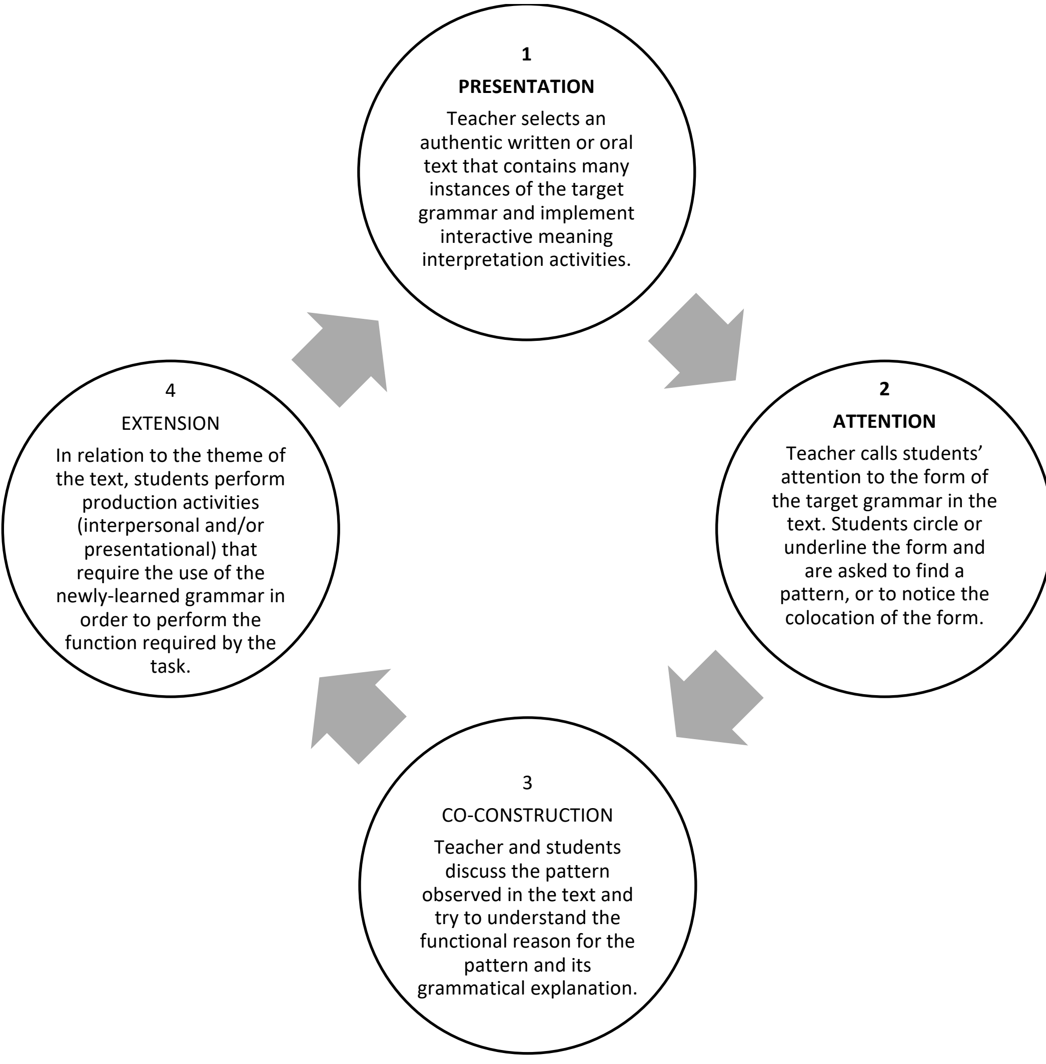

Figure 2
The PACE Model

Research on the PACE Model is scarce. Its tenets have been applied to the teaching of grammar and culture. Chrysostome's (2001) qualitative study examined the effects of using folktales from Benin[2] within the framework of the PACE model in French language classes to teach French culture and grammar. The results indicated that the PACE framework facilitated reflection on learning and promoted cultural conversations between students and teacher.

Haight, Herron, and Cole (2007) compared the deductive and guided inductive approaches, modeled after the PACE Model, in teaching eight French grammatical structures. There were a

control group and an experimental group taught with one or the other approach. Results indicated that the group taught using the guided inductive approach performed better than the deductive approach group at the posttest. The analysis also suggested the superiority of the inductive approach group over the deductive approach group in the long-term.

Blad, Ryan, and Serafin (2011) also applied the PACE Model to the teaching of culture, with a focus on cross-cultural analysis, transcultural thinking, and the development, if only preliminarily, of an intercultural perspective. The results were positive and encouraging; students enjoyed the multi-step approach to culture learning and benefited most from the large quantities of comprehensible input on the cultural subject and the low stress-environment that the PACE Model creates.

Groeneveld (2011) focused on the PACE Model's original objective, the teaching of grammar. She set up a non-experimental study with English-speaking students learning Dutch and French grammar. The target grammatical concepts were demonstrative pronouns, direct object, superlative, and agreement. Groenveld's conclusion was that PACE contributed to learners' declarative knowledge of the target grammar. The design of the study did not shed light on the role of the PACE Model in the development of the procedural knowledge of the participants, that is, in the ability to produce the target grammar for communication.

The differences between PI and the PACE Model become obvious. First, PI offers explicit explanation before the exercises, with the purpose of making learners aware of their own, first language-influenced, comprehension strategies (VanPatten, 2002). However, VanPatten and Oikennon's (1996) study found that previous explanations might not play an important role in the acquisition of the target grammatical form. In their study, three PI groups were compared: One group used the original PI model, another used structured input exercises only without any grammar explanation, and the third was explanation-only. The explanation-only group did not show any improvement, whereas the other two, original PI group (explanation plus structured input exercises) and structured input exercises only group, did show improvement. They concluded that the improvement is due to "the particular nature of the structured input activities and how these activities push them to make form-meaning connections […]" (VanPatten, 2002, p. 186).

On the other hand, PACE offers explanation after learners have noticed the target form and only if they cannot come up with the explanation by themselves, which they might have induced from observing the form used in the input text. Most importantly, the PACE Model does not provide the structured input activities that VanPatten (2002) deems essential in his reflection of the Processing Instruction Model.

A closer observation of the PACE Model shows that the gap between the Co-construction and Extension phases of PACE seems to be too great for learners to overcome by themselves. The immediate move from the discovery of the target grammar in the Co-construction phase to its production in the Extension phase does not allow enough time for learners to properly process the rule or to incorporate it into their developing linguistic systems. As suggested by Nassaji and Fotos (2011), learners need plenty of opportunities to practice the newly learned grammatical structure.

This lack of structure in the PACE Model procedure may be resolved by borrowing the PI's structured input and output exercises. These exercises seem ideal to bridge the gap between the

Co-construction and the Extension phases by providing opportunities for learners to make form-meaning connections during the structured input exercises, practice in a controlled way during the structured output exercises, and finally develop the newly acquired skill to be used in real communication during the Extension phase. As mentioned earlier, VanPatten (2002) himself recognizes the lack of opportunities for learners to develop the newly acquired skill as a shortcoming of PI.

THE S-PACE MODEL

As indicated earlier, the S-PACE Model is a "hybrid" technique combining both PI and PACE. This combination consists of inserting two additional phases, the structured input and output exercises suggested by PI, between the last two phases of the PACE Model, Co-construction and Extension. In this way, after having "co-constructed" the target grammatical rule, learners are given the opportunity to make form-meaning connections and practice the grammar in a controlled way before moving to the open-ended activities, thus enhancing the likelihood that learners incorporate the new grammatical rule into their developing linguistic systems. The resulting blended technique is S (structured) + PACE, that is, S-PACE.

The S-PACE Model consist of the following six phases:

1. Input (Presentation)
    a. Find an authentic/semi-authentic text that contains many instances of the target grammar. It could be either an oral or a written text, but if oral, students should be provided with the script in the written form, where it would be easier to visually notice the target grammatical form.
    b. Make the language input as comprehensible as possible via images, gestures, and students' background knowledge.
    c. Implement meaning interpretation activities, such as having students answer comprehension question or engage in tasks that require understanding and interpreting the text.
2. Attention
    a. Call students' attention to the form of the target grammar in the text.
    b. Ask students to circle or underline the form, find a pattern, or notice the colocation of the form.
    c. It helps comparing the new form and function with a form and function known by the students. For example, Past Tense versus Present Tense, Subjunctive versus Indicative modes, adverbs versus adjectives, etc.
3. Co-construction
    a. Teacher and students discuss the pattern observed throughout the text and try to understand the functional reason for the pattern and its grammatical explanation.
    b. Depending on the level of saliency of the form, students are expected to come up with an explanation on their own. If they do not, the teacher guides them until they do. Ultimately, the teacher confirms or corrects their hypothesis.

4. Structured input exercise
   a. Students perform structured (controlled) input exercises in which they are forced to select, by checking or marking with an "x", one answer or another depending on the grammatical form used in the prompt.
   b. When possible, and in order to make the target form more salient, it is important to place it at the beginning of the prompt.
   c. Intake is assumed to happen after several input exercises have been performed.
5. Structured output exercise
   a. Students are offered opportunities to produce the target grammatical form in a structured (controlled) way by responding meaningfully and communicatively to prompts that require the use of the target form in a short answer.
6. Extension
   a. Currently, ask students to perform open-ended production activities (interpersonal and/or presentational) that require the use of the newly learned grammar.

The S-PACE Model is visually represented in Figure 3, where the insertion of the two new steps of PI may be seen (structured input and output exercises) between the Co-construction and Extension phases of the original PACE Model:

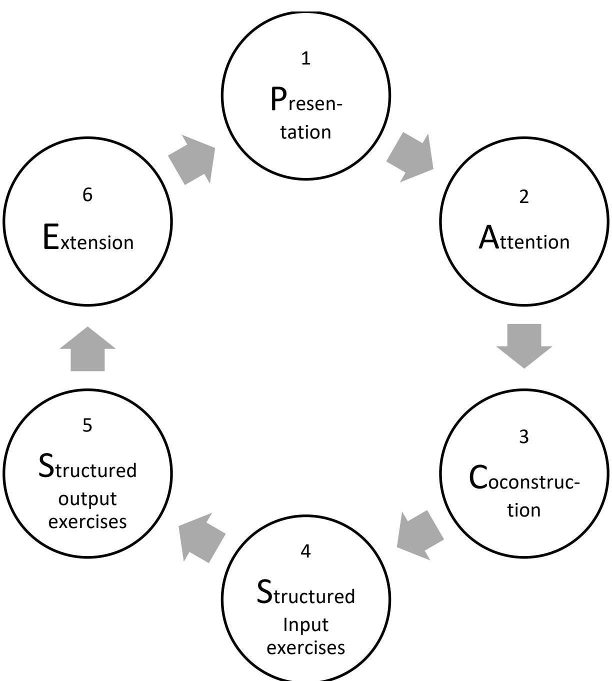

Figure 3
S-PACE (Structured-PACE)

Two examples of S-PACE lessons are offered in Appendices 1 and 2. The target grammar for the two lessons are the Spanish Imperfect and the Spanish Imperative.

As of today, a small number of experimental studies have been undertaken to test the advantage of the S-PACE Model over the original PACE Model. The evidence for the advantage of

the S-PACE Model is unclear. In one case, the results were not convincing due to the small number of participants, although the experimental group did present a tendency to improve in the delayed test (Gonzalez-Bueno, 2018a). In a second attempt, the results were invalidated when, after the experiment, the teacher taught the target grammar again according to her traditional approach, thus muddling any benefit that S-PACE might have exerted in the experimental group (Gonzalez-Bueno, 2018b). Anecdotally, one reader of Gonzalez-Bueno's (2019) essay, which proposes the S-PACE Model for teaching Spanish pronunciation, decided to form all of his lessons around the S-PACE model and later reported that it "worked great and the students had a wonderful experience" (Rao, personal communication, November 6, 2019). However, serious research is needed if foreign language teachers are to be persuaded that the S-PACE Model is an effective focus-on-form technique to teach foreign language grammar. From this platform, the author urges foreign language teachers to reach out and collaborate in the implementation and assessment of the S-PACE Model in order to examine it as a viable way to teach grammar.

Conclusion

The goal of this essay has been to show in detail the S-PACE Model technique to foreign language teachers so they can focus on the linguistic form in their teaching while staying within a communicative approach. The potential benefit of this model is the inclusion of sufficient form-focused controlled practice, both as input and as output, within the previously proposed PACE Model, and the provision of needed additional practice to the original PI.

Foreign language teaching methods and techniques do not necessarily replace one another but grow from previous ones, evolving towards improving language teaching and learning in a more effective way. Teachers and researchers are the agents of this growth as it is their responsibility to deliver the best education to students. To help students become better communicators and life-long language learners, we need to provide them with language practices that reinforce and ensure integration and permanence of the new grammatical knowledge in their implicit linguistic system. It is hoped that the S-PACE Model presented here might be one of these practices.

Notes

1. Field-independent learners (also called analytic learners) like to concentrate on the details of language, such as grammar rules, and enjoy taking apart words and sentences (Retrieved from http://esl.fis.edu/eltern/advice/styles.htm.)
2. The Republic of Benin (French: République du Bénin), formerly Dahomey, is a country in West Africa (Wikipedia).

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APPENDIX 1

S-PACE Lesson: Spanish Past Imperfect

This lesson features the six phases of the S-PACE Model: Phases 1, 2, and 3, Presentation, Attention, and Co-Construction, and Phase 6, Extension, are the same four phases of the PACE Model. Phases 4 and 5 correspond to the structured input and output exercises of PI.

Warm-up

Initial discussion prompt: "When you were little, what did you do that you don't do now?"

1. Presentation Phase: Choose a (semi-)authentic text that requires the use of the target grammar.[1] Add images to enhance comprehension. Offer comprehension questions beforehand to provide focus.

   Verdadero o falso (True or false)

Manuela...	*V*	*F*
... jugaba con su hermana y con sus amigos *... used to play with her sister and with her friends*	*x*	
... se monta en su moto para ir a trabajar *... rides her motorcycle to go to work*		*x*
... bailaba flamenco *... used to dance flamenco*		
... jugaba al Trivial Pursuit *... used to play Trivial Pursuit*		
... se viste de bruja *... dresses as a witch*		
... se montaba en la noria *... she used to ride the Ferris Wheel*		
... etc.		

Mi niñez

Cuando yo era niña, jugaba con mi hermana y con mis juguetes. Jugaba a que era una maestra y mis muñecos eran mis alumnos. Durante la Feria de Abril me gustaba vestirme de flamenca y bailaba con mis amigas. También, cuando mi madre me llevaba de compras, me montaba en el tío vivo que había cerca de casa.

Sin embargo, ahora juego al Trivial Pursuit con mis amigos. Cuando estoy sola y aburrida, juego Tetris en mi teléfono. Ya no me visto de flamenca, pero me gusta vestirme de bruja en Halloween, y en vez de en el tío vivo, me monto en mi coche.

Translation

When I was little, I used to play with my sister and my toys. I would pretend that I was a teacher, and my dolls were my students. During the Feria de Abril, I used to love to dress as a flamenco girl and I used to dance with my friends. Also, when my mom took me shopping, I would ride the merry-go-round that was near my house.
However, I play Trivial Pursuit with my friends now. When I'm by myself and bored, I play Tetris on my phone. I don't dress as a flamenco girl anymore, but I like to dress up as a witch on Halloween, and instead of riding the merry-go-round, I ride my car.

2. Attention Phase: Call students' attention to the difference between the verbs in the first paragraph ("Cuando yo era niña…") and the second paragraph ("Sin embargo, ahora…"):

Instructor: "Notice the difference between the verbs used in the first part ("Cuando yo era niña…") and the second part ("Pero ahora: …") of the story."

Cuando yo era niña…	*Pero ahora…*
… jugaba	*… juego*
… jugaba	*… juego*
… [me] gustaba	*… [me] gusta*
… [me] montaba	*… [me] monto*

What do you think of these two different endings? What can you conclude after this observation?

3. Co-construction Phase: At this point, students might be able to come up with their own conclusion or they might need the instructor's guidance:

Instructor:" When did the actions expressed with the –aba ending happen? When did the actions without the –aba ending happen?"

Possible answer: "To talk about actions that occurred for a period of time in the past, we add the ending –aba (-abas, -ábamos, - aban) to the stem of the verb."
Ultimately, the teacher confirms or corrects their hypothesis.

4. Structured Input Exercise This exercise presents identical pairs of sentences except for the verb forms. Only one member of the pair contains the target form (Imperfect), and the other does not (Present). Students need to make a choice and determine which one refers to the past. Notice that by placing the subject of all sentences ("Manuela") separately, the target form is the first word encountered:

Instructor: "Indicate whether the following actions refer to something that Manuela used to do when she was little or to something she does now:

Manuela…	Cuando era niña When she was little	Ahora Now
… dibujaba caras … used to draw faces		

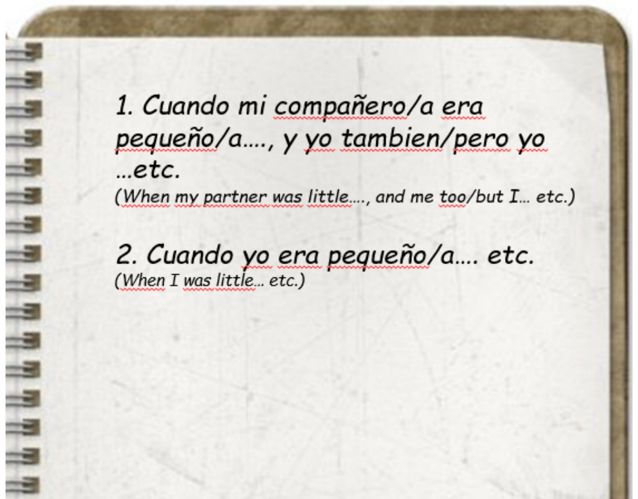
.. nadaba en el mar … used to swim in the ocean		
… juega al parchis … plays parcheesi		
… canta en la ducha … sings in the shower		
… jugaba al parchis … used to play parcheesi		
… dibuja caras … draws faces		
… nada en el mar … swims in the ocean		
… cantaba en la ducha … used to sing in the shower		

5. Structured Output Exercise: This exercise allows students to produce the target grammar in a controlled but still communicative and personal way. They get to express whether they used to do the same things as Manuela used to by responding "Yo tambien" (Eng. "Me too") and, most importantly, if they used to do something different, they must use the Imperfect. If they need help with new vocabulary, they can consult the instructor.

Instructor: "Compare Manuela's childhood with yours. Follow the models:"

Manuela…	*Pero yo…* *(but I…)*	*Yo también* *(Me too)*
… dibujaba casitas *… used to draw houses*		*x*
… jugaba al baloncesto *… used to play basketball*	*… jugaba al béisbol* *… used to play baseball*	
… se montaba en el tío vivo *… used to ride the Merry-go-round*		
… cantaba canciones de Menudo *… used to sing Menudo's songs*		
… escuchaba música de los Beatles *… used to listen to The Beatles' music*		
… veraneaba en el pueblo *… used to spend Summers in the village*		

6. Extension: Choose one of the following tasks:
   1. In pairs, compare your childhood with that of your partner.
   2. Write a paragraph describing how you celebrated your birthday when you were young.



APPENDIX 2

S-PACE Lesson: Spanish Imperative

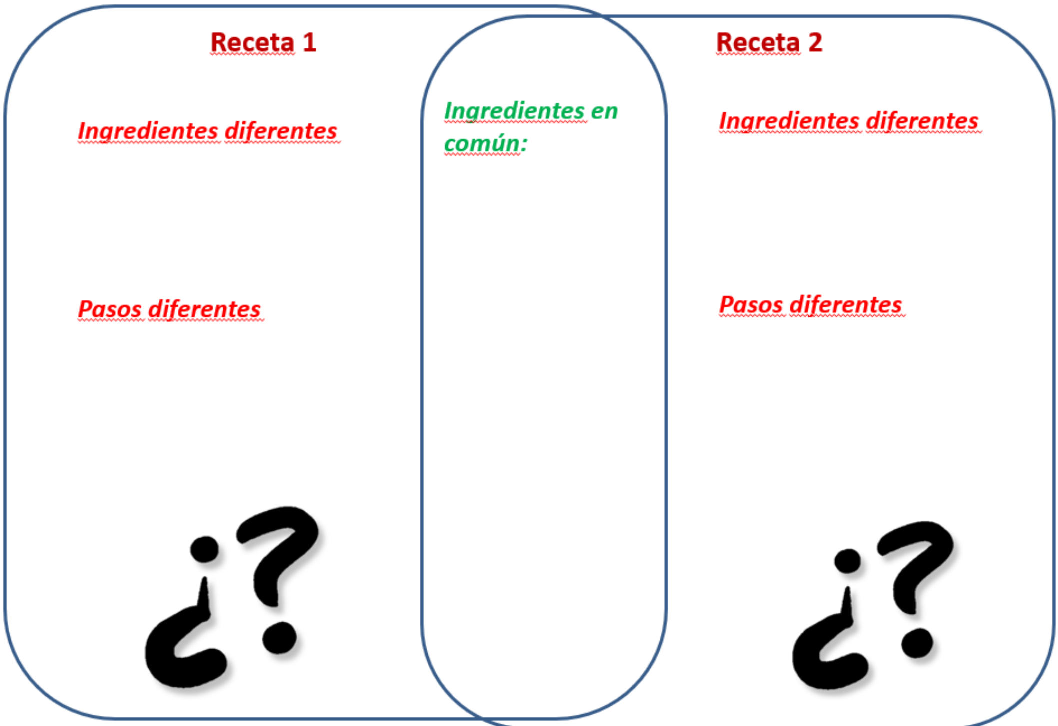
This lesson has the six phases of the S-PACE Model: Phases 1, 2, and 3, Presentation, Attention, and Co-Construction, and Phase 6, Extension, are the same four phases of the PACE Model. Phases 4 and 5 correspond with the structured input and output exercises of PI.

Warm-up

Initial discussion prompt: Do you go to restaurants often? Have you ever seen the interior of the kitchen or met the chef? What is a sous-chef? Can you cook? Would you like to work at a restaurant?

Presentation Phase: Choose a (semi-)authentic text that naturally requires the use of the target grammar. Add images to enhance comprehension. In this case, the Spanish Imperative. As in English, recipes might use the commands ("Slice the potatoes…") or the Present Tense in the first person plural ("We slice the potatoes...") For this exercise, two similar recipes were chosen: one using the Spanish Imperative (the target grammar) and the second using the Present Tense.

Instructor: You are going to read two slightly different recipes to make a Spanish omelet ("tortilla de patatas"). Pay attention to the differences between the two and complete the Venn diagram. Indicate the similarities between the two recipes.



La tortilla de patatas

La tortilla de patatas o tortilla española es una tortilla (es decir, huevo batido y luego frito) con patatas. Es una de las preparaciones más clásicas de la cocina española que puede encontrarse en cualquier bar o restaurante de España y otros países latinoamericanos, como Argentina y Uruguay.
Vas a leer dos recetas muy parecidas para hacer esta tortilla, pero son un poco diferentes. Presta atención a las diferencias y rellena el diagrama de Venn.

Receta 1

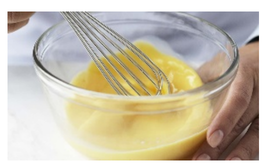
Ingredientes

- 4 huevos
- 5 patatas medianas
- Aceite de oliva virgen extra
- Sal

Pasos

1. Pelen y laven bien las patatas.
2. Corten las papas en trozos finos.
3. Pongan una sartén al fuego con el aceite y echen las patatas cuando el aceite este caliente.
4. Frían las patatas hasta que empiecen a estar doradas.
5. Batan bien los huevos en un bol.

6. Añadan las patatas a los huevos y pongan la sal.
7. Echen la mezcla en la sartén y dejen que se haga un poco.
8. Pongan un plato grande encima para dar la vuelta a la tortilla.
9. Sirvan la tortilla con un poco de perejil.



Receta 2

Ingredientes

- 8 huevos
- 1 kg de patatas
- Aceite de oliva virgen extra
- 1 cebolla grande
- Sal (al gusto)

Pasos

1. Pelamos las patatas, las lavamos y las secamos.
2. Cortamos las patatas en trozos finos y las salamos.
3. Elegimos una sartén grande y antiadherente. La ponemos al fuego y añadimos aceite de oliva virgen extra.
4. Introducimos las patatas cortadas y ya saladas en la sartén y dejamos que se cocinen durante aproximadamente veinte minutos a fuego bajo.
5. Mientras se están friendo las patatas, batimos los huevos en un bol.
6. Pelamos la cebolla y las cortamos lo más fino posible.
7. Calentamos aceite y freímos la cebolla y las añadimos al bol con el huevo batido.
8. Quitamos todo de la sartén y escurrimos (drain).
9. Cocinamos la mezcla por unos 8 minutos a fuego medio-alto.
10. Para darle la vuelta a la tortilla, usamos un plato llano de mayor diámetro que la sartén.
11. Cocinamos por el otro lado y la servimos caliente o esperamos a que se enfríe, que también está deliciosa.

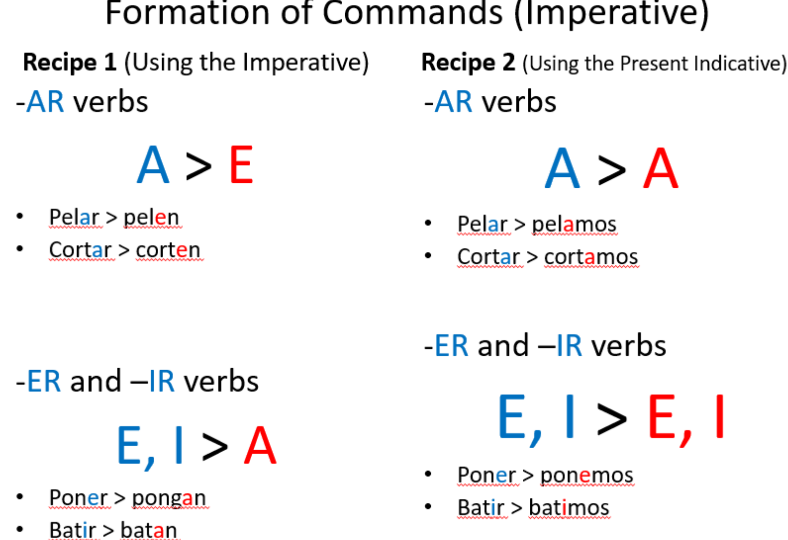
1. Attention Phase: After comparing the two recipes, the instructor asks students to write down all the verbs used in both recipes: one column for Recipe 1 and another for Recipe 2, pairing up the verbs with the same stem (pel-, bat- ...). Then a third column is added for the infinitive of those verbs.

Receta 1	Receta 2	Infinitivo
Pelen	Pelamos	Pelar
Batan	batimos	Batir
… etc		

What can you observe in this chart?

2. Co-construction Phase: At this point, students may have their own observations and conclusions or may need the instructor's guidance:
    - Examining the endings, which vowel do you see following the verb stem?
    - Who is the subject in each one? First, second or third person? Singular or plural?
    - You should recognize the form of the verb in Recipe 2. It has the same vowel after the verb stem as has the Infinitive: Pelar – pelamos, batir - batimos. It is the Present Tense, right?
    - Do you recognize anything unique in Recipe 1? Notice that the vowel following the verb stem differs from that in the infinitive. What might this be?
    - Which tense is it? Think of recipes in English. Which tense is normally used? (Cut butter into cubes; cream butter and add sugar…)

Ultimately, the teacher confirms or corrects students' hypothesis. The rule of the formal, plural Imperative formation[2] is shown on the board:

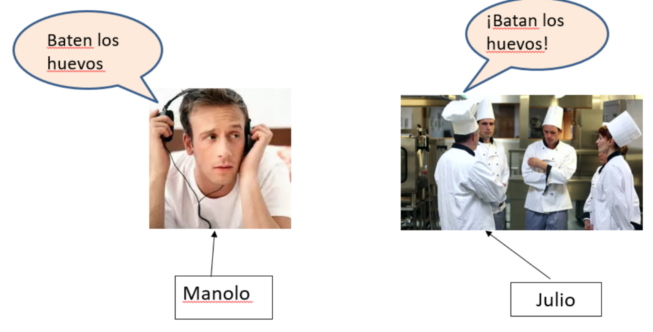


3. Structured Input Exercise

Introduction

Manolo Y Julio: Recetas Secretas

"Manolo's Bar" wants to copy the recipe for the tortilla de patatas from his archenemy, Julio, of "Restaurante Julio," renowned for its delicious tortillas de patatas. Manolo plans to spy on Julio, so he installs a hidden microphone in Julio's bar to hear his instructions to the new cooks. While he hears Julio's orders ("Beat the eggs!"), he takes notes on a piece of paper ("They beat the eggs").



This exercise presents identical pairs of sentences except for the verb forms. Only one member of the pair contains the target form

(Imperfect), and the other does not (Present). Students need to determine which sentence is Manolo's and which is Julio's.

Instructor: Indicate which sentences are Manolo's and which are Julio's.

	Julio's orders	Manolo's notes
Pelen y laven bien las papas.	x	
Corten las papas en trozos finos		
Pelan y lavan bien las papas.		x
Añaden las patatas a los huevos		
Batan bien los huevos en un bol.		
Pongan la sal		
Añadan las patatas a los huevos		
Ponen la sal		
Añaden las patatas a los huevos		
Echen la mezcla en la sartén		
Sírven la tortilla con un poco de perejil.		
Cortan las papas en trozos finos		
Sírvan la tortilla con un poco de perejil.		
Echan la mezcla en la sartén		
Pelen y laven bien las papas.		

4. Structured Output Exercise: In this exercise students correct the target grammar in a controlled but communicative way.

   "Restaurante Julio" has hired a new chef, Enrique. Enrique doesn't know Julio's recipe for the tortilla de patatas. He instructs his assistants to prepare them his way. However, Julio overhears him and corrects him accordingly. Imagine that you are Julio and set Enrique straight whenever he deviates from the original recipe by following the model. Otherwise, just write "Sí, está bien":

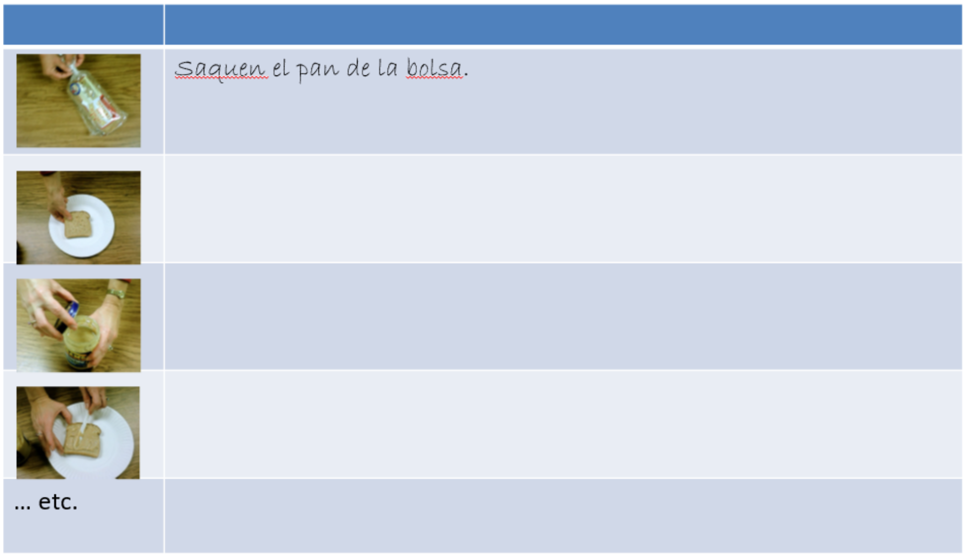
Enrique says	Julio's correction
Laven las patatas, pero no las pelen.	¡No ! ¡Pelen las patatas!
Corten las patatas en trozos grandes.	
Batan bien los huevos en un plato.	
Pongan la pimienta.	
Añadan las patatas a los huevos.	
Echen la mezcla en la sartén	
Sírvan la tortilla con un poco de cilantro.	

5. Extension: You are boarding an exchange student, Sergio, from Argentina, where they also make tortillas de patatas. But you want to share your American culinary culture with him. You write the recipe for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, so he can make it with his friends and family when he goes back to Argentina.

Receta de PBJ-Sandwich

Ingredientes
Pan
Manteca de cacahuete
Mermelada

Paso:
Instructor: List the steps of this recipe by following the model for Recipe 1; that is, use the Spanish Imperative (Commands). You may also include the following verbs: sacar, poner, extender or untar (spread), cortar, cubrir…



Notes

1. It is preferable to introduce a new form one at a time. Once learners become familiar with the formation of the third person singular form, they may be introduced to the other forms. This should be easy for those who already know the conjugation endings for the Present Tense.
2. Once learners become familiar with the formation of the formal, plural Command, they may be introduced to other forms (i.e., the formal singular "pele," the informal singular "pela," and the plural "pelad" (used only in Spain) later.

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The Effects of Task Complexity on Comprehensibility in Second Language Speech

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This study examined the impact of the manipulated task complexity (Robinson 2001a, 2001b, 2007, 2011; Robinson & Gilabert, 2007) on second language (L2) speech comprehensibility. I examined whether manipulated task complexity (a) impacts L2 speech comprehensibility, (b) aligns with L2 speakers' perception of task difficulty (cognitive complexity), and (c) influences the use of different linguistic features that construct comprehensibility. Forty Korean undergraduates completed five tasks, differing in complexity, within a single task type (picture narrative). Students were also interviewed regarding task difficulty and how they identified the task in terms of cognitive complexity. Ten raters judged the participants' speech comprehensibility and linguistic features. The linguistic features of the participants' language productions were analyzed—individual speech variables were coded, and five degrees of task complexity were accounted for. The most complex task scored highest on comprehensibility, accentedness, fluency, and linguistic features (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar), whereas the least complex task scored lowest. Statistical analysis revealed that task complexity played a crucial role in comprehensibility and the use of a broad range of linguistic features. The findings point to task-specific, multifaceted relationships between comprehensibility and linguistic assessments.

Keywords*: L2 speech, task complexity, comprehensibility, accentedness, linguistic features*

Introduction

Language teachers design classroom-based tasks to push learners to use the second language (L2), which creates, strengthens, and solidifies the brain's system of storing and retrieving L2 for faster, deeper, and more accurate language use. Teachers, however, struggle in deciding how complex the tasks should be. If the tasks are too complex, the students' language production may falter, and students may become frustrated. If, however, the tasks are too easy, they are not challenged. In either case, linguistic advancement may not occur.

The goal was to understand the relationship between student perceived task difficulty and task complexity. A group of English language learners partook of five tasks (pseudo-randomly presented) and their oral performance, based on five levels of task complexity, was examined.

Moreover, the students were asked to comment on the difficulty of each task and later interviewed for a detailed account of perceived task difficulty. Their comments were used to estimate their cognitive load.

Task complexity has been broadly investigated in task-based language teaching and learning (TBLT). One of the most utilized frameworks in TBLT research concerning task complexity is the Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2001a, 2001b, 2007, 2011), along with the Triadic Componential Framework (e.g., Robinson & Gilabert, 2007), and the simplify, stabilize-automatic-restructure, complexity (SSARC) model (e.g., Robinson, 2015). These frameworks have guidelines for teachers to manipulate task complexity in instructional contexts. The theory is that if teachers increase task complexity, they will change the cognitive demand on L2 learners who partake in the tasks. A considerable amount of research has examined the extent to which specific task characteristics manipulate task complexity and whether those manipulations affect task performance in expected ways. In Robinson's frameworks, it is assumed that if a task is more complex (e.g., with more elements and potential outcomes that necessitates more spatial reasoning), learners must *think* more deeply in the L2, therefore producing more or higher-level language or both, which will stretch and strengthen the neural networking of the second-language in the brain *more* than if tasks are simpler.

Research on the impact of task complexity in second language acquisition (SLA) has found that more complex tasks have resulted in greater lexical and grammatical accuracy. However, less research is found on how task complexity affects L2 speech features (Mora & Levkina, 2017; Solon, Long, & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2017). To fill this research gap, the current study focused on how five levels of task complexity affect learners' (a) speech comprehensibility, (b) perception of task difficulty, and (c) L2 linguistic features of oral production (pronunciation, lexis, grammar, and vocabulary). A review of key theories and former studies established the foundation of this study.

BACKGROUND

Theoretical Frameworks of Task Complexity

The theoretical frameworks in operationalizing task complexity have been debated by Skehan (1998, 2003, 2014; Trade-off hypothesis) and Robinson (2001a, 2001b, 2007, 2011; Cognition Hypothesis). The Trade-off hypothesis implies that L2 speakers cannot process multiple resources simultaneously. The Cognition Hypothesis holds an opposing view that L2 speakers can handle different resources in cognitively demanding contexts. Further, in operationalizing task complexity, Robinson's (2007) Triadic Componential Framework outlines not only a taxonomy of task characteristics for L2 pedagogical situations (e.g., syllabus), but also identifies three main types of factors contributing to *task complexity*, *task difficulty,* and *task conditions*. *Task complexity* factors decide the intrinsic cognitive demands of tasks (like Skehan's cognitive complexity, which is meant to capture the cognitive processes induced by the task). *Task difficulty* includes individual differences (e.g., anxiety and aptitude) that may affect task-based performance. *Task conditions* address variables that influence interactional task demands.

According to Robinson's (2001a, 2001b, 2011) Triadic Componential Framework, task complexity is operationalized in two task dimensions: *resource-directing* and *resource-dispersing*. Manipulated *resource-directing* features relate to conceptual task demands; i.e., tasks designed to enhance conceptual demands require learners to engage in various reasonings (causal, intentional, or spatial), and identify the numbers of elements (from few to many), as well as describing events that are dislocated in time and space. *Resource-directing* features, as Robinson further notes, may guide learners' attention to task-relevant linguistic features.

Previous Studies of Task Complexity

Task Complexity Effects on Comprehensibility and L2 Linguistic Features

Based on the theoretical debate between Robinson (2001a, 2001b, 2007, 2011) and Skehan (1998, 2014), researchers have investigated the differential effects of task complexity (for an overall review, see Appendix A). Specifically, the effects of task complexity on L2 production are examined in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). For example, Robinson (2001b) indicates that L2 speakers produce various lexical features in a more complex task (e.g., giving directions using a map of unfamiliar locations) than a less complex map task (e.g., giving directions using a small map with familiar locations). In another study, Révész (2012) finds that in an argumentative task with a simple and a complex version, accuracy and lexical diversity rise with increased task complexity. Other studies have also shown that task complexity affects grammatical accuracy and lexical complexity (e.g., Robinson, 2007; Robinson & Gilabert, 2007). Later, Sasayama (2016) implemented dual task complexity; that is, L2 speakers told the story while reacting to color changes. Her findings reveal that L2 learners can detect the task design features (number of elements).

Examining the impact of task complexity on CAF, researchers have mostly focused on written features of lexicogrammars (Plonsky & Kim, 2016); scant research has been done on oral production. To better understand the role of task, researchers assert the need to extend the studies of TBLT from lexis and grammar to speech aspects, such as comprehensibility and pronunciation (Mora & Levkina 2017; Solon et al., 2017). Previous studies have evidenced that comprehensibility is associated with various linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (e.g., Saito, Trofimovich, Isaacs, & Webb, 2017). Comprehensibility-associated linguistic features include word and sentence stress (Field, 2005; Hahn, 2004), speech rate (Crowther, Trofimovich, Isaacs, & Saito, 2015; Munro & Derwing, 2001), prosodic proficiency (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Kang, Rubin, & Pickering, 2010), and pause or syllable length (Kang et al., 2010). Although previous findings show that comprehensibility includes many linguistic features, researchers have not examined how manipulated task complexity affects comprehensibility.

In recent years, to better understand oral performance in the TBLT field, several researchers (e.g., Crowther et al., 2015; Crowther, Trofimovich, & Issacs, 2017; Saito et al., 2017) begin investigating the impact of task complexity on: (a) comprehensibility (e.g., the effort listeners put in to comprehend the speech) and (b) how comprehensibility is related to different linguistic features. Two noticeable studies (Crowther et al., 2015; Crowther et al., 2017) are about

task complexity's effects on comprehensibility. Crowther et al (2015; 2017) compare narrative (TOEFL iBT Speaking) and interactive (IELTS Speaking) tasks that impose different cognitive loads on the learners. They discover that in more complex tasks, comprehensibility has more grammatical/lexical variables. Their studies suggest that L2 learners produce different oral output based on task complexity. Built on these two studies, further research should examine whether the different cognitive demands within the same task type induce different L2 speech. This may bring practical implications to L2 instruction. In other words, we need to investigate whether a cognitively more complex task leads to higher L2 comprehensibility. Additionally, this investigation may examine the various linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) produced by L2 learners in relation to tasks at varying levels of complexity.

L2 Speakers' Perceptions of Task Difficulty

In manipulating task complexity, the main assumption of the Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2001, 2007) is that tasks with different cognitive demands may influence L2 learners' perceptions of task difficulty. This difficulty will, in turn, affect performance. In the Cognition Hypothesis, task *difficulty* is "the learners' perceptions of these task demands" (Robinson, 2007, p.210), which could explain learners' variant performances on the task. Researchers have investigated the L2 learners' and teachers' perceptions of manipulated task difficulty (e.g., Révész, 2012; Révész & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2016; Sasayama, 2016). Révész (2012) found that both teachers and learners perceived task demands in the intended way, that is, the designed-to-be more complex task was perceived as more difficult. In another study, Sasayama (2016) discovered that learners' subjective responses to the task difficulty were based on the observable task manipulations (e.g., dual-task methodology), suggesting that participants' perceptions on task difficulty could provide useful evidence for learners' mental processing in relation to the cognitive demands.

The previous studies have revealed that learners' perceived task difficulty influences their task performance: for example, more complex tasks elicit various uses of linguistic features. Furthermore, investigating the L2 learners' perception of task difficulty provides empirical evidence of learners' process of dealing with the cognitive demands of the task and the learners' variant performances. Written output was the main foci of previous investigation of learner perceptions of task difficulty, such as lexico-grammatical features. Consequently, more research is needed on spoken output, such as comprehensibility.

Given most empirical studies exploring the theoretical predictions of the Cognition Hypothesis and the specific focus of this study, I restrict the literature review to studies that investigate the effects of task complexity on L2 comprehensibility. The review reveals that little research thus far has explored to what extent a manipulated task complexity leads to different L2 speech outcomes and affects the learners' perceived task difficulty. I conclude that new research is needed to focus on: (a) the learners' perception of task difficulty, (b) the effects of task complexity on L2 comprehensibility, and (c) the effects of task complexity on the use of variant L2 linguistic features (pronunciation, lexis, grammar), accentedness, and fluency.

The Present Study

The three research questions guiding this study are the following:

RQ1. Do L2 speakers' speech performances significantly differ across five tasks in terms of task complexity?

RQ2. Do L2 speakers perceive designed-to-be-complex tasks as difficult (cognitively demanding)? (That is, is the task complexity operationalization valid regarding L2 speakers' perception of task difficulty?)

RQ3. Does the relationship between L2 comprehensibility and linguistic features (pronunciation, lexis, grammar, vocabulary) reveal differences in terms of different degrees of task complexity?

METHOD

Participants

Speakers

Forty native Korean speakers of L2 English at a university in the United States (female: *n*=20, male: *n*=20) participated in the study on a voluntary basis. The mean age was 24.9 (*SD* = 3.48), ranging from 20 to 29. According to self-reported standardized English proficiency test scores (TOEFL iBT/TOEIC) (Table 1), their L2 proficiency was advanced-low. Participants were in the United States as either undergraduate (*n*=28) or graduate students (*n*=12). To better understand the validity of manipulated task complexity, participants were asked to complete a survey on task difficulty on a scale of 1 to 9, respond to open-ended questions, and answer interview questions of which tasks they perceived as the easiest and the most difficult, and how they identified task difficulty.

Table 1

*Self-reported Test Scores on Standardized English Tests and Self-rated English Proficiency**

Standardized English Tests		Self-Rated Proficiency					
TOEFL iBT	*TOEIC*	*Overall*	*Pronunciation*	*Vocabulary*	*Grammar*	*Listening*	*Speaking*
M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
102.9 (8.46)	897 (36.5)	4.82 (1.38)	4.63 (1.39)	4.20 (1.44)	4.35 (1.82)	4.90 (1.58)	3.93 (1.59)

* Maximum score of TOEFL iBT: 120; maximum score of TOEIC: 990; Self-rated Proficiency: min=1; max =9.

Listeners

Ten raters participated in the study, with a mean age of 30.1 years (range: 27-34; SD: 2.87). Five raters were experienced raters based on their English as a second language (ESL) teaching

experience (*M*=6.25 years; *SD* = 2.1; range: 4-10 years). The other five were native speakers of Korean, graduate students in the United States, who were proficient English speakers (Mean TOEFL iBT=112.33). The ten raters were asked to judge student oral output's (a) comprehensibility, (b) accentedness, (c) pronunciation, (d) vocabulary, (e) grammar, and (f) fluency on a 9-point scale (1=*not good*, 9=*very good*). According to a language background questionnaire, the average familiarity with Korean-accented speech by the native speakers of English was 4.58 out of 9. None of the raters reported hearing problems.

Speaking Tasks

A commonly used task to elicit L2 speech for comprehensibility analysis is the picture narrative (e.g., Crowther et al., 2017); i.e., learners describe a sequence of given pictures. The participants in this study also completed picture narrative tasks that differed in complexity. Task complexity was manipulated following Robinson's (2001a, 2011) triadic componential framework along the resource-directing continuum. Resource-directing features were manipulated across the least to most complex tasks. The current study was designed to use one task type (picture narrative) differing in cognitive complexity. Three dimensions were manipulated to increase the cognitive demand: (1) number of elements, (2) time sequence, and (3) the number of elements in the background (Robinson, 2011; Sasayama, 2016; Tavakoli & Foster, 2011).

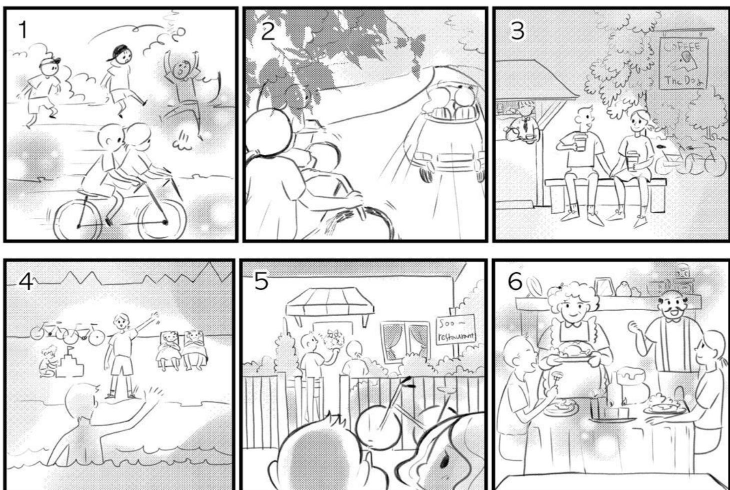

Figure 1
Picture Narrative Example for the Main Task

As the task increased in complexity, several elements were added. Background changes were manipulated by changing the scene. The task in Figure 1, for example, had five background scenes: park, road, café, swimming pool, and restaurant. Whereas the time sequence in the least complex task was obvious, the most complex task had no detectable sign of a time change. A description of the tasks and their complexity features are in Table 2. To validate whether the participants also perceived the tasks as increasingly complex, each student self-assessed their performance on each task using four categories: (a) complexity, (b) pronunciation, (c) vocabulary, and (d) grammar (see Appendix B).

Table 2
Increasingly Cognitively Complex Version of a Picture Narration Task

		Complexity Dimensions			
Tasks	*Complexity level*	*1. Number of elements*		*2. Time sequence*	*3.Background changes*
1	Simple	3	chicken, squirrel, deer	Detectable	0
2		5	dog, boy, girl, cow, picnic basket		2
3		7	five boys, ball, snake		3
4		9	man, policeman, two robbers, painter, tiger, deer, woman, dog		4
5	Complex	11	three couples, car, bike, boy, beach, sunbed, restaurant, café, bench	Undetectable	5

Participant Procedure

The participants completed the tasks individually in a quiet room. They first filled out a background questionnaire; then completed practice tasks, learning how to record their responses; subsequently performed the five picture narrative tasks with the order of tasks randomized. For each task, they had 30 seconds to study the pictures and one minute to record their story. After each task, participants rated how complex the task was on a scale of 1 to 9 and provided explanatory comments. They also rated how each task affected their linguistic performance (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar). Lastly, participants took an exit questionnaire and participated in an interview with the researcher about their perceptions of the task complexity.

Rating Procedure

The rating directions were given to 10 raters in their first language about the variables to be judged. The rubric was developed from Hardison's (2014) definitions (see Appendix C). Raters familiarized themselves with the rating procedure by listening to three practice samples, and then they rated the data set of 200 speech samples, which were five responses from each of the 40 participants. There were three sessions, lasting two hours each. The interval between sessions was less than a week to prevent raters from forgetting the definitions and rating procedures.

The raters gathered in one place and listened to a randomized order of speech samples played via laptop. Upon hearing each sample, raters evaluated comprehensibility, accentedness, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency by checking a number (1-9; 1= not good, 9= very good). Raters assessed both comprehensibility and linguistic variables simultaneously and intuitively, simulating the natural speech perception process. For comprehensibility, raters listened to each sample only once to ensure that ratings tapped into their intuitions.

Results

L2 Speakers' Perception of Task Difficulty (Cognitive Complexity)

The first analysis was about the L2 speakers' perceptions of task difficulty. To see which tasks participants thought were the easiest and the most complex to perform, data from the exit questionnaires were analyzed. Even though participants did not use the expression *cognitive demand*, they consistently reported the difficulties that they experienced in discovering seemingly minor details, fully realizing the time sequence of the story, or thinking about the different uses of linguistic variables. Table 3 presents a summary of the learner-rated task difficulty levels. Participants rated the linguistic features of each task to be more complex than the previous one as the tasks became more difficult, except for one variable—pronunciation (pronunciation for Task 4 was rated more difficult than Task 5).

Table 3
Summary of Participants-rated Task Difficulty in Five Tasks (N=40)*

	Overall Task difficulty M (SD)	*Pronunciation* M (SD)	*Vocabulary* M (SD)	*Grammar* M (SD)
Task 1	4.10 (1.66)	3.17 (1.77)	3.85 (1.89)	3.71 (1.91)
Task 2	4.34 (1.67)	3.27 (1.95)	3.34 (1.76)	3.83 (1.80)
Task 3	4.51 (1.58)	3.73 (1.83)	3.76 (1.79)	3.95 (1.80)
Task 4	4.76 (1.56)	3.85 (1.85)	4.17 (1.77)	4.02 (1.71)
Task 5	5.24 (1.64)	3.80 (1.81)	4.32 (1.64)	4.29 (1.57)

* Rated on a 9-point Likert scale (1= least complex; 9= most complex)

To compare the differences in participants' perceptions of overall cognitive load related to the three linguistic variables (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) and across the five tasks, four one-way ANOVAs were performed. The findings of the univariate test showed an overall task effect for the speakers' perception (F (4, 200) = 2.63, p =.04, d = .05). Post hoc (Scheffe adjusted) analyses revealed that the overall task difficulty was rated higher in Task 5 than in Task 1 (p =.04, d =.69). No significant difference of difficulty levels was found in pronunciation (p =.08, d =.35), vocabulary (p =.10, d =.27), and grammar (p =.09, d =.33) across tasks.

Ratings on Comprehensibility and Linguistic Features across Tasks

The next analysis targeted raters' perception of comprehensibility, accentedness, and four linguistic features (pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary). Ten raters showed high consistency in their ratings via Cronbach alpha (comprehensibility: α=.91, accentedness: α= .90). Inter-rater reliability of linguistic variables had high consistency in fluency (α=.91), followed by grammar (α=.88), vocabulary (α=.84), and pronunciation (α=.75). Table 4 shows that Task 1, designed to be the least complex task, had the lowest scores in comprehensibility, accentedness, and in the language variables. There was an increasing score trend with the intended medium-complex tasks (Tasks 2 and 3). The highest score was in Task 5, which was designed to be the most complex task, followed by Task 4.

Table 4
Raters' Scores for Comprehensibility, Accentedness, and Linguistic Properties across Five Tasks*

	Comprehensibility	*Accentedness*	*Fluency*	*Pronunciation*	*Vocabulary*	*Grammar*
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Task 1	4.00(0.35)	3.64(.52)	3.27(.37)	3.81(.40)	3.65(.25)	3.58(.58)
Task 2	4.69(0.37)	4.24(.41)	4.18(.45)	4.31(.72)	4.42(.27)	4.11(.34)
Task 3	4.96(0.62)	4.54(.55)	4.45(.51)	4.17(.51)	4.48(.20)	4.52(.37)
Task 4	5.31(0.77)	4.92(.42)	4.73(.45)	4.78(.51)	4.61(.24)	4.72(.33)
Task 5	5.88(0.43)	5.34(.43)	5.39(.30)	5.22(.48)	4.94(.30)	5.23(.37)

* On a 9-point Likert scale (1= unable to rate; 9= very good)

To investigate the different effects of tasks on the ratings of comprehensibility and linguistic variables, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was carried out. The five tasks manipulated on complexity served as independent variables. All six variables: comprehensibility, accentedness, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar were assigned as dependent variables. The score differences across the five tasks were significantly different from one another in complexity (Table 5). From Phillai's trace, there was a significant effect of task complexity on all six variables (V=1.10, F (24, 772) =12.16, p <. 005, n_p^2 =.66).

Comparisons of pairs (Scheffe adjusted) showed that (a) more complex tasks (Tasks 4 and 5) received statistically significant higher scores than the other three tasks; and (b) tasks with medium-level complexity (Tasks 2 and 3) had no significant differences across the six variables. Task complexity had an impact on comprehensibility across all five tasks, except for Tasks 2 and 3 (p =.15). Accentedness was significantly different across tasks (p < .005; d =.53), but Tasks 2 and 3 did not differ in ratings of accentedness (p = .09; d = .62). Tasks 2 and 3 were not significantly different in fluency (p =. 10, d = .56), pronunciation (p =. 86; d = .22) and vocabulary (p = .87; d = .25). Other tasks that had a non-significant difference in pronunciation were between Tasks 1 and 3 (p = .07, d = .79), and there was no significant difference in vocabulary between Tasks 3 and 4 (p = .34, d = .59).

Table 5
Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for Task Ratings

Measure	*Comprehensibility*	*Accentedness*	*Fluency*	*Pronunciation*	*Vocabulary*	*Grammar*
df	4,195	4,195	4,195	4,195	4,195	4,195
F	95.91	76.47	135.12	42.30	136.81	87.22
n_p^2	.66	.61	.74	.47	.74	.64
p	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

To investigate which rated linguistic features (pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar) fell best under the construct of comprehensibility (to explain it as a variable), discriminant function analysis was used as a follow up to MANOVA. The results showed that there were three discriminant functions (Table 6). The structure matrix in Table 7 provided information regarding which linguistic features were most useful for segmenting the comprehensibility across tasks. This structure matrix indicates that the larger the absolute correlation coefficient is, the greater the distribution of the linguistic variable is to the discrimination of comprehensibility

across tasks. The higher correlations such as 0.4 are regarded to reflect the measurement of the corresponding function.

Function 1, the most impactful function, explained 95.7% of the variance (R^2 =.85), with factor loadings of all linguistic features but pronunciation (accentedness, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar). Function 2 explained 2.7% (R^2 = .14) of the variance, which included pronunciation and vocabulary. Pronunciation was regarded as the most strongly correlated linguistic feature (.64) within Function 2. Lastly, Function 3 explained 1.2% of the variance, with fluency and pronunciation as loading factors. The combinations of the three discriminant functions significantly differentiated the task types (Λ= .11, χ^2 (24) = 426.14, p <.005), removing the first function also significantly differentiated the task types (Λ= .77, χ^2 (15) = 49.50, p <.005). It is plain to see that Function 1 contributed the most and had the largest impact. When Function 2 was removed, task types still significantly differed (Λ= .91, χ^2 (8) = 19.01, p = .015), showing the impact of pronunciation on isolated features.

Table 6

MANOVA Results of Three Discriminant Functions

Function	*Eigenvalue (Λ)*	*Wilks' Lambda*	*Chi-Square (χ^2)*	*% variance*	*p-value*
1	6.004	.11	426.14	95.7	<.005
2	.171	.77	49.50	2.7	<.005
3	.093	.91	19.01	1.2	.015

Table 7

Structure Matrix of Functions 1, 2 and 3

Factor	*Function 1*	*Function 2*	*Function 3*
Comprehensibility	r = .57*	r = .34	r = .08
Accentedness	r = .51*	r = .35	r = .18
Fluency	r = .68*	r = .09	r = .54
Pronunciation	r = .36	r = .64*	r = -.61
Vocabulary	r = .67*	r = -.61	r = -.37
Grammar	r = .54*	r = .30	r = .32

* Largest absolute correlation between each variable and any discriminant function

Linguistic Features as Predictors of Comprehensibility across Tasks

The third analysis estimated whether and, if yes, how much, the nine linguistic features predicted comprehensibility across tasks. A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the conditional expectation of the linguistic features on comprehensibility. In coding *fluency*, the number of filled and silent pauses was rated based on 250-milliseconds criteria (De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, & Hulstijn, 2013; Riggenbach, 1991). Both the filled and silent pauses were counted whenever they exceeded 250ms. Table 8 describes the nine coded linguistic features. The intercoder reliability was high across the five tasks (α= .91).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Nine Linguistic Measurements

		M (*SD*)	*Range (min-max)*
Pronunciation	Segmental errors	.01 (01)	.00-.07
	Syllable structure errors	.08 (.05)	.01-.25
	Intonation	.64 (.22)	.12-.99
Fluency	Number of silent pauses	5.26 (2.68)	0-16
	Number of filled pauses	2.01 (2.05)	0-11
	Number of repetitions and self-corrections	2.34 (2.09)	0-10
	Articulation rate	2.28 (.83)	.53-4.78
Vocabulary	Lexical errors	.08 (.06)	.04-.26
Grammar	Grammatical errors	.09 (.06)	.03-.26

Multiple linear regression was performed to see the relative impact of the linguistic properties of pronunciation, fluency, and lexicogrammar variables on comprehensibility. Comprehensibility scores were primarily linked to overall linguistic features (R^2 = .64). The results from the *F*-test showed a significant value, implying that the model explained a significant amount of the variance in comprehensibility. First, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to see whether linguistic features predict comprehensibility without a task effect. The result is presented as Model 1 in Table 9. The first model had an adjusted R^2 of .621, indicating that Model 1 explained 62% of the predictability of linguistic features on comprehensibility. In Model 1, the results revealed five significant linguistic predictors: (1) intonation, (2) segmental errors, (3) pause frequency, (4) articulation rate, and (5) lexical errors.

Table 9

Model 1 of Multiple Regression Predicting Comprehensibility

	Test Statistics	B^a	SE_b	$ß^b$	*F*	*P*	Adj.R^2
Model 1 (Linguistic variables)							
Comprehensibility	Segmental errors	-14.752	5.924	-.120	*F* (9, 200) = 37.17	.014*	.621
	Syllable structure errors	1.208	.965	.086		.212	
	Intonation	1.130	.356	.319		.002**	
	Number of silent pauses	-.040	.020	-.138		.049*	
	Number of filled pauses	-.001	.018	-.003		.952	
	Repetitions and self-corrections	-.014	.018	-.038		.443	
	Articulation rate	.223	.072	.238		.002**	
	Lexical errors	-2.075	.968	-.159		.033*	
	Grammatical errors	-1.295	1.149	-.097		.261	

Notes: [a] Unstandardized regression coefficient. [b] Standardized coefficient. *p<.05. **p<.005.

To further analyze how the nine linguistic features predicted comprehensibility across the five tasks, Task 1 was coded as a baseline. Model 2 was generated after a multiple regression analysis of task variables (Table 10). The adjusted R^2 increased from .621 to .661 in Model 2, indicating that task complexity explains more about the possible impact of linguistic features on comprehensibility. Whereas five linguistic measurements in Model 1 were found to be significantly influencing comprehensibility, only one variable (segmental errors, p =.004) remained significant in Model 2. Both Model 1 and 2 showed segmental errors to be a strong variable predicting comprehensibility. The other four linguistic features (intonation, pause frequency, articulation rate, lexical errors) that were significant in Model 1 covaried with the task condition in Model 2. The increase in ß values from Tasks 2 to 5 showed that the more complex task had an increasingly higher influence on comprehensibility.

Table 10

Model 2 of Multiple Regression Predicting Comprehensibility

	Test Statistics	B^a	SE_b	$ß^b$	*F*	*P*	Adj.R^2
Model 2 (Linguistic variables including Task effect)							
Comprehensibility	Segmental errors	-16.542	5.639	-.135	*F* (13, 200)	.004**	.661
	Syllable structure errors	.917	.933	.065	=30.8	.327	
	Intonation	.240	.405	.068		.554	
	Number of silent pauses	-.003	.021	-.012		.869	
	Number of filled pauses	.003	.017	.008		.859	
	Repetitions and self-corrections	-.008	.018	-.021		.655	
	Articulation rate	.056	.080	.059		.487	
	Lexical errors	.491	1.081	.038		.650	
	Grammatical errors	.645	1.172	.048		.583	
	Task 2	.690	.155	.357		***<.001	
	Task 3	1.008	.223	.522		***<.001	
	Task 4	1.347	.283	.697		***<.001	
	Task 5	1.867	.371	.966		***<.001	

Notes: Coding baseline of task effect = Task 1. [a] Unstandardized regression coefficient. [b] Standardized coefficient.

Discussion

Overall, the results showed that task complexity played a role: when tasks were of higher complexity, participants' speeches were rated as more comprehensible, fluent, vocabulary-rich, and grammatically accurate. The more nuanced result of the study indicated that the increase in task-complexity affected the individual test takers' performance. The results suggest that if a teacher gives a student a series of less and more complex tasks, the students' best speech sample

most likely will be from one of the more complex tasks. In this study, L2 speakers perceived complex tasks as more difficult than the simplified ones, yet they produced more comprehensible speech sample with more complex tasks. This is an important addition to what researchers know about L2 speech comprehensibility in TBLT. When proficiency is held relatively constant (and at the advanced-low level in this study), and when task complexity is increased by small increments, the more complex tasks can, in the end, result in speech that is more highly rated in all categories. In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate on the three elements of interest in this study: (1) L2 speakers' perception of task difficulty (cognitive complexity); (2) higher scores for more complex tasks; and (3) varying the linguistics features needed for comprehensibility across task complexity levels.

The first objective was to explore L2 speakers' perceptions of the five tasks that were assumed to be at different levels of complexity. Task 1, designed to require the least cognitive demand, was found to be the simplest task by the L2 speakers on all four measurements (overall task difficulty, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar). Task 5, designed to be the most cognitively demanding task, was consistently rated as the most complex. The results indicated that the *resource-directing* features had an influence on task complexity, as predicted by the Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2001a) and further studied by other researchers (Kormos, 2011; Sasayama, 2016). Nonetheless, task complexity was experienced differently by L2 learners in terms of the overall cognitive load, depending on the resource-directing features in the task, that is, the number of elements, time sequence, and background changes (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Prabhu, 1987; Révész, 2012; Sasayama, 2016).

Second, clear systematic patterns were seen with the raters' perception of both comprehensibility and linguistic features. As predicted by the task complexity framework, increases in task complexity generally elicited speeches associated with higher scores. However, it is important to note that the higher scores of comprehensibility, accentedness, and linguistic features were not solely due to the listener's expectations or the speakers' increases in oral proficiency. Task complexity did not change the speaker's underlying skill set. Instead, the listeners expected better comprehensibility and higher speech performances regarding the speaker's ability to deal with multiple linguistic properties simultaneously. This finding is in line with the Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2001a), which posits that L2 learners can manage multiple resources simultaneously in tasks that require a higher cognitive load, bringing about *better* performances. The more complex tasks pushed learners to produce more comprehensible speech, with various linguistic properties incorporated. The result from this study aligns with findings from previous studies (e.g., Crowther et al., 2015; Crowther, Trofimovich, Saito, & Isaacs, 2018; Kang et al., 2010; Kormos. 2011; Zalbidea, 2017). However, it is important to note that because L2 speakers had more elements to describe in more complex tasks, they might have produced fewer pauses and used more words. Thus, to gain a better and deeper understanding of effects of task complexity on oral performance, a further study is required in which researchers manipulate the cognitive demand on more than *resource-directing* features.

Lastly, the current dataset revealed a multifaceted relationship between comprehensibility and linguistic features, indicating that comprehensibility may be explained via segmental, prosodic, temporal, and lexical aspects. Overall, task complexity was found to be the crucial factor explaining comprehensibility. Specifically, pronunciation, segmental errors, and pitch contour

significantly influenced comprehensibility judgments. Raters relied on segmental and prosodic aspects, suggesting that L2 speakers who had fewer errors in articulating segments with appropriate intonation were perceived to be more comprehensible. This finding followed previous statements by various researchers on the importance of pronunciation in comprehensibility development (Derwing et al., 1998; Gordon & Darcy, 2016; Sardegna, Chiang, & Ghosh, 2016). Other linguistic variables (silent pauses, articulation rate, and lexical errors) also critically influenced comprehensibility. This was possibly caused by the task design —the task was timed, and the participants attempted to use a simple grammatical structure to convey their intended message under time constraints. Following Kormos's (2011) and Levelt's (1999) speech production models, another possibility was that because the participants were given a short time to prepare, it was likely that they focused more on the content than encoding the linguistic variables.

Overall, findings in this study bring empirical evidence that the same speaker may produce various linguistic outcomes depending on the task difficulty. There is a widely accepted view that a speaker at a certain proficiency level can be highly comprehensible to listeners if given an appropriate level of speaking task. However, this study suggests that different levels of speaking task are appropriate for one individual. The complexity level of a task influences the speech that the speaker produces. For example, as this study reveals, higher-proficiency L2 speakers can incorporate various linguistic features simultaneously in a more complex task (e.g., Crowther et al., 2015; Saito et al., 2017). In language learning situations, teachers may design tasks with varying cognitive demands to provide different semi-authentic contexts for L2 leaners. By doing so, students can develop L2 oral proficiency through manipulated task complexity that pushes them to use different linguistic resources. In this way, L2 learners can produce speech by employing all available linguistic properties (Levelt, 1999), as comprehensibility tends to be highly resource- and context-sensitive (Saito, Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2016). The same type of task with manipulated complexity conditions may provide L2 learners with various communication contexts and thereby lead to higher comprehensibility.

CONCLUSION

Although researchers have agreed that tasks can support the development of communicative skills, the effects of task complexity on comprehensibility and linguistic features have received limited attention. Whereas more studies are needed to draw any firm conclusions, this study has contributed to L2 speaking pedagogy in the TBLT research field. The study demonstrates the differential effects of task complexity on comprehensibility and its associated language features within L2 speech.

With respect to task complexity, L2 speakers' perceptions aligned with the researcher's intent in terms of cognitive load manipulation. This indicates that although the same task type is used in learning situations, learners' perceptions of difficulty differ depending on how each task is operationalized. As comprehensibility and linguistic features are dependent on task complexity, speakers rely heavily on various linguistic sources to manage the greater cognitive load required in a task. Thus, manipulation of cognitive load in the same task type can be a crucial factor in comprehensibility. It is expected that the multifaceted relationship among intuitive judgment of

comprehensibility and various linguistic features in L2 speech contributes to a better understanding of L2 speech research issues in the TBLT contexts.

The current findings suggest that the relative weight of instructional focus on developing comprehensibility varies based on task complexity. Whereas overall linguistic features are influential, segmental accuracy (Jenkins, 2000; Loewen & Isbell, 2017) should be given consistent attention to scaffold L2 speakers' comprehensibility. For further research, instructors, assessment specialists, and researchers may consider the current findings that task design impacts both speaker production and perception, as well as listener perception, in terms of linguistic performance. As this study focused only on advanced-low proficiency L2 speakers, further research might explore the mediating role of different proficiency levels on task complexity and oral production. Pedagogically, an integrative approach is recommended by targeting various linguistic properties that are critically linked to comprehensibility.

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APPENDIX A: PREVIOUS STUDIES OF TASK COMPLEXITY

Authors & Year	Journal/Book	Topic	Participants information	Comprehensibility	Accentedness	Pronunciation	Lexical features	Morpho-syntax	Task difficulty perception
Robinson, 2007	IRALLT	Effects of increased task complexity on L2 learners' production and their perception of task difficulty	42 Japanese L1 university students (age range: 20 and 23)				x		x
Robinson, 2001	AL		44 Japanese L1 undergraduates (age range: 20 and 24)				x		x
Zalbidea, 2017	MLA		32 Spanish L2 university students (mean age: 19.6)				x	x	x
Révész, 2012	MLJ		43 ESL learners in the United States (age range: 21 and 45)				x	x	
Kormos, 2011	Book chapter, edited by Robinson	Task complexity effects on L2 speech	N/A				x	x	
Crowther et al., 2015	MLJ	Task complexity effects on L2 comprehensibility	60 English L2 university students with 4 L1s (Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Farsi, Romance) and 10 L1 English speaker raters (age range: 25-56)	x	x	x	x	x	
Crowther et al., 2018	SSLA		60 English L2 university students with four L1s (Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Farsi, Romance) and 10 L1 English-speaker raters (age range: 25-56)	x	x	x	x	x	

Tavakoli, 2009	IJAL	Validating the task complexity via learners' and teachers' perspectives	10 ESL university students (age range: 18 to 33) with 9 language backgrounds and 10 EFL teachers (age range: 30-52)	x
Sasayama, 2016	MLJ		53 L1 Japanese university students (age range: 18 -35)	x
Révész et al., 2016	SSLA		96 (48 ESL, 24 Spanish L1, 24 German L1) students (age range: 18-35), and 61 ESL teachers (age range: 22-67)	x
Révész & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2016	ARAL		10 ESL teachers from the United Kingdom (mean age: 37.20) and 6 ESL teachers from the United States (mean age: 42.33)	x

Appendix B: Perceived Task Complexity Questionnaires

1. How difficult/complex was this task to tell the story? (Circle below)

1 (Very easy)	2	3	4	5(Neutral)	6	7	8	9 (Very difficult)

2. To which degree did you have difficulty within each part? (Circle below)

	1 (Very easy)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 (Very difficult)
Pronunciation									
Vocabulary									
Grammar									
Other:									

Appendix C: Speech Rating Rubric

1. ***Comprehensibility***

Please provide a rating for comprehensibility using the scale below, where 1= unable to understand, and 9 = perfectly understandable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2. Accentedness

Please provide a rating for overall accentedness using the scale below, where 1= a very strong foreign accent, and 9 = no foreign accent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

3. ***Linguistic features***

Please rate each speaker's oral production on the following five features by using the scale from 1 to 9 below. Note that the highest and lowest categories each have one number. The intermediate categories each have 2 numbers; the higher number in each category represents greater proficiency.

	Pronunciation	Fluency	Grammar	Vocabulary
9	Rarely mispronounces; has near native-like production of sounds, stress, and intonation	Near native-like fluency; effortless, smooth, delivery	Uses high-level discourse structures with near native-like accuracy	A wide range of vocabulary with near native-like use; vocabulary is clearly appropriate to express content
8 7	Pronunciation is clear; occasionally mispronounces some words but has good consistent production of all sounds; stress is generally	Speaks with confidence but has some unnatural pauses; some errors in speech rhythm;	Shows ability to use the full range of grammatical structures but makes some errors; errors do not impede	Vocabulary is sufficient for the task although it does not always reflect native-like use

	correctly placed; overall accent may sound foreign but speech is easily comprehended; intonation is generally native-like.	rarely exhibits difficulty in searching for words	the meaning of the utterances	
6 5	Pronunciation is not nativelike but is generally comprehensible; mispronounces unfamiliar words; may have difficulty with some sounds and correct placement of stress in some words; intonation may not always be native-like.	Speech is hesitant; some evidence of nonnative-like problems in searching for words	Relies mostly on simple (but generally accurate) sentences; has enough grammar to express meaning; complex sentences are used but often inaccurately	Vocabulary is generally adequate for expression opinion but is limited; some words or phrases may not be used accurately
4 3	Frequently mispronounces individual sounds; stress may be placed incorrectly; intonation may not be native like; accent often interferes with comprehension; difficult to understand even with effort	Slow speech; long unnatural pauses and substantial difficulty findings words	Uses simple inaccurate sentences and fragmented phrases; doesn't have enough grammar to express opinions clearly	Vocabulary is not adequate for the task; cannot express opinion
2	Frequently mispronounces; heavy accent; some elements may not be comprehensible	Speech is fragmented with numerous long pauses	Only says a few words; cannot evaluate the speaker's grammatical ability	Little vocabulary; insufficient for responding to simple questions
1	Insufficient to evaluate	Insufficient to evaluate	Insufficient to evaluate	Insufficient to evaluate

Linguistic Stereotyping, Reverse Linguistic Stereotyping, Language Ideology and their Potential Effects on Oral Proficiency Interview Ratings

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Recent empirical research in sociolinguistics and social psychology has established the existence of the socio-psychological phenomena known as linguistic stereotyping (LS) and reverse linguistic stereotyping (RLS), which have an implicit or unconscious effect on listeners' perception of speech and speakers. Despite such findings, little research has explored the role these phenomena may play in the rating of speaking proficiency as assessed by Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) testers. This article provides an overview of the OPI instrument followed by a review of some published criticisms thereof. These criticisms are expanded upon through a review of research on LS, RLS, standard language ideology, the native speaker construct, and the co-construction of speaking performance with particular emphasis on research concerning Spanish dialect perception. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of this research for the assessment of speaking proficiency, and a call for further research in several areas in order to better understand and mitigate the potential for these phenomena to cause bias in the high stakes assessment of speaking proficiency.

Keywords: *Oral Proficiency Interview, Linguistic Stereotyping, Reverse Linguistic Stereotyping, Language Ideology*

It has now been well established through empirical research in sociolinguistics and social psychology that listeners use cues from speech to make judgements about the speaker's non-linguistic social attributes to include characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, profession, education, and socioeconomic status, just to name a few (Callesano & Carter, 2019; Carter & Callesano, 2018; Chappell, 2018; Kang, Rubin & Kermad, 2019; Rubin, 2011; Suárez-Büdenbender, 2013). These linguistic stereotypes are pervasive and constitute a part of the overall sociolinguistic landscape of any given speech community. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the reverse is also true. Listeners' perception of speech is affected by what they believe to be true about the speaker's non-linguistic social attributes. As Rubin (2011) writes, "listeners

attribute a speech style to a speaker based not on what they hear, but on what they believe is the speaker's social identity" (p. 12). These complementary phenomena of linguistic stereotyping (LS) and reverse linguistic stereotyping (RLS) point us to the insight that the perception of speech is highly susceptible to the listeners' expectations about how and how well the speaker will perform when speaking a given language.

The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) assesses a candidate's speaking proficiency in a given language and is used in the U.S. Government institutions such as the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), and the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC). The OPI has also been adopted and adapted by nongovernmental institutions such as Educational Testing Services (ETS) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Although there are differences in implementation between the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) OPI used by U.S. Government Agencies and the ACTFL OPI commonly used in K-12 and higher education, both follow essentially the same structure and protocols consisting of the warm-up, level checks, probes, and wind-down phases (ACTFL 2012a, LTI 2018, Johnson 2001, Lowe 1982). Despite a tendency within the OPI testing community to maintain a sense that there are distinct versions of the OPI, this paper will follow Johnson (2001) in focusing on the common origin and prevailing similarity between versions of the OPI, and consider them together. The primary difference between the assessments is the scale against which the sample is compared (LTI, 2018). Because of space restrictions, this paper will place greater emphasis on the ILR scale, referring to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 as a point of contrast when necessary.

During the interview, one or two trained testers speak directly with the examinee, or candidate. The candidate's speaking proficiency rating, as exemplified by the sample produced during the interview, is based on the scale level descriptions of the ILR, ACTFL, ETS or other, depending on the institution administering the OPI. Again, although the OPI testing community maintains a sense of separateness among these scales, it must be remembered that the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were developed from the ILR scale, and the similarities between them are visible when they are compared side by side (Johnson, 2001).

Johnson reports that approximately several thousand OPIs are administered each year (2001, p. 2). Griffe and Gevara (2011) define a *high stakes test* as "a situation that has important consequences for test takers" (p.195), and the OPI fits this description. As Johnson (2001) explains, "professional careers, future job assignments, pay increases, and entrance to or exit from college language programs frequently depend on the rating obtained in an OPI" (p. 2). ACTFL (2012b) also states that the OPI is used by some states for teacher certification.

The ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Speaking make explicit reference to the examinee's accent and pronunciation. The descriptions compare the performance of the examinee, both as a speaker and a listener, to that of a native speaker (NS) of the target language (TL) (Lowe, 1982). The NS, and more specifically the Educated Native Speaker (ENS) criteria hinge, in turn, on the notion of the *standard dialect.* "Unless otherwise specified, the term 'native speaker' refers to native speakers of a standard dialect" (Interagency Language Roundtable, n.d.). The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 for speaking also make explicit reference to a non-native accent and lack of native-like economy of expression as factors which may be present at the Distinguished

level, and refer to the NS as a presumed interlocutor throughout the Advanced High, Advanced Mid and Advanced Low levels.

Given that the NS and standard dialect concepts are socially constructed, as will be discussed further, and that listeners' perceptions of speech are intertwined with and affected by their social expectations for the speaker, there is good reason to question to what extent the ratings assigned by trained OPI testers (whether they identify as NSs or not) may be susceptible to bias as a result of linguistic stereotypes prevalent in their speech communities. As Kang, Rubin and Kermad (2019) observe, "the nature of human judgement is subject to both implicit and explicit biases, and humans (as raters) can be subject to their stereotypes, native language status, exposure to [non-NS] speech varieties, teaching experience, and educational attainment/ linguistic sophistication" (p. 483). It is incumbent upon us as practitioners and researchers in the field of language education to understand how such biases play a role in OPI testing programs.

The stereotypes and stigma associated with certain speakers and social groups are unique. Therefore, it makes sense to narrow the scope of discussion to a language for which OPIs are often conducted, and for which extensive empirical research has already been conducted to explore the interaction between speech perception and language attitudes. This paper will provide examples from Spanish, a language taught and learned widely as a second language (L2) in the United States and spoken by widespread and highly diverse groups of native and heritage language speakers throughout the country. The cultural and linguistic diversity of the Spanish-speaking world makes Spanish a worthy subject for sociolinguistic investigation. The presumed volume and variety of contexts in which Spanish OPIs are conducted make Spanish a relevant language to discuss in an analysis of LS and RLS as they relate to OPI ratings.

Overview of the OPI

History and Structure

History of the OPI

In order to provide context for an analysis of the potential for LS and RLS to affect the rating of an OPI candidate, the following is a general description of the OPI instrument found in government and academic contexts.

The OPI's origins can be traced to the U.S. State Department which developed the "Government Definitions" of L2 speaking proficiency in the 1950s. From these, the oral interview system was developed and officially adopted by the mid-1950s (Lowe, 1982). By the 1960s, the government's confidence in the FSI's testing procedures was so high, that they were adopted and adapted by the DLIFLC/DLIELC, the CIA, and the Peace Corps (Chaloub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003). The combined efforts of U.S. Government agencies to improve the FSI system led to the development of the ILR Skill Level Descriptions and to the extension of the original 5-level FSI scale to include the plus levels, resulting in the 11-point scale in use today (Johnson, 2001).

The Peace Corps asked the ETS to develop an OPI program for its world-wide training sites in the 1960s, first spreading the method outside of government circles. The interest this generated

led to the FSI conducting OPI familiarization workshops to academic institutions in the late 1970s and early 1980s. ETS and ACTFL then received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop proficiency definitions for use in K-12 and higher education (Johnson, 2001). The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 contain the current and updated version of these definitions. By 2010, the ILR had also been adapted to the requirements of the U.S. and its NATO partners in the Standardization Agreement 6001 (Holman, 2017).

Although the use of the OPI has spread, it is important to remember that it was initially conceived and designed for the needs of the U.S. Department of State to test the foreign language skills of its employees. Well into the early 1980s, it had been assumed that the OPI candidate was an American who had learned the TL (Lowe, 1982). Furthermore, as Lowe (1982) explains, "the definitions were expressly designed to rate the functional abilities of Americans who learned a given TL and not to rate [native speakers]. However, due to a government requirement that all employees must be rated by a uniform system, [native speakers] must be included. This inclusion raises problems" (p. 6-105).[1]

Structure of the OPI

The OPI is described in the *ILR Handbook* as a criterion-referenced test with an *educated native speaker'*s functionality as the "ultimate criterion". It is further described as a face valid proficiency test, whose validity is dependent on adequate elicitation technique and whose reliability is maintained by comparing the candidate's speech sample to the guidelines, grammar grids, level descriptions, and sample recorded tests (Lowe, 1982). The ACTFL OPI is similarly described as a valid and reliable assessment of how well a person speaks a language, which is conducted in the form of an interview following an established structure and protocol. ACTFL also claims that the OPI simulates a casual conversation (LTI, 2018). Proponents of the OPI have long claimed that "a well-structured oral proficiency interview tests speaking ability in the real-life context – a conversation. It is almost by definition a valid measure of speaking ability" (ETS [1982] as cited in Johnson, 2001, p. 2).

In the ILR OPI, for example, the examinee converses face-to-face with one or two trained testers on a variety of topics for ten to thirty minutes. The elicited sample is then rated on the ILR scale ranging from 0 (no functional ability) to 5 (proficiency equivalent to that of a well-educated native speaker). "Plus" ratings are assigned when the examinee's speaking proficiency is determined to exhibit features of the next higher level. Overall, the examinee's level of speaking proficiency is rated on an 11-point range scale (Johnson, 2001). At the top of the scale is the ENS concept, used to describe the ideal against which the candidate's performance is to be judged (Chaloub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003). The ACTFL OPI follows essentially the same protocol, but assigns a rating based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 (LTI, 2018).

As the OPI rating is given as a "global score", in which the testers assess many factors, it is generally not specified which language features in a given speech sample contribute to the overall rating or how individual testers weight them. As Lowe (1982) explains in the *ILR Handbook*, testers are not necessarily consciously aware of all factors considered in assigning a global score. It was reported in a study that testers are first aware of "Pronunciation/Accent, followed by Fluency/Integrative and third by vocabulary" (p. 3-13). The definition of the "ultimate criterion" is

also not abundantly clear as Lowe (1982) described in the *ILR Handbook*, with the conception of the ENS being at least partially dependent on the testers' intuition. "Each tester possesses a conception of the ENS, which may range from remembered actual Level 5 speech samples to idealized ones, from remembered actual speakers to an idealized conception of one" (p. 6-104). He further reveals the potential subjectivity of the rating when he explains that "testers should ask themselves when listening to a candidate's speech sample, 'How would I say that?' and compare the candidate's sample to their own" (p. 6-105).

Critiques of the OPI

Since the OPI's adoption outside of government circles became more commonplace in the 1980s and 1990s, there have been many criticisms of the validity and appropriateness of the instrument. Chaloub-Deville and Fulcher (2003) claim that "the spread of the ILR scale has not been accompanied by a research program examining its fundamental assumptions about language use and development" (p. 500). Furthermore, they suggest that academia adopted the FSI's OPI procedure and an adapted (ACTFL) proficiency scale without sufficient research into the assumptions that underlie them.

The purported face validity of the OPI, which McNamara (2001) has equated with "political acceptability" (p. 341), has been one target of criticism. What is meant by face validity is that the OPI appears to both testers and test-takers to assess communicative language ability in a realistic situation. However, Salaberry (2000) has argued that face validity by itself does not prove test validity. The lack of a scientific basis for the scale level descriptions has also been a point of concern. As Salaberry (2000) asserts, the "guidelines cannot fit all situations, all purposes, all levels, all languages and there is no empirical research to support their descriptions" (p. 292).

As observed by Chaloub-Deville and Fulcher (2003) "in terms of research or documentation of the quality of the interview and scale, investigations have focused primarily on reporting interrater reliability" (p. 500). First, reliability of this kind has been described as both necessary and insufficient to establish the validity of a test (Lindemann & Subtirelu, 2013). Second, interrater reliability in OPIs has been attributed as much to shared expectations (i.e., shared biases) of a speaker's language and social groups as to the speech itself (Lindemann & Subtirelu, 2013), with "assessments of speech being affected by information given about the speaker's ethnicity or national origin" (p. 570).

The construct validity of the OPI has also been challenged, with ample attention given to the controversial NS and ENS concepts and their role in framing the skill level descriptions and training testers. As Chaloub-Deville and Fulcher (2003) have asserted,

> Perhaps the in-depth training that OPI raters receive enables them to operationalize and render the abstract native speaker norm concrete. Such evidence, however, is not available. It is unlikely, given published evidence on rater behavior, that a uniform interpretation of native speech by OPI raters is achieved (p. 503).

And in another note:

> In the lower ranges of both the ILR and ACTFL scales, the term NS describes not the speaker, but the type of listener, who would likely be able to comprehend the speech of

> the test candidate. These 'common sense' definitions have yet to be empirically validated (p. 504).

The very concept of communicative competence itself has been revealed as "an abstraction that is rarely defined with any precision in terms of actual test performance" (Brown, 2003, p. 19). Johnson's (2001) critique centers on the claim that the OPI tests speaking in the real-life context of a conversation, demonstrating empirically through her discourse analysis that the interactions that unfold constitute a unique genre of interview in which the interviewer exerts far greater levels of power and initiative than the test candidate would in a "real-life" conversation.

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND LINGUISTIC STEREOTYPING

The ENS of a standard dialect is the model against which ILR OPI examinees' speaking performance is measured (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003; Lowe, 1982). Thus, in order to consistently and objectively rate candidates, OPI testers need an understanding of what constitutes a standard dialect in the target language. Lowe (1982) discusses this in the *ILR Handbook on Oral Interview Testing*, in which the ENS is defined as, "a person whose speech reflects the characteristics of one who has been educated and lived extensively within the boundaries of a particular ethnolinguistic/geographical area, *and who would normally be accepted by educated residents of that area as a countryman and social equal* [emphasis added]" (p. 6-109).

This acceptability criterion, as Lowe (1982) explains, "rests with the testers themselves" (p. 6-110). As the notion of standard dialect varies from language to language, its definition is dependent upon the intuition and perception of the tester as a participating member of the TL speech community. As the *ILR Handbook* (1982) explains, "if a language is seen culturally as a supranational language like Russian in the Soviet Union or Mandarin in China, the acceptability criterion will be broader than for other languages like Danish where the prestige dialect of the standard language resides in a city, the capital, Copenhagen" (p. 6-110). Lowe then addresses the question of standard dialect in Spanish, which is of interest to us here.

> Due to experience in languages with a wide dispersion such as English and Spanish, the ILR requires interviewers to accept as an ENS anyone speaking an acceptable regional variant of the educated standard. Latin American Spanish is a prime example with acceptable standard variants from Mexico, Cuba, and Argentina to name a few. Essentially, each Latin American country has at least one acceptable version of the standard (p. 6-110).

Whereas the *ILR Handbook* recognizes that the definition of standard dialect is relative to the TL culture, it fails to provide an objective definition of the construct for any given language, leaving this to the experience, perception, and ultimately, intuition of the tester.

The intuitive nature of most scale level descriptions has been identified as a concern by Holman (2017), who points out that despite the presumed shared intuitions of native speakers, "when ILR neophytes rate individual speakers, they often disagree in their ratings" (p. 3). Although the shared perceptions of native speakers and their ability to recognize and accept certain other speakers as *countrymen* and *social equals* may seem straightforward, Lindemann and Subtirelu (2013) emphasize that "the research on attitudes and stereotypes suggests that perceptions that appear to be straightforward assessments of speech are not immune to distortion" (p. 571).

Linguistic stereotyping is defined by Rubin (2011) as “a robust mechanism of social judgement whereby listeners ascribe a myriad of traits to speakers based often on only very thin samples of pronunciation” (p. 11).

Language Stereotypes and Spanish

Unequal Prestige among National Varieties

With respect to the question of standard dialect in Spanish, it is crucial to understand that despite the purported acceptability of a national variety from each Latin American country, the national varieties of Spanish are themselves not constructed as socially neutral (Carter & Callesano, 2018). It should also be noted that whereas the notion of national varieties is commonly used as a point of reference in dialectology and related fields, we must also recognize that there is significant linguistic variation within the boundaries of every Spanish-speaking country (and indeed all nations), and that socially salient linguistic features also transcend geographic and political demarcation.

Nonetheless, there are a few prevalent stereotypes in the Spanish-speaking world concerning national varieties. One of these is that the highland dialect of Colombian Spanish, as spoken in cities such as Bogotá is among the “best, most pure, or most refined varieties of Spanish” (Carter & Callesano, 2018, p. 70). Another stereotype constructs European Spanish as superior due to its ties to *“la madre patria”* or motherland, and Latin American varieties as “derivative, vulgar, or ‘incorrect’” (Carter & Callesano, 2018, p. 85).

Race and Ethnicity

Language attitudes in the Spanish-speaking world are also tied to race and ethnicity. Colombia, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay are considered to be more middle class and ethnically European in comparison to other Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America, and the varieties of Spanish which are most stigmatized are those associated with countries that have large populations of indigenous, Black, and impoverished people (Carter & Callesano, 2018). Caribbean dialects of Spanish are especially stigmatized relative to other Latin American varieties (Carter & Callesano, 2018; Suárez-Büdenbender, 2013).

Several experiments in perceptual dialectology have been conducted to add to our understanding of how language attitudes interact with the perception of native Spanish speakers. In a study of how Miami Cubans perceived different Spanish varieties, Alfaraz (2002) found a significant correlation between the gross domestic product of the countries, where Spanish varieties are spoken, and the perceived “correctness” of those varieties.

Perceived National Origin

In a verbal guise study of Puerto Ricans’ perception of Dominican Spanish, Suárez-Büdenbender (2013) found that “Dominican Spanish speakers (or those believed to belong to this group) are not associated with higher socioeconomic classes (i.e., higher than middle class) by

Puerto Rican listeners" (p. 127). This study also revealed that female and male participants rated one speaker differently with respect to social class and that participants could not consistently distinguish between Puerto Rican and Dominican speakers based on the recordings. She also found evidence that the participants in her study relied on phonetic/phonological cues to differentiate between the two varieties (i.e., accent and intonation), but that "when asked to specify can only offer unspecific comments" (p. 129). In Puerto Rico, identifying a speaker as Dominican entails a preconception that the speaker is less educated, poor, and an immigrant.

The phonetic realization of syllable-final, or coda /s/ is a salient feature which can be used to differentiate between regional varieties of Spanish. The maintenance of /s/ (pronounced [s]), or weakening/aspiration of /s/ (often pronounced [h] or Ø) is broadly used to mark the division between highland and lowland Spanish varieties in the Americas, respectively (Chappell, 2018). In an experiment, Chappell (2018) manipulated this linguistic variable to study Mexican listeners' perception of speech as belonging to Mexican or Puerto Rican speakers, and as related to social properties such as intelligence, work ethic, confidence, and snobbishness.

Although /s/ maintenance is considered highly salient, and there is a general understanding that Mexican speakers maintain /s/, whereas Puerto Rican speakers weaken /s/, "many listeners were able to correctly identify Puerto Rican speakers with coda [s] as Caribbean, which shows that other, less salient linguistic phenomena can and do condition evaluations of speaker origin" (Chappell, 2018, p. 387). The study also found that (for Mexican listeners) coda [s] is associated with higher status, intelligence, work ethic, confidence, and snobbishness.

Carter and Callesano (2018) have studied the implicit perception of Latin@/Latinx adolescents in Miami-Dade County, Florida, with respect to three national-origin varieties of Spanish commonly heard in metropolitan Miami: Cuban, Colombian, and Peninsular (European). Three men, who were college educated in their respective countries of origin (Cuba, Colombia, and Spain) and professionally employed in Miami, were asked to read a text in their home variety of Spanish.

These recordings were matched with background information about the speaker, including the parents' country of origin. Sometimes the recordings were matched with correct background information when presented to participants in the experiment, and sometimes they were mismatched. This manipulation allowed the researchers to "separate the perceptions based on the elements of the speech signal from the provided social information" (Carter & Callesano, 2018, p. 65.) Among their findings was a tendency for participants to perceive the Peninsular voice as more likely to have come from a family that invested in education. When participants believed that the speaker's parents were from either Cuba or Colombia, they were significantly more likely to rate the speaker as coming from a "poor" family, compared with believing the speaker's parents were from Spain.

In another analysis of Spanish language perception in Miami, Callesano and Carter (2019) found that Peninsular Spanish is perceived as more "correct" with respect to other Spanish dialects, and that participants made predictive judgements favoring Peninsular speakers in the domains of income, profession, and personality traits related to competence. Cuban and Colombian Spanish varieties were associated with significantly less competence traits by participants in the study.

What these studies demonstrate clearly is that the perceptions of listeners are based only partially on information found in the "speech stream" or "acoustic signal", and partially on nonlinguistic information known (or believed to be known) about the speaker (Carter & Callesano, 2018). Listeners use linguistic information to make judgements and predictions about the speakers' social characteristics such as intelligence, competence, and educational attainment. Furthermore, as shown in Suárez-Büdenbender's (2013) work, listeners have often only a vague or superficial awareness of what information from the acoustic signal they are using as a basis for their judgements, especially when the differentiating linguistic features are non-salient phonetic/ phonological traits.

Reverse Linguistic Stereotyping

As we have seen, it is common for listeners to use LS to judge speakers in accordance with their preconceptions about the speaker's presumed social group. Such judgements may be about non-linguistic attributes such as ethnicity, social status, confidence, intelligence, academic success, and even their physical height. RLS is a complementary process in which listeners attribute a speech style to a speaker based not on what they hear, but on what they believe to be the speaker's social identity (Rubin, 2011). In other words, the listener "hears" linguistic features that they expect to hear from a member of the social group to which they believe the speaker belongs, even when the features in question are absent from the acoustic signal.

Niedzielski (1999) conducted an experiment in which she digitally manipulated vowels associated with Detroit and Canadian English varieties. The results indicated that "Detroiters expect to hear raised /aw/ in the speech of Canadians, and therefore, they do. They do not expect to hear it in the speech of fellow Detroiters, and therefore, they do not" (p. 75).

In another experiment, one group of undergraduate students was presented with a recorded lecture and a picture of an Asian lecturer. Another group was presented with the same recorded lecture and a picture of a Caucasian lecturer. The students' comprehension scores were significantly lower when the lecture was accompanied by the image of an Asian speaker (Carey, Mannell, & Dunn, 2010). This represents a tendency for listeners to suffer deficits of listening comprehension based on their beliefs about a speaker's national or ethnic origin (Rubin, 2011). RLS presents a serious obstacle to achieving an objective assessment of the intelligibility of an OPI examinee's speech, as "ratings of intelligibility and comprehensibility may exhibit a consistency that stems not from a shared objective assessment of speech, but rather shared biases that exist within a population" (Lindemann & Subtirelu, 2013, p. 576).

Standard Language Ideology

We have seen above that the complementary phenomena of LS and RLS challenge the construct of the standard dialect as an objective frame of reference in the ILR and other related scale level descriptions for speaking. What is standard is defined on the basis of the perception and acceptance of the ENS (Lowe, 1982; Muni Toke, 2013), and such judgements have been shown empirically to be affected by both explicit and implicit biases about language varieties and the

social groups associated with them. Researchers have highlighted other concerns in recent decades about standard language ideology which are pertinent to our discussion of the standard dialect construct as a conceptual anchor for assessing speaking proficiency.

As defined by Lippi-Green (as quoted by Carter & Callesano, 2018), standard language ideology is “bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class”(p. 69). In this sense, the standard dialect is an abstraction and can be described more in terms of its socio-political acceptability than by a comprehensive description of its linguistic features. Standard American English, for example, has been described by Wolfram, as Cited in Niedzielski (1999), as a collection of language variants that are *not stigmatized*. Here again, the definition of a standard variety hinges upon the absence of stigmatized features rather than on a specific dialect or variant which could by objectively described.

Carter and Callesano (2016) write that “national languages, particularly the constructed ‘standard’ varieties, are therefore tightly bound up with national identity the world over. Monolingual dictionaries, national language academies, and systems of education reinforce the ostensibly natural link between geographic location, language, and ethnolinguistic groups” (p. 70). The fact that the so-called standard variety or dialect is intertwined with national identity further ties it to another problematic anchor within the scale level descriptions used in OPI testing—native speaker identity (Muni Toke, 2013).

The Educated Native Speaker

The notion that the native speakers should be held as the ideal for the language teacher, and that individual speakers can, in fact, be categorized based on their native or non-native status has faced increasing criticism (Atamturk, Atamturk & Dimilier, 2018). The very notion of the NS as a proper category for linguistic inquiry has also been challenged because “it is more political than scientifically accurate” (Muni Toke, 2013, p. 85). It has also been suggested that the teaching of pronunciation be based on what makes an L2 speaker successful at communicating, rather than on an idealized notion of the NS (Lindemann & Subtirelu, 2013).

There are negative associations tied to the phrase native speaker, which emerged with the construction of modern nation-states and whose connotation is linked to nation, race, class, and ethnicity. It is a political notion which underlies an ethnicized conception of the nation as a monolingual homogeneous group of people equally sharing a stable culture (Muni Toke, 2013).
Aside from the potential for the divisive nature of the NS construct to erode the acceptability of its use as a point of reference in oral proficiency assessment, there is the problem of potential rating error due to listener bias. As the research has shown, the stereotypes about the social groups speakers are members of (or believed to be members of) have an influence on how their language varieties are perceived (Niedzielski, 1999). An OPI examinee’s self-identification as an NS or non-NS may have a significant effect on how their speech sample is perceived, even by trained OPI testers.

As we have discussed so far, the perception of a speaker's educational attainment (among other social characteristics), based on both language features and available social information, is also highly susceptible to error due to LS. This further problematizes the construct of the ENS as an ideal against which OPI examinees can be objectively compared.

There is also empirical evidence to suggest that the degree to which a listener will perceive or detect a foreign accent is affected by their level of exposure to the speaker's interlanguage. In a study of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) OPI, it was found that the testers' level of exposure to the English pronunciation of a given linguistic group affected the severity of the rating. Candidates were more likely to be awarded a higher score for pronunciation if they took the test in their home country, or at a center where the examiners are highly exposed to their interlanguage (Carey, Mannell & Dunn, 2010).

In contrast, listeners unfamiliar with a particular non-native variety tend to perceive more of a foreign accent than those familiar with that specific variety (Kang, Rubin, & Kermad, 2019). A tester's familiarity with a certain accent will tend to make that accent less "disturbing", and therefore present less of an implicit barrier to intelligibility and comprehensibility. For example, Kang, Rubin, and Kermad (2019) found that "TOEFL raters who had studied Spanish and Chinese as their L2, were more lenient in their ratings of Spanish and Chinese test-takers" (p. 484). This is referred to as the perceptual magnet effect model. As Carey, Mannell, and Dunn (2010) explain, there is strong psychoacoustic experimental evidence that simply listening to an ambient language variety affects phonetic perception over time.

The Co-construction of Speaking Performance

Fundamental to the OPI construct is the assumption that a speaker's proficiency in each language can be measured by a sample elicited through a carefully structured and expertly executed interview. The role of the tester/interviewer, as an interlocutor, in the construction of this performance is minimized in this narrative, in which the interviewee is held responsible for the quality and character of the speech sample provided. The responsibility both to understand and to be understood are placed on the candidate, and it is assumed that the role of the expert tester with respect to the intelligibility and comprehensibility of the elicited sample is neutral and objective. As McNamara (2001) succinctly stated, "our existing models of performance are inadequately articulated, and the relationship between performance and competence in language testing remains obscure. In particular, the assumption of performance as a direct outcome of competence is problematic, most obviously in the case of interactive tests such as direct tests of speaking" (p. 337).

Several authors have refuted this fundamental assumption, asserting that speaking performance in any interaction is co-constructed by the speaker and listener, and that the behavior of the interviewer during the OPI can have a demonstrable effect on the speech sample produced. Lindemann and Subtirelu (2013) assert that "intelligibility and comprehensibility are not characteristics of a speaker but rather a jointly achieved effort" (p. 583), and that a principled assessment of intelligibility cannot exist in the absence of attention to the listeners' role. It has been demonstrated that the individual tester's strategy and level of collaboration during the OPI

may vary, and that this variation in collaboration may affect the overall success of the interaction (Brown, 2003; Kang, Rubin, & Kermad, 2019; O'Sullivan & Porter, 1996). Stansfield and Kenyon (as cited in Brown, 2003) claim that because the interviewer is reasonably free to select the topic and ask whatever questions he or she chooses to, the same candidate may give two different performances with two different interviewers.

Kang, Rubin, and Kermad (2019) write that "in Lindemann's (2002) study, native English speakers' negative or positive attitudes toward Korean-accented English had an effect on both the collaboration and success of an interaction" (p. 483), or as Lindemann and Subtirelu (2013) put it, "ratings of intelligibility and comprehensibility may exhibit a consistency that stems not from a shared objective assessment of speech, but rather shared biases that exist within a population" (p. 576). This suggests that explicit or implicit LS may affect how well the interviewer expects the candidate to perform from the very beginning of the interview, and in turn, how much the interviewer is willing to collaborate in the success of the interview.

In her reexamination of the OPI's validity, Johnson (2001) criticizes the claim that the OPI measures speaking ability in the context of a conversation, demonstrating through her analysis that the OPI is not a *conversation* at all, but rather an *interview* in which there is a clear imbalance of power and initiative between the interviewer and the interviewee. Chaloub-Deville and Fulcher (2003) also argue that the discourse style of the OPI constitutes "an interaction style or genre unique unto itself" (p. 503).

Salaberry (2002) describes how the imbalance of power between the interviewer and the candidate can limit the speaker's performance during the OPI; he writes "as currently structured, level checks may prevent subjects from getting role-play cards that enable them to show proficiency in Advanced or Superior level categories. That is, these interviewees are being denied the opportunity to show their proficiency in those areas" (p. 302). In her analysis, Johnson (2001) also criticizes the extent to which the OPI's structure may limit the speaker's ability to demonstrate performance at higher levels: "The phases in which the candidate may exhibit more initiative – the warm-up and the wind-down – are minimized in the process of assigning a global rating. The final rating is based on the candidate's performance within the level check and probes – the phases wherein the candidate's power to negotiate is almost nonexistent" (p. 144).

The OPI tester does play an active role in how the interaction with the candidate unfolds. The individual interview strategy of the tester makes a difference, and this strategy can be influenced by the tester's attitude toward the speaker; an attitude which may be formed quickly and even subconsciously on the basis of LS and/or RLS.

Implications for Assessment

As the findings summarized above have shown "assessments of pronunciation accuracy and intelligibility ultimately rely on human perception and are thus subject to all the biases that underlie that perception" (Lindemann & Subtirelu, 2013, p. 568). Such biases are pervasive throughout any speech community, and not limited to just a few highly prejudiced individuals. The existence of LS means that listeners associate social attributes (such as NS status and educational attainment) to the speaker due to features in the acoustic signal, whereas RLS means that social

attributes revealed about the speaker, whether accurate or not, cause the listener to perceive expected linguistic features, whether they are present in the acoustic signal or not. Common sense would lead us to believe that a trained OPI tester is capable of objectively assessing a candidate's performance relative to that of an NS or ENS of a standard dialect, and yet, as has been argued above, the abstract way in which these concepts are constructed leaves their definition to the intuition and perception of the tester, as well as any linguistic biases at play in the TL speech community.

The imprecise definition of communicative competence itself, and the potential role of the tester's biases in shaping the performance of the candidate have also been highlighted in recent scholarship. The very language of the ILR Skill Level Descriptions for speaking, upon which the OPI procedure is based, is often imprecise and does little to belie the subjectivity of the rating with phrases like, "errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker" (Interagency Language Roundtable, n.d.). Furthermore, it is not trivial that the OPI was conceived and designed to test the L2 proficiency of Americans, and yet it is administered to both NSs and Non-NSs in a variety of high stakes contexts in government, industry, and academia around the globe having undergone only relatively minor adaptations for its use in such varied contexts.

To illustrate the potential for implicit bias to affect the rating of an OPI candidate, let us consider a hypothetical Spanish OPI. Although the OPI may take place over the phone, eliminating visual clues as to the candidate's racial or ethnic background, the candidate may reveal in the first few minutes of the interview that their parents are of, for example, Caribbean origin. This information may subconsciously lead a tester to assume that the candidate is a heritage speaker and prime them to perceive linguistic features associated with heritage language speech. Pervasive stigma attached to Caribbean Spanish may also subconsciously lead the tester to assume that the examinee has not mastered a "standard dialect" or attained a high level of education, and therefore is unlikely to achieve a performance characteristic of an ENS. Whether the tester realizes it or not, they may suffer from a comprehension deficit (however slight) due to RLS or unfamiliarity with the speaker's accent, and guide the interaction, through their choice of prompts or a less collaborative discourse style, in such a way as to inadvertently deny the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate a skill level beyond a preconceived performance ceiling as suggested by Brown (2003). It is common sense which leads us to deny that the time-honored OPI tradition could be prone to such error. However, despite the empirical evidence of LS and RLS published in recent decades, there has been no empirical research to date which demonstrates that OPI tester training or protocols are consistently able to overcome or avoid such effects.

Despite criticism of the OPI's validity and the growing volume of research into linguistic bias in recent decades, there has been no practical alternative yet proposed which has gained the level of acceptability enjoyed by the OPI in its various incarnations. If the commonsense notion that the OPI is a valid test of speaking ability in the real-life context of a conversation is to prevail, this assertion must be able to bear the weight of empirical scrutiny. For now, there is at least enough justification for us to begin exploring what can be done to mitigate the potential effects of socio-psychological phenomena in OPI testing programs.

There is a need to describe the effects of LS and RLS in a wider variety of speech communities and social contexts because these dynamics will differ and cannot be generalized to all languages or all communities. There is also a need to study whether practical interventions can control the effects of bias in the OPI. An emerging body of research suggests that some strategies for regulating implicit biases may be available (Brownstein, 2019), but these have yet to be tested in the OPI context. For example, can we control the effects of RLS by conducting OPIs by phone, and restricting the testers' access to social and background information about the candidate both prior to and during the interaction?

Kang, Rubin, and Kermad (2019) suggest that language bias should be considered in rater selection, but the question remains, how could this be done? Stereotypes can be both explicit and implicit, with implicit stereotypes being more resistant to change (Ngnoumen, 2019). There has been some promising research into change-based interventions to reduce bias, but unfortunately research has not shown these effects to be generalizable or to last long (Ngnoumen, 2019; Kang, Rubin, & Kermad, 2019).

The controversial constructs that underlie the scale level descriptions such as standard language ideology and native speaker identity must also be re-evaluated, and alternative constructs conceived and considered. Finally, we must ask ourselves if a uniform test of general speaking proficiency is practical at all and explore proposed alternatives such as the Practical Oral Language Ability test conceived by Johnson (2001), which would measure proficiency in job or role-specific tasks (as opposed to global proficiency) defined through a detailed needs analysis conducted in a specific context as required by the individual consuming organization.

Whereas OPI testing programs are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future because of their established acceptability and the lack of a readily available alternative, which could be implemented efficiently on a large scale as a replacement, policy and procedure must catch up with contemporary research in sociolinguistics, psychoacoustics, and social psychology if this practice is to endure.

NOTE

1. The pages in in Lowe (1982) are numbered by chapter. For example, p. 6-105 refers to the 105th page of Chapter 6.

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Strategy Diaries: Learner Perspective on the Benefits of Communication Strategy Training

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This study examined learner perspectives of the benefits of communication strategy training by analysing strategy diaries written by low English proficiency learners enrolled in an English for Occupational Purposes programme. The communication strategy instruction involved 23 students who were taught 13 lexical, negotiation, and discourse-based communication strategies during the 13-week training. Each session consisted of presentation, rehearsal, and performance stages, and closed with strategy diary writing. The students wrote 117 strategy diary entries related to the learning outcomes of the training sessions. Most diary entries (82.9%) were on English improvement, and the remaining (17.1%) were related to communication strategy use. Further analysis of the strategy-related entries indicated the communication strategies taught during the training helped the students to better explain themselves, increase their vocabulary, and speak more spontaneously. A longitudinal analysis of one student's diary entries revealed that the student did not develop greater awareness of communication strategies during the training. When the subject matter of the interaction became more technical, his reflection shifted from communicative and language skills to the topic of the lesson and activities. The findings suggest the need to train learners on reflective writing to obtain insights into the learner perspective of learning to use communication strategies.

Keywords: *strategic competence, communication strategies, strategy diaries, learner perspective, English for Occupational Purposes, low English proficiency*

Introduction

In second and foreign language environments, language users need to interact in the target language with their limited sociocultural and grammatical competence. Despite the limited resources, language users with strategic competence can use communication strategies to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules or performance limitations and, in the process, develop communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Strategic competence is one of the

three areas of competence in Canale and Swain's (1980) theory of communicative competence, the other two being grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) defined strategic competence as the ability to use communicative strategies, both verbal and nonverbal, to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance factors, insufficient grammatical competence, and/or sociolinguistic competence. Sometimes the communication strategies may be used before the communication breakdown takes place. Faérch and Kasper (1984) stated that learners may predict a communication problem and use communication strategies to avert a communication breakdown and, in the process, achieve fluency in the speech. The type of communication strategies used to avert communication breakdown is also referred to as improvisation or avoidance strategies by Clennell (1995). Improvisation or avoidance communication strategies are used to overcome specific obstacles in the process of communication (e.g., restructuring, coinage), and can be used during monologues. Improvisation or avoidance strategies differ from another two types of communication strategies which are usually used in interactions involving two or more interactants. Clennell (1995) divided the other two types of communication strategies into negotiation and collaboration strategies. Negotiation strategies are used to maintain an interaction, examples including comprehension checks, clarification requests, and confirmation checks. These strategies were first identified by Tarone (1980) who focussed on joint negotiation of meaning during interactions. Collaboration or planning strategies, used to facilitate transfer of key information to enhance the effectiveness of communication, include lexical repetition, tonicity, and topic fronting. Negotiation and collaboration strategies are both discourse-based, whereas improvisation or avoidance strategies are local lexically based for overcoming specific lexical difficulties.

Researchers (Ting & Kho, 2009; Ting & Lau, 2008; Ting & Phan, 2008) formulated an integrated typology of communication strategies that included the frameworks of Faérch and Kasper (1984), Tarone (1980), and Clennell (1995), that is, improvisation or avoidance strategies, negotiation strategies, and collaboration or planning strategies. They conducted studies on the use of the integrated typology of communication strategies by English as a second language (ESL) learners. The results showed that learners were able to use discourse-based strategies to facilitate transfer of key information before communication breakdown while depending on improvisation or avoidance strategies. Ting and Lau (2008) found that second language learners were versatile in conveying a range of meanings: tonicity for clarification requests; topic fronting for marking key information; and lexical repetition for comprehension checks, topic maintenance, agreement, emphasis and clarification requests. The advantage of discourse-based strategies is that no additional lexical resources are needed. As an example, for tonicity, rising and fall tones are used to convey different meanings. Similarly, for lexical repetition, learners repeat words or phrases to check whether their interactant understand them correctly or to maintain a conversation. However, learners need to be taught on how to use discourse-based strategies. For example, Soekarno and Ting (2016) found that following communication strategy training, healthcare trainees with limited English proficiency could use lexical repetition as a stalling device while thinking of how to express intended meanings.

Communication strategy training raises learner consciousness of communication strategies. For example, Nakatani (2005) taught Japanese learners to consciously use metacognitive strategies to solve language-related difficulties in communicative situations.

Consciousness is inherent in the use of communication strategies in a sense that learners make a deliberate choice from various communication strategies (Bialystok,1990). In most communication strategy training, the first phase is consciousness-raising where definitions of selected oral communication strategies are introduced (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995; Rabab'ah, 2016). Researchers find that consciousness-raising leads to greater awareness of communication strategies in learners' written self-reports (Gan, Rafik-Galea, & Chan, 2017; Tiwaporn, 2009). These written self-reports reveal what learners are thinking, which are more useful for tracking the development in learner awareness of communication strategies than teacher observations of learner strategy use (Gallagher, 2018). The study by Ting, Soekarno, and Lee (2017) show that more proficient learners have greater awareness of their use of communication strategies. Based on these findings, it is important to analyse learner diaries to obtain insights into learners' perspective of the effects of communication strategy training.

Thus far, learners' reports in the form of retrospective verbal protocol or reflective writing in diaries have been analysed mainly in research on language learning strategies (Chamot, 2004, 2005; Cohen, 2005; Riley & Harsch, 1999; Taycke & Mendelsohn, 1986; Yabukoshi & Takeuchi, 2004). For example, Taycke and Mendelsohn (1986) analyzed the daily diary of seven learners who completed an eight-level language program. In their study, a low proficiency adult student reported that her strategies were unsuccessful as she relied on translation. In contrast, an advanced level student reported that she used frequent practice, memorization, and requests for error correction to achieve linguistic accuracy. The retrospective verbal protocols provide insights into cognitive processes taking place in second language learning (Rubin, 1981, 2003; Schmidt, 1993). Some communication strategy training has incorporated learner diaries for awareness-raising (e.g., Fazilatfar & Khoshkhoo, 2010; Nakatani, 2005) but few have used learner self-reports as a research tool. Among the few, Yabukoshi and Takeuchi's (2004) quantitative analysis of the diaries of four foreign language learners shows the successive and simultaneous use of cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies but little use of communication strategies.

Whereas learner self-reports, such as diaries, as a research tool may lead to better understanding of learners' use of strategies, there are concerns about the validity of self-reports. Chamot (2004) cautions that diaries and journals may not necessarily provide accurate descriptions of learners' attempt to solve language problems. As an example, in Fazilatfar and Khoshkhoo's (2010) study, the Iranian learners with intermediate English proficiency wrote diaries in their first language but only in so far as providing reasons for using avoidance strategies. Use of avoidance strategies leads to message reduction which is unproductive. The learners did not describe their attempts to convey intended meaning with communication strategies; such descriptions would have revealed how learners coped with a communication breakdown. Language proficiency may also limit what learners can write. It is perhaps because of these limitations that there have been few studies on strategy diaries of learners participating in communication strategy training, resulting in a dearth of literature on the direct relations between how the learners are taught and how they learn to use communication strategies. This study aims to examine how learner perceive the benefits of communication strategy training by analysing strategy diaries written by limited English proficiency learners.

METHOD OF STUDY

Participants

The study was conducted in Sabah, a state in Malaysia located on Borneo Island. The participants in this study were 23 first year students in their early twenties enrolled in a Malaysian Skills Certificate (Culinary) program which prepared them for employment as kitchen assistants, chef de partie, and sous chefs.

The students had low English proficiency, reflected in their results of the English subject at Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) level (similar to "O" level)—passes only, no distinction or credit. A few even had difficulties producing comprehensible utterances. In daily life, they hardly spoke English because they used other languages for communication. The home languages for students in Sabah include Dusun, Chinese, Sama'an, Orang Sungai, or the regional variety of Malay. Sabah Malay Dialect is like a lingua franca in Sabah (Jawing & Ting, 2011; Mahadhir, Ting, & Tumin, 2008; Ting & Tham, 2014). Lee and Ting (2016) attribute the lack of English use outside the English classroom in Malaysia to the language environment, in which English is used for formal purposes and mainly for government, intra-country commerce, and mass media whereas another primary language fulfils various communicative needs (Judd, 1981).

Intervention and Data Collection Procedures

To obtain permission for conducting the study at the research site that offered the Malaysian Skills Certificate (Culinary) program, the first researcher explained the study to the chief executive officer of the academy. After permission was obtained, the academy arranged for the first researcher to meet the culinary students. She explained the study, how she would conduct the training, and the benefits of the communication strategy training. She sought students' voluntary participation for 13 weeks. Students were required to write strategy diaries. They were also informed that their performance in class tasks would be recorded for research purposes and no personal information would be revealed in any reports of the study. Those who agreed to participate signed a written consent form.

The 13-week communication strategy training for the culinary students was not a compulsory class but an additional training on English for Occupational Purposes which the students signed up for. The training commenced on 29 July 2015. Each session consisted of three stages: presentation when the instructor explained a specific communication strategy; rehearsal when the students rehearsed using the strategy; and performance when the students demonstrated their use of the taught strategy. Students' output was in the form of individual presentations, dyadic role plays, and group discussions. In individual presentations, communication strategies such as circumlocution and topic fronting could be used, whereas dyadic role plays and group discussions allowed negotiation strategies (e.g., comprehension checks) and improvisation strategies (e.g., appeal for help). An example of a dyadic role play (Table 1, Session 2) was asking for and giving directions. The performances at the end of the sessions were recorded and transcribed.

Table 1 shows the learning content and tasks of the training sessions. For example, in Session 1 (S1) students were taught how to use fillers to keep the communication channel open in a workplace communication task. Table 2 provides the definition of the communication strategies.

Table 1
Communication Strategy Training Content and Tasks

Session	*Communication Strategy*	*Content*	*Task*
S1	Using fillers to gain time	Useful communication strategies in the workplace	Dyadic interaction
S2	Appealing for help by asking for repetition to show that s/he did not hear or understand an utterance	Giving directions	Individual presentation
S3	Appealing for help by asking for the correct item or structure to carry on the interaction	Hygiene guidelines	Individual presentation
S4	Using circumlocution for conversational repair	Anecdotal report	Individual presentation
S5	Using approximation of alternative expressions with similar semantic features to the intended expression	Incident report	Individual presentation
S6	Restructuring by reformulating the syntax of the utterance to convey intended meaning	Analysis report (lab/field)	Individual presentation & Dyadic interaction
S7	Using tonicity to mark key information or to differentiate from new information	Proposal report	Group discussion (not recorded)
S8	Using topic fronting for emphasis	Progress report	Group discussion
S9	Using lexical repetition of words or phrases for facilitating information transfer	Project report	Group discussion
S10	Checking confirmation to affirm the speaker has correct understanding	Risk management	Group discussion
S11	Checking comprehension to see if the listener has understood correctly	Crisis management	Group discussion

S12	Requesting clarification to show that the speaker does not entirely comprehend something	Negligence and Malpractice	Dyadic interaction
S13	Responding by rephrasing, shadowing, or offering the target item to signal negotiation of meaning	Workplace communication	Dyadic interaction

Table 2
*Definition of Communication Strategies**

Strategy	*Description*	*Example*
1. Fillers	The speaker uses time gaining strategies –fillers to think and to keep the communication channel open.	Actually, what I'm trying to say is
2. Asking for repetition	The speaker asks for repetition to show that s/he did not hear or understand an utterance; sometimes by using a questioning tone.	P17: uhh. For this moment we going to charge them around fifty ringgits but… T: Fifty? P17: Fifteen.
3. Seeking help	The speaker asks for the correct item or structure.	Can I ask you something? How do you say X?
4. Circumlocution	The speaker describes characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language structure.	Uhh, the, the, the movie one, the, the, English show
5. Approximation	The speaker uses an alternative expression that had semantic features like those of the intended term.	So, you wear the suitable [uhh] footwear, it will [umm] […]
6. Restructuring	The speaker restructures the syntax of an utterance.	So, is it really, do you need to utilize the one hour for "Finding the difference"?
7. Tonicity	The speaker uses stress and pitch to mark key information or to differentiate from new information.	Oh, the CHEAPEST because we are student, so it's uhh, maybe it's the CHEAPEST for …
8. Topic fronting	The speaker makes use of subject plus predicate syntactic structure to parcel up information to emphasize the topic.	Then our <u>venue</u>, we will do it at Ascot Academy, umm, if we can use the venue here.

9. Lexical repetition	The speaker repeats words or phrases with a system of tones for discourse maintenance, topic maintenance, topic salience marker, request for assistance, request for clarification, and comprehension.	But maybe if anything changes, anything changes, in the here we will inform.
10. Confirmation check	The speaker queries to affirm he has understood something correctly, which sometimes includes repeated words or phrases.	But I put a wrong ingredient, I put a salt, so the food becomes salty, so, it was a, very bad for serve the food, right?
11. Comprehension check	The speaker queries to see if the listener has understood correctly, which sometimes includes repeated words or phrases.	The Borneo of battle of the band is objective to identify talent in Borneo, like Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, or Sumatera Indonesia. Alright?
12. Clarification request	The speaker asks for an explanation when not entirely comprehending something, which sometimes includes repeated words or phrases.	What do you mean, madam? Effect, you mean?
13. Response shadowing	The speaker uses the exact, partial, or expanded repetitions of the interlocutor's preceding utterance to ensure the listener's understanding of important information	Yeah, one five.
14. Response utterance	The speaker offers the target item to the interlocutor.	No, we just approximate about the time.

*Source: Ting and Phan's (2008) *integrated typology of communication strategies*, which is based on Faérch and Kasper (1984), Tarone (1980), and Clennell (1995). The examples are from the present study.

In S1, the students practiced time gaining strategies (fillers, interjections) in professional ice breaking conversations. As it was the first session, the instructor explained how students might write their reflections on the activities in the provided strategy diary template (see Table 3). The strategy diary template was adapted from the Reflective Journal Assessment in the School of Educational Sciences at the University of La Salle (Appendix 1). A decision was made to use a structured diary to guide the report items because during the pilot study, students wrote general comments, such as "It helps me to improve my English". A strategy diary template would guide students reflecting on what they had learnt. For example, a student wrote "I learnt how to explain about a situation with the help of a picture" (Appendix 2).

Table 3
Template of Strategy Diary

Area: Content Awareness: What have I learned?	REFLECTION
Area: Process Awareness: How did I learn it?	REFLECTION
Area: Rationale Awareness: Why did I learn it?	REFLECTION
Area: Professional Development Awareness: How does this learning experience contribute to my professional development?	REFLECTION
Area: Personal Development Awareness: What does this learning experience mean to me?	REFLECTION

To enable the students with limited English proficiency to carry on an interaction beyond their linguistic resources, S2 and S3 focused on strategies to seek direct and indirect help when giving directions and discussing hygiene guidelines in the kitchen.

S4 to S6 focused on lexical strategies for short-term conversational repair, namely, circumlocution, approximation, and restructuring. Clennell (1995) refers to these lexical strategies as improvisation or avoidance strategies to overcome specific obstacles in the communication process. The tasks for these three sessions were individual presentations of observation reports and technical reports.

In S7 to S9, the students were taught how to use discourse-based collaboration or planning strategies (tonicity, topic fronting, lexical repetition) which Clennell (1995) promotes as better communication strategies with a message-enhancing conversational maintenance role. In S7, the students were grouped to discuss the planning of an event such as camping (retreat), telematch, English Day, and Culinary Family Day. They were explicitly told to use tonicity (stress, pitch) to mark key or new information during their discussion. At the end of their discussion in S7, several students presented proposals to conduct a student event such as a telematch. This session was not recorded to lessen the students' anxiety. Subsequently, in S8, students discussed further details of the proposed event, including budget and other specifics. Their use of topic fronting to signal emphasis when presenting their progress report was analyzed. In S9, the students were taught lexical repetition and were encouraged to use this strategy when presenting their project report.

S10 to S12 were on negotiation strategies, first identified by Tarone (1980): confirmation check, clarification request, and comprehension check. The students were taught and encouraged to use these strategies in pair and group interactions. The contexts for using the negotiation strategies were a technical forum on risk management of potential hazards identified in Ascot Competency Profile (S10), a question-and-answer session with the instructor on plans of action during conflicts or a state of emergency which would influence the wellbeing

of hotel staff working in the kitchen (S11), and an interview by the instructor on (S12) on handling negligent behavior and malpractice. The interview questions were as follows:

1. What is a negligent behavior **OR** what is identified as a malpractice? (This question requires the students to define technical term.)
2. Can you explain the condition related to the issue? (A follow-up of Question 1, requiring students to elaborate their explanation.)
3. Can you provide a counter action/response/feedback on the issue? (A follow-up of Question 2, requiring students to reflect on the issue holistically.)

The final session S13 taught the students how to make use of shadowing to maintain a conversation. This involves rephrasing a part of the interlocutor's utterance or offering a target item to the interlocutor in the context of small talks in the service industry.

Data Analysis Procedures

For the analysis of the strategy diaries, the students' handwritten entries were entered in a Word document. A code was given to the participating students and sessions. The students were referred to as P1 to P23, and the training sessions, S1 to S13. The analysis was done for 117 diary entries from 12 communication strategy training (S7 was not recorded). The number of diary entries was lower than expected because some students were absent from the training and some students did not write the strategy diary.

The diary entries were analyzed to identify themes in communication strategy use. The analysis found few diary entries directly related to communication strategies. Instead there were many entries on general language learning, particularly on improving English. Because of this, the data was analyzed based on two themes: communication strategies and English improvement. As for communication strategies, three sub-themes emerged and were used for the final coding of the strategy diaries, namely, specific description pertaining to communication strategies, better explanations, and descriptions pertaining to oral skills.

In addition, the strategy diaries of one student (P5) were analysed to track the progression in training. P5 was selected because he was one of the students who attended every session.

Results

Content of the Student Strategy Diaries

This section presents the results from learner diary analysis by training session and strategy. The students wrote 117 strategy diary entries related to the learning outcomes of the training sessions. Table 4 shows that 97 entries (82.9%) were on general learning outcomes and 20 entries (17.1%) were on communication strategy use. Most diary entries were general feedback on English improvement and class activities. In other words, most students were unable to reflect on strategy use. In the rest of this section, the focus is on strategy-related diary entries to glean understanding of how the students responded to the communication strategy training.

Table 4
Content of Students' Strategy Diary Entries

Content of strategy diary entries		*Frequency*	*Percentage*
English improvement and class activities		97	82.9%
Communication strategies	Better explanation	12	17.1%
	Specific to communication strategy	6	
	Better oral skills	2	
Total		117	100.0%

In 12 out of the 20 strategy-related entries, the students reported an improvement in their ability to give explanations. A typical diary entry was "I can explain to somebody clearly" (S5, P19). Although students did not explicitly mention use of communication strategies, the results suggested that students learned how to use circumlocution (*n*=1, S4), approximation (*n*=5, S5), restructuring (*n*=3, S6), and confirmation checks (*n*=1, S10), which might have enhanced the clarity of their explanations.

Regarding the strategies for conversational repair, the students' diary entries showed that they understood what the circumlocution strategy was and attempted to use it (S4). A sample utterance illustrating the use of circumlocution is "Uhh, the, the, the movie one, the, the, English show." Four students reflected on how using circumlocution increased their vocabulary and enabled them to "use more professional words" (P10) or a more "suitable word during presentation" (P23). Another two students reported that they could explain things more easily (P8) and confidently (P5). These results showed that communication strategy training might help students describe the characteristics of an object or action when they did not have the word for it.

Moreover, students could give better explanations with the approximation strategy. In this utterance "So you wear the suitable [uhh] footwear, it will [umm]", the participant replaced "boots" with an approximate term "footwear". In all five strategy-related diary entries (P18, P19, P20, P22, P23) written by S5, S5 reported to be able to explain things more clearly. It was helpful for students to know that they could use alternative expressions that share semantic features with the intended expression.

As for restructuring, students used their knowledge of combining words in meaningful sentences, phrases, or utterances in the target language to restructure the syntax of an utterance when they could not proceed with the original sentence structure. A sample utterance illustrating the restructuring of a message was "So is it really, do you need to utilize the one hour for 'Finding the difference'?" Altogether four strategy-related diary entries were identified for S6. Three students reflected on their ability to give clearer explanations (P10, P17, P23) and one student wrote about oral skills (P11). P11 wrote "Help me more comfortable during work. It's not easy to explain, but, very useful – helpful for me". P11 reflected on how learning to restructure utterances helped him to feel at ease to speak English at work but he lacked the English proficiency to explain further. This may confirm some researchers' reservation (e.g., Chamot, 2004) about the usefulness of strategy diaries.

Confirmation check, a negotiation strategy, is used to check whether the speaker has understood something correctly. For example, "But I put a wrong ingredient, I put a salt, so the

food becomes salty, so, it was a, very bad for serve the food, right?" Here the student asked whether he had correctly interpreted the interlocutor's statement. In S10, confirmation check was taught but there were no diary entries related to confirmation check. The lack of strategy diary entries on confirmation check and the other two negotiation strategies indicated that the students either did not use the strategies or did not have adequate understanding to reflect on them.

Finally, two diary entries addressed improvement in oral skills. Both were reflections in S3 after the direct appeal for help was taught. One student reflected on how using fillers helped him to speak spontaneously. P11 wrote, "Speak spontaneously. Using a pause, how to interrupt." Another student did not know that she could ask her interactant for help when she encountered communicative gaps. P19 wrote, "I learn how to ask for something polite[ly]. By recording it. To improve my English. Help me use proper English." She might have found the stock phrases to appeal for assistance beneficial. For example, "Can I ask you something?" and "How do you say X?". The instruction on stock phrases helped P19 produce less hesitant speech.

One Student's Reflection on Progression during Communication Strategy Training

This analysis of the strategy diaries of one student (P5) who attended all 13 sessions during the training showed that she could not reflect on the specifics of how she used a particular communication strategy (see Appendix 3). The only diary entry close enough to "asking for repetition" strategy taught in S2 was "I by asking, using the right question word. So people from another country can understand" (S2). This was considered relevant because the students were told that the indirect appeal for help was a suitable strategy to use when they could not hear or understand what their interlocutor had said. Other diary entries were general reflections dealing with improvement in English and class activities that did not offer much insight into how she grappled with learning to use communication strategies.

Analysis of P5's strategy diaries revealed that she could correctly write down the communication strategy and process (task) for each session, but her rationale, professional development, and personal development were similar to those of the training session. They looked like the learning outcomes put forth by the session. These terms might have been too technical and P5 could not differentiate them. Because of the similarity of content, P5's perspective of the benefits of the strategy training sessions was analysed.

What was interesting was the change in the content of her strategy diaries over the 13 weeks. From S1 to S3, P5 focussed on the benefits she gained in terms of communication skills and improvement of English (e.g., "improve my English", S3), which she could use in work interviews (e.g., "I get to use during work interview", S1). P5's strategy diary for S4 showed that she developed confidence when explaining how an accident occurred. After S5 which focussed on approximation, P5 felt that she could explain previous events clearly. Both S4 and S5 focussed on teaching lexical strategies to overcome specific obstacles in communication. P5 viewed these two lexical strategies had helped her explain events with greater confidence. She did not report the same learning outcome for S6 on restructuring, another lexical strategy, but highlighted her sharing technical content knowledge about "how to use the tool and equipment in the kitchen".

From S6 to S13, P5's strategy diary was task-focused and reported class activities. For example, for S7 she wrote "Doing a discussion for our planning for the proposal, collected many

ideas for our proposal by doing discussion, improved my teamwork by doing discussion with my teammates." For other training sessions, the diary entries were about the tasks and knowledge learnt. For example, "To know the difference between risk and crisis, the meaning of crisis is the hazard that is happening, crisis is something that is already happening" (S11). It seemed that as the training moved into more technical communication P5 lose sight of the communication strategy and was overwhelmed by the subject matter of the tasks.

P5's strategy diaries showed that she did not develop greater awareness of communication strategies during strategy instruction. In fact, when the topic of interactions became more technical, her attention shifted from communication and language skills to the topic content. Subsequently, her diary entries merely reported activities carried out during the sessions.

Discussion

Analysis of participant strategy diaries of a communication strategy training showed that only 17% of the 117 diary entries were related to communication strategy use. The students highlighted how the training helped them better explain things, increase vocabulary, and speak more spontaneously. Most diary entries were general comments on English improvement and class activities. The results indicate students' inability to reflect on the processes of learning new communication strategies, to demonstrate analytic thinking and metacognitive awareness of their understanding of the communication strategies, and to describe their attempts to utilize the strategies. Based on the case study of P5, one reason may be that as the subject matter of the training sessions became more technical, the student's reflections shifted from communicative and language skills to the subject matter and class activities.

This finding seems to have confirmed some researchers' notion that strategy diaries have limited usefulness in obtaining insights into the cognitive processes in second language learning (Bialystok, 1990; Chamot, 2004; Gallagher, 2018; Rubin, 1981, 2003; Schmidt, 1993). For instance, in Fazilatfar and Khoshkhoo's (2010) study, the learners wrote one-liners giving their reasons for not using strategies. For strategy diaries to offer rich information on the learner's progress in using communication strategies, the learner needs to be a trained linguist, like in Carson and Longhini's (2002) study where one of the researchers recorded her reflections of her language learning styles and strategies in a naturalistic setting. Zhu and Carless (2018) reported that their students wanted more guidance on peer feedback as they did not know how to comment on features like content and argumentation across multiple writing tasks. A methodological contribution of this study to diary studies is the importance of giving learners adequate training on reflective writing. For example, learners need to be trained to reflect on their learning decisions, conscious explorations of ways to use strategies, and intuitive or unplanned use of strategies, appropriate or inappropriate. In the present study, the students wrote the strategy diary in English, which could be why the entries were short because of their limited English language proficiency. This is a limitation of the study. To allow learners to express themselves freely and be unconstrained by language limitations, they should have been allowed to write the diaries in a language that they were comfortable with because the objective was to understand their strategy use.

Two pedagogical implications can also be drawn for communication strategy training. During the training, the strategies must be presented in a simple way such that they are clear and comprehensible to learners. The diary analysis revealed that the students reflected on compensatory lexical strategies but made no reference to negotiation strategies and collaborative discourse-based strategies. In future communication strategy training, more time and practice should be allocated for negotiation and discourse-based strategies for learners to utilize these strategies. One advantage of these strategies over local lexically-based strategies is that they do not draw upon extensive lexical resources because only simple phrases are needed to negotiate meaning and facilitate key information transfer, yet they bring tremendous returns in the prevention of communication breakdown. With adequate practice, learners with limited English proficiency may be able to use communication strategies for conversational maintenance.

Another implication for communication strategy training is to be selective on strategies to be included in the training, which may allow more rehearsal opportunities. In the present study, one strategy was taught per session, like Nakatani (2005, 2010). Inadequate learning of certain strategies could lead to students' inability to reflect on these communication strategies. It is crucial to allocate more than one session to some more complex strategies, such as negotiation and collaborative strategies. Adequate rehearsal in new situations helps to promote automaticity. The literature shows that proficient language learners know when to use good strategies, but we do not know which strategies are more easily automatized and if there is a threshold that indicates a learner's permanent change in strategy use behavior. Further studies of these issues are warranted.

DECLARATIONS

Availability of data and materials: The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the author upon request.

Competing interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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APPENDIX 1

Reflective Journal Assessment (University of La Salle)

UNIVERSITY OF LA SALLE – SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
BA IN SPANISH, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH – REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ASSESSMENT

Based on your reflective journals, write a general reflection of what has happened in your lessons and in the teaching practicum in general. Use the following form to help you systematize and concretize your thoughts.

AREA	AWARENESS
CONTENT (WHAT?)	What have I learnt?
PROCESS (HOW?)	How did I learn it?
REASONS (WHY?)	Why did I learn it?
ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (WHAT FOR?)	How does this learning experience contribute to my academic and professional development?
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (WHAT FOR?)	What does this learning experience mean to me?

(Source: Teacher Practitioner, 2018)

APPENDIX 2

Sample of Strategy Diary by P4

Session 4	Content	Learning Activities
Introduction (10 minutes)	Appeal for help	Conduct the previous task with a different partner from the last lesson.
Presentation (15 minutes)	Circumlocution	Discuss requested linguistic resources for the task through brainstorming session.
Rehearsal (20 minutes)	It is a kind of ... For example, ...	Prepare word lists to fulfil the roles assigned. Practice roles with partner.
Performance (60 minutes)	Anecdotal report	Describe characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the target language structure.
Assessment (15 minutes)	Strategy diary	Check and reflect on strategy use.

LEARNING PROFILE	STRATEGY DIARY
Date	4/9/2015
AREA	REFLECTION
Content	I learnt how to explain about a situation with the help of a picture.
Awareness	
What have I learnt?	
AREA	REFLECTION
Content	Madam Mega gave us a picture about a car accident and each of us must explain what we saw in the picture.
Awareness	
What have I learnt?	
AREA	REFLECTION
Content	To increase my vocabulary and boost my confidence also I could use it in my future job as a chef.
Awareness	
What have I learnt?	
AREA	REFLECTION
Professional development	I could increase my vocabulary and use more professional words.
Awareness	
How does this learning experience contribute to my professional development?	
Personal development	REFLECTION
Awareness	Shows me that I can explain something to someone.
What does this learning experience mean to me?	

Learner's Signature: (signed)
Date: 4/9/2015

APPENDIX 3

Summary of Strategy Diaries by P5

Session	Communication strategy	Process	Rationale	Professional development	Personal development
S1	Time gaining	Gaining strategies such as filler, filled pauses and interjections to keep the communication on going	To improve communication skills	I get to use during work interview	I can improve my knowledge of how to speak English
S2	Asking for repetition	I by asking using the right question word.	So, people from another country can understand	Help when im [I'm] in an interview	Improve my English skill
S3	Asking for repetition: I learn how to ask politely	For hygiene guidelines and S.O.P. By doing presentation in class Presentation on value things/daily routines	To improve my English	Help me use proper English	Improve my English
S4	Circumlocution	Description on accident	Increase confidence when explaining something	Could increase my confidence when explaining something to people	Shows me that I need to be confident when explaining something to someone
S5	Approximation	Individual presentation/ report a class activity	Telling about activities that we had done during Ascot's Merdeka Fair	I can explain to anyone clearly	I can explain about previous events
S6	Restructuring	Doing a report in the training kitchen. Also had a Q&A in the training kitchen	Individual presentation about the usage of tools and equipment in kitchen	Q&A by Madam after presenting	Shared some knowledge about how to use the tools and equipment in the kitchen
S7	Tonicity	Doing a group discussion	Doing a discussion for our planning for the proposal	Collected many ideas for our proposal by doing discussion	Improved my teamwork by doing discussion with my teammates

S8	Topic fronting	Presenting progress report	Present half of our proposal to other colleagues	My group almost finished our proposal but still need to add on some more details	Doing proposal for events
S9	Lexical repetition	Presenting a project report with slide	Presenting and explaining our proposal by using PowerPoint	Q&A by Madam about our proposal	Need to improve planning skills
S10	Confirmation checks	Risk management	Risk means a hazard that probably will happen	Present our opinion by doing forum	Presenting opinion about how to handle risk and some step about how to avoid the risk from happening
S11	Comprehension checks	Crisis management	To know the difference between risk and crisis	The meaning of crisis is the hazard that is happening	Crisis is something that is already happening
S12	Clarification requests	Negligence and malpractice	Knowing the difference between malpractice and negligence	Interview by Madam about negligence and malpractice and how to avoid	Knowing how to handle negligence or malpractice when it happens
S13	Response utterance	Workplace communication	Want to see if I improve my communication compare to the first session that is ice breaking session	Me and my partner did small talk	Learning how to do a small talk with someone

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REVIEW

The Influence of the Foreign Service Institute on US Language Education: Critical Analysis of Historical Documentation

By Theresa Ulrich (2021). New York and London: Routledge. Pp.169.

Reviewed by **Jiaying Howard**, *Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center*

To understand the influence of US government policies on foreign language education in American public schools, Theresa Ulrich, the director of a language program in a public school district, undertook an examination of one government foreign language school, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). Ulrich focuses on the FSI documentation from 1947 to1968, because "[it] encompassed the beginning of the FSI's debut through the initial period of its development of foreign language instruction program"(p. 3). *The Influence of the Foreign Service Institute on US Language Education: Critical Analysis of Historical Documentation* summarizes the findings of her investigation. The product is a historical timeline addressing four related topics: 1) the historical value of bilingualism in the US; 2) the FSI's language instruction and assessment development process; 3) policies and events that influenced foreign language education in US public schools; and 4) current political views and debates related to foreign language education in public schools.

The book has seven chapters organized into three parts, accompanied by a list of 1) Tables and figures; 2) Abbreviations; 3) Archive locations in the US; 4) The addresses of Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) agencies and offices; and 5) References. A content index is also provided.

Part I, *Historical Background and the Role of the Foreign Service Institute in the United States*, has two chapters. Chapter 1 starts with an incident in World War II (WWII), illustrating the necessity of trained linguists during a time of war. This led to the establishment of governmental foreign language training programs, among which was the Foreign Service Institute. The discussion then shifts to the three language proficiency assessment models; i.e., the models of the *Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR),* the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL),* and the *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA),* with figures and tables illustrating major similarities and differences. Ulrich traces the origin of the proficiency

assessment models to the FSI, justifying the analysis of the FSI's historical documents. Chapter 1 also provides an overview of the investigation, including the research questions, the methodology, document analysis, and development of major and minor themes. Seven major themes are generated by data analysis: 1) political agendas and policy formation, 2) FSI validation and inadequate budget, 3) Foreign Service Officer (FSO) and interpreter quality issues, 4) expansion of language and area training, 5) the FSI and US military connection, 6) the evolving role of the FSI, and 7) foreign service and US national security. In addition, there are four minor themes: 1) the FSI's link with public universities, 2) the FSI, communism, and Soviet threats, 3) presidential directives to the FSI, and 4) language training for Congress and family members. These themes lay the framework for the findings and discussions presented in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 is a historical review of government involvement in the formulation of the educational goals of American public schools from the 1700s to the mid-1940s. During this period, the government stressed English-only instruction to unify the people, but various forms of bilingual education existed in immigrant and native American communities. The government and the public viewed multicultural and multilingual instruction as impediments to national unity. Consequently, "…formal Americanization movement resulted in negative perceptions of bilingualism" (p. 23). Chapter 2 traces the emphasis of Anglo-Saxon Protestant values in the American school system to the exclusion of those of other cultures. The bias against bilingual individuals (mostly immigrants) lingered into the 1920s. It was believed that those who spoke a foreign language were handicapped because of a diminished capacity to learn English. In the 1940s, foreign language education gained attention because of the need for bilingual military personnel in WWII. Chapter 2 also outlines the historical context in which the US Army Language School (ALS) was created and developed. The ALS was at a late date renamed the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

Part II, *Document Analysis and Historical Milestones 1945-1968*, has three chapters, featuring document analysis in three time periods: Chapter 3, covering 1945-1952; Chapter 4, 1953-1960; and Chapter 5, 1961-1968. The findings are organized as major and minor themes described in Chapter 1. With historical and political changes, themes vary among the three chapters.

Chapter 3 reveals the development of the FSI as the US emerged from WWII as an international superpower. The FSI efforts and achievements embodied the US foreign polices of developing better foreign relations, forging anti-communist alliances, avoiding world war, and preserving America's identity. In 1946, The Foreign Service and the National Security Acts vindicated the establishment of the FSI, which was to provide two types of training—short-term training to orient new employees in the Foreign Service, and longer-term training for personnel development; i.e., strengthening the effectiveness of the Foreign Service. The chapter also addresses several themes, such as US foreign language instruction, language assessment, and Foreign Service as national defense. From these interwoven, overlapping themes, the FSI's language training programs emerged. After realizing that FSOs lacked sufficient language proficiency to function, the FSI mandated that FSOs complete intensive language study as part of career preparation and training. Ulrich cites documents that illustrate the FSI's efforts to develop

a robust foreign language education program. One notable effort was the shift from traditional language study to one that emphasized cross-cultural communication.

In Chapter 4, Ulrich examines governmental policies between 1953 and 1960 that directed FSI's operation and development. The FSI's work centered on American identity and values, relationship with the military, relationship with universities, the language proficiency assessment framework, Sputnik and US school curricula, expanding language instruction, fighting communism, and addressing fiscal challenges. Highlights include the FSI's collaboration with the military to develop vigorous language and area studies training programs. A major achievement in the mid-1950s was the FSI's introduction of the first language proficiency assessment scale. Moreover, it started work on a language aptitude test. Because of budgetary restraints, the project relied largely on university professors and grants, leading to expanded cooperation with universities. Meanwhile, as the US assumed responsibilities as a world leader, the shortage of linguistically-prepared American diplomats became apparent.

Chapter 5 describes how the FSI addressed President Kennedy's concerns on national security by expanding language instruction to diplomats' dependents, prioritizing Russian language instruction, and defining language aptitude. In addition, the FSI collaborated with the military in counterinsurgency and internal defense training for projects of communicating in secret codes. Meanwhile, the Bilingual Education Act boosted public school interest in foreign language education. In 1968, the FSI passed responsibility for developing the foreign language proficiency assessment scale to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). In the hands of the ILR, the FSI's proficiency framework underwent reviews and refinements and was adopted by other government agencies.

Part III, *Bilingualism Becomes Increasingly More Important*, addresses the influence of the FSI's foundational work in foreign language instruction and assessment on US public schools. Chapter 6 focuses on language assessment from the 1970s to the 2000s, and Chapter 7 on the role that foreign language education plays in maintaining US national security and global economic competitiveness.

Chapter 6 starts with the implementation of the Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA) in public schools. To ensure equal education opportunity to minority students, public schools were required to provide appropriate English instruction, bringing the rise of English learning and bilingual education programs. In the early years, there was little guidance for ways to measure the effectiveness of these programs. To assess language programs and student learning outcomes, the ACTFL developed curriculum and instruction standards and an aligned assessment. It formally brought the ILR proficiency framework into public education, made adjustments, and developed the ACTFL language assessment framework. Chapter 6 also describes how the No Child Left Behind Act affected English language instruction in public schools, particularly with the development of the English proficiency assessment framework of the *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA).* The WIDA assessment framework shares similarities with the ILR and ACTFL models. The chapter also mentions several other government-sponsored initiatives; among these are flagship language programs in universities, instruction for heritage language speakers, and language development pipelines (K-16).

Chapter 7 examines America's national security and global economic competitiveness in the 21st century. It outlines major challenges as well as actions taken by government and public schools to meet them. Deficiencies in bilingual personnel and public schools' lag in language education are among the most serious. The government has passed legislation to provide funding for instruction in world languages as well as English. For example, the World Language Advancement and Readiness Act of 2019 authorized the Secretary of Defense to fund foreign language study in K-12 public schools. The Reaching English Learners Act allowed the Secretary of Education to grant funds to English language education at the university level. Other initiatives taken by the government and schools include expanding study-abroad immersion, connecting university and K-12 language education, and implementing dual language programs. The goals, challenges, and suggested resolutions of public education are discussed in the chapter.

The Influence of the Foreign Service Institute on US Language Education has many strengths. It brings awareness to the often-overlooked aspect of foreign language education in US schools; i.e., it is closely connected to, and greatly impacted by, government policy and legislation. Ulrich's analysis of the FSI and other government documents illustrates a complex historical and political context in which the contemporary education, particularly that pursuant to foreign language, has emerged, evolved, and expanded. The comprehensive account of the FSI's history and its contribution to the language education field should appeal to those interested in the origin and development of language assessment models.

Readers may find that a large amount of historical information is compressed in the book. This strength, however, may also be its weakness. Due to limited space (169 pages), the account and analysis are brief and general. In many cases, one sentence covers one historical event. The language is concise and clear, but a lack of transition from one topic to another makes following its themes difficult at times. The following paragraph is illustrative of its style:

> To strategically expanded [original text, in need of correction] its language training to include other government agencies and departments, such as the Department of Commerce and Labor, the FSI surveyed language needs at home and abroad (Bidwell, 1952; Director of FSI, 1949). By 1949, the growing Institute was making plans to move into a separate, larger building. The expanding diversity of the FSO's duties included facilitation of intra-governmental officer exchanges with other countries and providing training to support-personnel, such as clerks (Director of FSI, 1949). Even more, the US extended its diplomatic course offerings to representatives of Pakistan and Liberia (Director of FSI, 1949; Smith, 1952, May 12). US government officials were determined to build relationships with as many foreign countries as possible to build collective surety against Soviet infiltration and communism. Part of this effort resulted in the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), signed in 1949 (US DOS, 2018) (p. 49).

Had such density been addressed, resulting in improved topic transition, it would have made the reader's task much easier. Nevertheless, Ulrich's analysis of FSI documents is a valuable resource for scholars and students engaged in educational policy research.

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INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Applied Language Learning (ALL) is to promote professional communication within the Defense Language Program and academic communities on adult language learning for functional purposes. The Editor encourages the submission of research and review manuscripts from such disciplines as: (1) instructional methods and techniques; (2) curriculum and materials development; (3) testing and evaluation; (4) implications and applications of research from related fields in linguistics, education, communication, psychology, and social sciences; and (5) assessment of needs within the profession.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Prepare the manuscripts in accordance with the following requirements:

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- Not exceeding 6,000 words (not including reference, appendix, etc.)
- Use double spacing, with margins of one inch on all four sides
- Use Times New Roman font size 12
- Number all pages consecutively
- In black and white only, including graphics and tables
- Create graphics and tables in a Microsoft Office application (such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel)
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Submit reviews of textbooks, scholarly works on foreign language education, dictionaries, tests, computer software, audio-video materials, computer and mobile applications, and other non-print materials. Point out both positive and negative aspects of the work(s) being considered. In the three to five double- spaced pages of the manuscript, give a clear but brief statement of the work's content and a critical assessment of its contribution to the profession. Keep quotations short. Do not send reviews that are merely descriptive.

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Applied Language Learning, a refereed journal published semiannually by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey, is soliciting articles for publication.

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- Curriculum and materials development;
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