The TFLTA Journal

An Online Peer-Reviewed Research Journal

The TFLTA Journal

The TFLTA Journal is an online, double blind-reviewed research publication of TFLTA, the Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association, an affiliate of ACTFL. The journal is dedicated to publishing original scholarly articles that address all aspects of second language (L2) teaching. Manuscripts may: report empirical research results which have direct implications for the classroom; address specific language-related topics which may benefit language pedagogical practices; describe innovative language teaching programs; focus on trends, issues and practices of interest to K-16 second language educators. Potential authors will follow the *Submission Guidelines* on page 4 which detail specific criteria required for publication consideration in *The TFLTA Journal.* Submissions from prospective authors are gladly accepted year-round and inquiries to the Editor (*pdwiley@utk.edu*) are most welcome.

The TFLTA Journal

Volume 7, Spring/Summer 2018
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Original Research Articles

Message From the Editor

The Spring/Summer 2018 issue of The TFLTA Journal offers its readership a unique opportunity to enjoy three different genres of unique research-based articles drawn from three distinct second language arenas—World Languages, English as a Second/Foreign Language, and Deaf Education.

Our trilogy of articles begins with a WL research study conducted by Christina Huhn who closely examines the integration of the National Standards in post-secondary Spanish textbooks—-a *must* read for our college-level professors. Then, Valerie M. Schmidt-Gardner offers an extremely timely second WL piece exploring how WL instructors can guide their students to achieve, maintain, and improve proficiency at the ACTFL Advanced-Low, the level at which one can meet basic work and/or academic needs in the target language (ACTFL, 2017).

The next two articles focus on issues teaching English Language Learning students. The first, crafted by Jason DeHart, is a metacognitive review of the literature regarding composition instruction strategies for Chinese-speaking undergraduate students, through his lens as a basic writing instructor of ELs in the U.S. Emily Brooks' article follows with a comprehensive autobiographic piece describing teaching cultural literacy to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Mainland China.

Ending our journey into the L2 educational realm, follow our last two manuscripts dealing with issues that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students face in today's educational arena. In her article, Sara Evans uses a multiple case study approach to introduce us to a unique population in the EL world known as the Deaf and hard of Hearing Multilingual learner (DML)—deaf students who live in a home in which neither English nor American Sign Language (ASL) is used. Our final piece in the spring/summer 2018 issue of the *TFLTA Journal* is Emily Sherwood's compelling piece that suggests that ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, a relatively new English-proficiency assessment used for EL and bilingual placement, may actually cause marginalization for this group of students in the classroom.

The Editorial Board hopes that you enjoy our current *TFLTAJ* issue and that you consider submitting your own research-based manuscript for blind review in the 2019 spring/summer publication.

Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley, Editor-in-Chief

Call for Manuscripts
The TFLTA Journal
Volume 8, Spring 2019 Issue

The Editorial Board of *The TFLTA Journal* welcomes original scholarly, research-based articles that address issues directly related to best practices in world or second language pedagogy in the K-16 world language (modern and classical) and second language arenas. Topics may include: original, empirical research studies; assessment models; innovative language instruction paradigms; cultural issues; and digital literacies. All manuscripts follow a double-tier review process and are first read by the Editor of the journal and then sent for blind review to members of the Editorial Board who have expertise in the focus of the manuscript. Submissions are accepted year-round although the absolute deadline for the Spring 2019 issue is January 15, 2019. Manuscripts *must follow the guidelines* below to be sent out for blind-review. Those that do not will be returned to the author(s).

Manuscript Preparation Guidelines

1. Submissions must be original work that has not been previously published or presently under review by another journal. *iThenticate* will be used to ensure this.
2. Submissions must be written in standard English that is appropriate for the *TFLTA Journal's* readership of second language educators.
3. Book reviews, anecdotal reports, non-research-based manuscripts or literature reviews are *not* accepted
4. All submissions are initially read by the Editor (first review) and then if deemed appropriate and have followed *all* guidelines, sent out to a group of appropriate L2 experts for their blind review. Therefore, anonymity of the author(s) *must be ensured* by removing all identifiers from the manuscript.
5. All manuscripts will be written in WORD and use the APA 6th Edition format for levels of headings and manuscript components. Submissions not using this format will be returned to the author(s).
6. Tables and Figures will be numbered sequentially and need to be prepared as either WORD or *jpeg* files. (Do *not* use *pdf* files for tables and figures.) They need to appear at the end of the article following References. Place a note [insert Table X/ Figure Y here] in text to indicate their suggested locations.
7. All in-text quotes require page numbers or paragraph sources for non-paginated sources. Use *italics* for emphasis; not quote marks.
8. Word limitations are as follows: Title [15 words}; Abstract [150 words]; Key Words [5].
9. Manuscripts must not exceed 20 double-spaced pages in length.
10. All submissions will be sent electronically to the Editor at (*pdwiley@utk.edu*) with TFLTA Manuscript submission *in the subject line* of the email and a confirmation in the text of the email stating that all Submission Guidelines for *The TFLTA Journal* have been followed.
11. All submissions will be acknowledged by the Editor within 2 weeks of receipt.

Integration of the National Foreign Language Standards in Post-Secondary Beginning Spanish Textbooks

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Abstract: *Despite what we have come to understand about effective language teaching, the textbook continues to serve as the cornerstone of World Language instruction in many post-secondary classrooms. Recent survey data suggest that the National Standards guide educators at all levels as they create learning experiences for language learners, but this may not consistently be the case in environments whose curriculum are restricted by a textbook structure. This study explored the implementation of the National Standards into current World Language textbooks (2012-2017), finding that while many textbooks reference the standards, the depth and support of the standards in textbooks remains limited. The study also reinforced that the materials in the textbooks alone are not sufficient to provide a university-level instructor with materials to create a fully standards-driven classroom.*

Introduction

In discussions of post-secondary curriculum, textbooks often dominate the conversation. University faculty often rely on the textbook to support curriculum and maintain course consistency across instructors. Many post-secondary foreign language departments continue to use what has been labeled the *coverage model* (Chaffee, 1992) and rely heavily on textbooks to maintain content consistency and provide educational materials to faculty, especially at the introductory levels. Merely covering the material in a textbook is unlikely to lead to the implementation of SLA research (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) or the broader application of the Standards into post-secondary instruction.

More recently, Willis-Allen (2008) found that the textbook served as a common point of reference for both students and faculty, an idea also presented by Bragger and Rice (2000) and Shrum and Glisan (2016) who noted that textbooks still serve as a backbone for instruction in many contexts. Additionally, Cubillos (2014) asserts that the role of the textbook in the teaching and learning of world languages in the U.S. is undeniable, with textbook content continuing to serve as the primary source for classroom content and curriculum in the United States.

On a wider scale, the 2007 MLA Ad Hoc committee report has called for "a broader and more coherent curriculum" (MLA, 2007, p. 237) at the post-secondary level. Leading organizations outside the field of language study have also advocated a global, interdisciplinary approach to curriculum (ter Horst, 2010); these changes may be hindered by an extensive reliance on the textbook as the primary source of teaching materials.

Importance of the Study

With the increased application of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Standards for Foreign Language Learning (hereafter Standards) throughout the language education profession (ACTFL, 2011a; ACTFL, 2011b), the five goal areas of the Standards provide a clear proficiency-oriented framework that would promote and support this curricular shift, and potentially guide the materials development efforts of authors and textbook publishers. However, very little professional discussion has occurred with respect to the use of the textbook in Spanish classes in a U.S. University context that could potentially lend support to a broader, more global approach to curriculum. The relationship between textbook users and textbook publishers is at times complex and is defined both by textbook content, expectations of faculty and by the demands of the highly competitive textbook industry (Cubillos,

2014). Meanwhile, the Standards provide a "framework for a curriculum with the richness and depth to provide a broad range of communicative experiences and content knowledge. These Standards put the focus on the broader view of second language study and competence" (W-RSLL, 2015, p. 8); this framework would promote and support this curricular shift, and potentially guide the materials development efforts of authors and textbook publishers. (Cubillos, 2014). Retrospectively, from the first iterations of the National Standards several authors have argued that the college level curriculum must undergo significant change (James, 1998; Lange, 1997), and identified the Standards as the catalyst for that change.

Despite the consensus that there is a need for change, the direction necessary to bring about that curricular change remains undefined. Given the indisputable role that the textbook plays in the context of the post-secondary curriculum, the content of those textbooks could be seen as both evidence of change and an avenue to affect change. This article proposes scrutinizing textbook content, in particular through the incorporation of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (NSFLEP, 2006, W-RSLL, 2015), as one potential resource that would support curricular change while simultaneously promoting the incorporation of the Standards into published literature.

The present study used the five goal areas of the Standards (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) including the 3 modes of Communication and Cultural Paradigm (Products, Practices and Perspectives) to explore the content of 17 post-secondary textbooks, to investigate the incorporation of the Standards into the post-secondary textbook. It is important to note that at the onset of the study, the standards in use were the 2006 National Standards (NSFLEP, 2006). During the course of the study, the Standards were *refreshed* giving rise to the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards (Released to the public in April 2015; hereafter W-RSLL). However, the long-standing Organizing Principles behind the standards were maintained, specifically, the 5 goal areas and the 11 standards, including the Communicative Modes and the Cultural Paradigm (Products, Practices and Perspectives). Furthermore, the majority of the textbooks included in the study were published in 2015 or earlier, so any references to the standards in the textbook would have followed the 2006 Standards. The few textbooks included in the study that have undergone revisions since the World Readiness Standards were formally released on April 9, 2015 have retained the focus on those underlying principles, rather than referencing a specific iteration of the standards.

Review of the Literature

Role of the Textbook in Curriculum

As noted above, very little professional discussion has occurred with respect to the use of the textbook at the post-secondary level. Although our EFL and ESL colleagues have engaged in professional dialogue on the role and contributions of the textbook, (Calvo, 2014; Harwood, 2013; Karimi, Kargar, & Behjat, 2015; Maleki, Mollaee, & Khosravi, 2014) research on the same topics in Spanish as a Foreign Language in a U.S. university classroom context remains limited. Cubillos (2014), Fernández (2011), and Rubio, Passey and Campbell (2004) found that textbooks still tend to follow traditional teaching approaches; Cubillos (2014) and Fernández (2011) also found that the majority of textbooks remained grammar-focused. Additionally, the majority of the textbooks reviewed focused on providing explicit information followed by controlled production practice and open-ended practice. Furthermore, Cubillos (2014) expands on this, adding that not all of the open-ended practice required students to participate in real exchanges of information that mimic natural conversation.

Among the limited research on Spanish textbooks, Aski (2003) investigated the connections between textbook activities and SLA and on the types of practice found in textbooks (Aski 2003; Aski, 2005; Bragger & Rice, 2000). Many textbooks still contain significant mechanical practice, despite the findings of Wong and VanPatten (2003), who engaged in a detailed discussion of drills such as those commonly found in language textbooks. Wong and VanPatten (2003) concluded that not only do mechanical drills not support language acquisition, but they may actually impede student progress in developing language proficiency, yet these types of practice remain common in textbooks. Both Bragger and Rice (2000) and Aski (2003) asserted that traditional grammatical considerations continue to drive the content and organization of textbooks. Other than Cubillos' (2014) article, current research on textbook content is noticeably lacking in the literature.

Textbook Use and Content

In one of the few studies of textbooks at the post-secondary level, Willis-Allen (2008) explored the use of the textbook by teaching assistants. Her research found that TA's used the textbook more frequently for structured and mechanical practice, but used the textbook materials less for oral communication; many felt the communicative activities represented unnatural speech, similar to the previous study by Glisan and Drescher (1993) who found that much textbook communication does not represent natural speech.

As an alternative to the textbook, the TA's chose to create their own activity, or modify and expand the textbook content to facilitate expanded oral communication. Willis-Allen (2008) found that TA's tended not to use the textbook when developing student-to-student oral activities, as it did not necessarily facilitate real communication. Authentic communication is among other things, unpredictable, while textbook-based communication is, by nature, predictable. Willis-Allen (2008) also notes a prevalence of controlled or guided practice in textbooks, however, her research included only two textbooks: one in French and the other in Italian. This limited reference supports the need to further analyze the content of today's textbooks, including in Spanish.

Willis-Allen (2008) also noted that the textbook served as a common point of reference for both students and faculty, an idea presented by Bragger and Rice (2000) and Shrum and Glisan (2016) who noted that textbooks still serves as a backbone for instruction in many post-secondary contexts, further emphasizing the need to be aware of the disconnect between textbook content and standards-based instruction. In the language classroom, it is important that students be provided with opportunities for real-world authentic communication, and both controlled and free language response (Ellis, 2012). Nevertheless, the textbook does not always provide those opportunities (Aski, 2003; Aski 2005; Askildson 2000; Glisan & Drescher, 1993).

An overabundance of mechanical practice and an extensive reliance on a traditionally focused textbook (or focusing too much on *coverage* of the textbook content) may limit essential opportunities for students to produce both controlled and free language response and production that Ellis (2012) suggests, or the language interaction that Shrum and Glisan (2016) encourage. In general, more research exists on K-12 than post-secondary textbooks. Rifkin (2006) commented that most current post-secondary textbooks perpetuate the two-tiered system identified in the MLA Ad hoc report (MLA, 2007), with more depth and breadth of textbooks available for first and second year levels. Furthermore, there is a notable reduction in available materials at upper levels, for heritage learners, or students who have studied abroad (Rifkin, 2006).

Other topics that have been investigated with regard to textbook content include vocabulary in textbooks (Fernandez, 2014) and choosing an appropriate textbook (Angell, DuBravac,& Gongleski, 2008; Pardiñas-Barnes, 1998; Shrum & Glisan, 2016). Additional authors have investigated the role of information about the language versus language for communication (Swaffer 2006), and ancillary and technology-based materials (Cresswell, 2008). While these studies contribute to the limited research on textbooks in the post-secondary curriculum, there remains a lack of studies that investigate the role of the Standards in the post-secondary curriculum.

Standards

The Standards provide the agenda that will help us define teaching and learning for the next decade – and beyond. (W-RSLL, 2015) To accomplish this, it will be necessary for the Standards to be present in the learning experiences of all students, including at the post-secondary level. Over a decade after the National Standards were developed, the A*CTFL Task Force on Decade of Standards Project (2011) found that the Standards* are being distributed at all levels, have garnered interest, and suggests that there has been a positive scholarly response to them in the literature (ACTFL, 2011). Standards-based practices such as Integrated Performance Assessments, intuitive grammar instruction (PACE Model) and activities involving the cultural paradigm (products, practices and perspectives) have received expanded attention in the profession, and some implementation of standards-based activities has begun to emerge in the literature, with articles on cultural portfolios and Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs) appearing more recently in publication (Adair-Hauck et al., 2006; Adair-Hauck & Troyan, 2013; Davin et al., 2011). Nevertheless, Troyan (2012) found that the implementation of the Standards has been inconsistent in language depart

ments noting that the evolution and impact of the Standards in connection with the post-secondary *classroom* is not prevalent in the literature, and merits additional investigation.

Despite the aforementioned progress, little research has delved into how the Standards are represented in the classroom at the post-secondary level, including in post-secondary textbooks. Despite the long-standing presence of the Standards, only Cubillos (2014) included components of these standards in his investigation, including the three modes of communication in his analysis, and reporting the percentage of activities of each type in college level textbooks: interpretive (27%), interpersonal (37%) and presentational (35%), with almost exclusive focus on word-level and sentence level writing tasks. He also notes that newer college textbooks include slightly more presentational tasks, but fewer interpretive and interpersonal tasks than existing college level textbooks. Additionally, within his review of college level textbooks, he noted that about 13% of textbook activities are cultural in nature, but adds that few of these tasks go beyond simple recall or identification of facts and general knowledge about a featured country (Cubillos, 2014).

Using as a basis the articles identified as applicable to the post-secondary level in the standards project database, a review of the 96 articles labeled as post-secondary in the ACTFL Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011) shows that roughly 1/3 (32%, $n = 96$) of the cited research is specifically connected to the classroom, with very little discussion centering on the textbook itself. (Huhn, 2015).

The ACTFL Standards Impact Survey indicates that the major impact of the Standards was on classroom practice, though these data were not disaggregated by K-12 and post-secondary levels of instruction (ACTFL, 2011, p. 5). Additionally, Aski (2003) notes that publishers develop the materials demanded by those who use them; in other words, textbook content is driven by the demands of those classroom instructors who will use those same textbooks. A standards-based curriculum, however, is not tied to the use of a textbook, and teachers who use a curriculum driven by the Standards may use a variety of sources and instructional methods to support student learning (Allen, 2002). It is the presence of the Standards and activities that support the five goal areas that may further the expansion of the Standards into post-secondary language instruction, in addition to supporting the development of language proficiency.

Research Questions

From this review of literature, the following research questions serve as the direction for this study:

1. Do current textbooks provide explicit instruction and reference to the standards and/or goal areas?
2. Do current textbooks provide post-secondary educators with the tools they need to take a standards-based approach to their teaching?
3. Do current post-secondary textbooks contain activities, information or references to Integrated Performance Assessments, inductive grammatical instruction (PACE) or concepts such as the Cultural paradigm (products, practices and perspectives) which would support the implementation of those concepts into instruction?

Methodology and Research Design

To investigate the presence of the Standards in current post-secondary Spanish textbooks, a convenience sample of textbooks was gathered as part of a search for a beginning Spanish course sequence in a communicative curriculum with a strong oral proficiency focus. 17 textbooks were submitted by publishers for inclusion in that textbook search. After the emergence of the W-RSLL (W-RSLL, 2015), the original textbook selection was reviewed and updated to assure that the most current textbooks were included in the study.

As a matter of practicality, all textbooks were published between 2012 and 2017, with a maximum of three texts per publisher included in order to maintain balance between publishers. 2 textbooks were eliminated as they were not true beginning level textbooks, and the textbook layout was duplicated. Fifteen unique textbooks were selected for evaluation and publishing information about the 15 textbooks can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Textbooks Included in Study by Year and Edition

Identifier	Year	Edition
A	**2018***	2
B	2012	9
C	2012	2
D	2015	3e
E	**2017***	5
F	2015	6e
G	2015	10
H	2013	1
I	**2017***	4
J	2013	2e
K	**2017***	4
L	2013	4e
M	2013	7e
N	2014	1
O	**2018**	5
*denotes a recent edition date, but no change to textbook structure.		

For consistency, as each textbook program had a different structure, no ancillary or supplemental texts were included in the study; only the instructor edition was examined. To focus the study on content rather than a critique or commentary on any particular author, method, or layout, the textbooks were assigned a random number before evaluation.

Using the five goal areas as the basis for analysis, an evaluative chart in an excel spreadsheet was created, using a similar method of analysis used by Fernandez (2011), and incorporating some of the ideas recommended by Shrum and Glisan (2016) The categories were developed based on the components of each goal area.

Rather than engaging in complex statistical analysis, a 3-point scale was developed: *includes activities that directly relate to the goal area, activities may connect but require instructor intervention, and no connection to the goal area.* This scale is similar to the structure of the ACTFL Standards Impact Grant Survey (ACTFL, 2011). These three points were developed for each of the five goal areas.

To maintain a focus on the development of language proficiency, the evaluation was approached, based on key proficiency concepts. Given that developing increased proficiency levels requires effort, preparation, and experience, attention was focused on concepts that would be concepts deemed essential for students to progress in their language proficiency. While there is no known, direct correlation between proficiency levels and beginning course levels, one essential benchmark of increasing language proficiency is the ability to consistently communicate in both past and present time frames (ACTFL, 2012). A truly communicative textbook that provides support for all three modes of communication, with a goal of increasing language proficiency, would include exposure to those varying time frames. To that end, the inclusion of the 5C goal areas (5C's) in three specific topics was examined for each textbook: Introduction of present tense regular verb construction, *ser* and *estar* (to facilitate describing in all tenses), and the presentation of the *preterite/imperfect* as a contrast. The goal was not to focus on the grammatical constructions or format of the textbook content, but rather to examine how the five goal areas (the 5 C's) were incorporated throughout these three key points in a beginning Spanish textbook.

Each textbook was explored separately according to the developed criteria in order to formulate the findings. A second review of areas of disagreement was then completed and the results compiled, using percentage of agreement as a measure of reliability (Multon, 2010).

RQ 1: Do Current Textbooks Provide Explicit Instruction and Reference to the Standards?

Among the 15 textbooks reviewed, only three textbooks made no overt reference to the Standards or the five goal areas (D, H, and N), whereas only textbooks J, K and L provided any direct explanation of the Standards or the five goal areas (5C's). All remaining textbooks at minimum mentioned the Standards, and textbooks B, C, and O included icons that connect the textbook sections with the five goal areas (the 5 C's). None of the textbooks, however, provided any direct instruction or detailed information that would help a new instructor or teaching assistant who may be unfamiliar with the Standards to incorporate these ideas into the classroom.

While some newer faculty may receive instruction on the Standards in their graduate work, many current faculty have not. References to resources that support understanding the Standards, sample textbook activities that incorporate the of how the standards apply to a topic or activity, such as the cultural paradigm or the three modes of communication, and front matter that provides more than just statements about the Standards would strengthen the potential influence of the Standards on post-secondary instruction. Given the primary role that the textbook currently plays in many post-secondary foreign language classrooms, the inclusion or exclusion of the Standards in the textbook has the potential for significant influence on a program's curriculum. Additionally, the availability and references to the standards may influence an individual instructor in terms of what they incorporate into their courses.

RQ2: Do Current Textbooks Provide Post-Secondary Teachers With the Tools They Need to Take a Standards-Based Approach to Their Teaching?

To respond to this question, the researcher investigated specifically the incorporation of the five goal areas (5C's) and their visibility in the 15 textbooks used in this study.

Communications: Researchers agreed (100% agreement) that all textbooks provided activities that support *Interpersonal, Interpretive* and *Presentational* communication. However, the textbook often assumed that the activity could stand alone, when in fact instructors may need to add or alter context, add a model or other descriptive information to make the activity meaningful to students, and to incorporate more authentic or natural communication. These findings mirror those of Cubillos (2014) who found that the three modes of communication were present in both established and new college textbooks. Only two textbooks (K and E, same publisher) which were revised in 2017 made reference to the availability of Integrated Performance Assessments in the Ancillary materials.

Cultures. All textbooks (100% agreement) included activities or materials that could be used to introduce and expand on the concept of the cultural paradigm (products, practices and perspectives) paradigm.

However, in NO textbook was the paradigm directly mentioned or presented, nor are any outside references included. Textbooks did include cultural activities but the supporting detail to help further expand the cultural paradigm (3Ps) is noticeably absent.

Textbooks continue to be primarily limited to discrete cultural information, such as descriptions of places, or vignettes about a cultural activity or event. This finding aligns with Cubillos (2014), who found that a very low percentage (.2%) in established post-secondary textbooks and in new post-secondary textbooks (.8%) of materials were authentic materials.

Connections. The majority of the textbooks evaluated (80% agreement) included activities and materials that could provide avenues to connect to other disciplines, but would require application. In other words, the activities in the textbook do not provide the connections in and of themselves; the instructor would need to further develop these activities. For example, there are notable connections between Costa Rica and Ecology, but incorporating that into classroom content would require further development by an instructor.

Comparisons. The representation of the Comparisons goal area was the least clear in the researcher's evaluations of each textbook. The researchers agreed (~67%) that there were potential materials, but that instructors would need to intervene and add to the materials in order to reach this goal area.

Language. The primary way textbooks drew comparisons is through the use of translation and direct English explanations. Textbooks did not incorporate or make reference to activities such as inductive grammatical instruction (versus direct instruction often in English) — which could potentially provide a more language- focused activity to engage students in comparing their native language with the target language studied.

Culture. The majority of the textbooks provided points of comparison between Hispanic culture and students' culture. However, the teacher will need to intervene in order to help the students make this connection. See also Cultural goal area discussion.

Communities. The Communities goal area is very broad, and is unlikely to be achieved by textbook activities alone. The researchers also found (~67% agreement) that textbooks contained possible activities, but an instructor would need to incorporate additional efforts. Activities such as videos and Internet research may engage students in thinking about connecting with communities or going beyond the immediate classroom, but are unlikely to achieve that in and of themselves.

In the textbooks that identified activities, readings, or online research as the Communities goal area, they are typically found at the end of the chapter, isolated from the instruction and activities throughout the chapter. Hence, it might be assumed that the Communities goal area is not the central focus of learning a language. In order for a textbook to effectively present the Communities goal area, it would be necessary for the Communities goal area not to be an isolated activity at the end of a chapter or unit. The Communities goal area could be more effectively incorporated by beginning the chapter or unit with an engaging question in order to guide students' interactions and make their work more meaningful and purposeful. Activities and instruction within a chapter or unit could be built around that big idea (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Additionally, in order to be defined as Communities, the students should be interacting with the target language community by virtual means, real-time interaction, or service-learning projects. Students would be able to answer the *big idea* question by the end of the chapter or unit, by integrating knowledge and skills acquired through their communication in the target-language community (Lentz, 2013).

RQ3: Do Current Post-Secondary Textbooks Contain Activities, Information or References to Integrated Performance Assessments, Inductive Grammatical Instruction (PACE) or Concepts Such as the Cultural Paradigm (Products, Practices and Perspectives)?

Activities such as Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA), inductive grammatical instruction (PACE), and the concept of cultural paradigm (3Ps) benefit from the availability of authentic materials. Many of the textbooks provided activities that could be used to introduce and engage students in these types of instruction, but direct application was not currently present in any of the reviewed textbooks. While it may not be possible to include these materials directly in a textbook, the inclusion of true authentic materials to support Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA), or readings that might support inductive grammatical instruction would assist post-secondary educators in incorporating these activities into their classrooms, despite being required to use the textbook as their primary source of instructional materials.

Conclusions

The 15 textbooks reviewed in this study demonstrate that the Standards are at best superficially present in the majority of today's post-secondary textbooks. Overall, the five goal areas (the 5C's) are present in the 15 textbooks examined, but the textbooks do not provide background information on the Standards themselves and how they would apply to a post-secondary classroom. A textbook that has an overt focus on the Standards, without supporting understanding of the role those Standards play in language instruction, may give the impression that the Standards are the curriculum itself, rather than supporting standards-based instruction. Nonetheless, the Standards have not yet reached in-depth incorporation into the post-secondary textbook. Most textbooks follow a predictable sequence focused on grammatical topics, and do not provide explicit instruction or references to the Standards. In particular, although cultural references and information were included throughout the texts examined in this study, the current cultural paradigm of products, practices and perspectives is conspicuously absent.

Current post-secondary beginning Spanish textbooks provide faculty with resources that they could potentially use to incorporate such items as the IPA or PACE lessons, but explicit instruction, or references to it, is lacking in the textbooks evaluated herein. This may simply be a product of the complex relationship between textbook publishers and post-secondary instructors. In other words, textbook publishers may be responding to a demand for the Standards, but are presuming that the textbook audience is already well-versed in standards-based instruction and implementation. As a result, a post-secondary instructor who wishes to provide more opportunities for real communication, work with authentic materials, provide comparisons in ways other than English/Spanish translation, develop materials for an Integrated Performance Assessment or incorporate any of the other 5 Goal areas will need to take initiative to educate themselves and locate or create those materials.

In summary, while many of the textbooks examined contain some reference to the Standards or the five goal areas (the 5 C's), in-depth implementation in textbooks remains limited and requires that the post-secondary instructor receive training in this important concept. Furthermore, the absence of the standards as an integral part of textbook structure may slow the consistent expansion of the Standards into post-secondary instruction.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

All research has limitations and the present study is no exception. First, this project evaluated only beginning level textbooks, and eliminated ancillary and additional materials as a matter of practicality. Future studies could expand into those ancillary materials. Many of the textbooks included in this project made reference to ancillary materials, and those materials may further support the inclusion of standards-based materials into post-secondary courses. Likewise, this analysis could be carried out using intermediate and upper level course texts, textbooks at those higher levels are much less prevalent, as noted above (Rifkin, 2006).

The continued prevalence of a curriculum that is driven by the coverage of a textbook (Chaffee, 1992;

1992; Shrum & Glisan, 2016; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) in post-secondary language programs presents challenges to further and more in-depth implementation of the standards into the post-secondary classroom. If an instructor is required to cover a specific number of chapters or topics, this limits opportunities to incorporate standards-based activities as noted elsewhere in this article. Nevertheless, the use of the textbook as a manner of ensuring that multi-section courses cover similar material is unlikely to disappear completely, especially when coupled with the realities of the post-secondary teaching environment, demands for research and service, and the complexities of the textbook publishing industry.

As noted by Cubillos (2014), textbook publishers must consider the financial risks of in depth revisions of a long standing textbook. Many of the textbooks in the current analysis have been in existence for several years (see Table 1), and a complete revamping of those textbooks may be financially prohibitive. The inclusion of the mention of IPA materials in two textbooks published in 2017, when the original version of those textbooks was published in 2012 and 2013, demonstrates the amount of time it can take for textbooks to catch up to published research.

It is important to reaffirm here that no matter how current or well-designed a textbook is, it is the role of a good teacher to determine the best way to use those materials and how to best reach students, without an over-reliance on the structure, context, and activities in the text. Teachers at all levels must consider whether the textbook provides an appropriate context, purposeful language, and if a textbook falls short, they must adapt their instruction to expand beyond just following the sequence of the textbook. (Glisan & Donato, 2017).

In sum, there many factors that impact the disparity between the implementation of the Standards at the K-12 level versus the post-secondary level. While the L2 profession has begun to play a more substantial role in the design and conceptualization of textbooks, Cubillos (2014) asserts that those changes may not yet be fully visible neither in the post-secondary curriculum nor in published literature. This project serves as one exploration of this ongoing discussion.

Acknowledgments

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OPI Advanced Low:
Achieving, Maintaining, and Improving Proficiency in a World Language

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Abstract: World language teacher candidates in the United States are well acquainted with initiatives designed to prepare them to facilitate language acquisition for their students upon entering the world language classroom. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) is one such initiative that seeks to guarantee a teacher's successful matriculation from the teacher education program to the world language classroom. The assumption herein is that the ability to achieve a level of Advanced Low on the OPI is congruent with future teacher efficacy and success. Achieving the level of Advanced Low does not guarantee a teacher's use of the target language once in the classroom nor does it ensure a teacher's continued growth in oral proficiency of the target language (TL). This article seeks to provide history about the need for and the design of the OPI. Next, it highlights teacher education programs and candidates as they make preparations for the interview. Additionally, the author shares opinions about how teacher efficacy in the world language classroom is defined. Lastly, it examines study abroad and other strategies as potential forms of professional development aimed at enhancing or improving a teacher's oral proficiency in the TL.

Keywords: OPI, advanced low, world/ foreign language education, teacher efficacy

Introduction

Many world language teachers believe that their like-minded peers, pursuing certification in teacher education programs, are generally *born* out of a love for a language, its people, and the culture in which that language is spoken. Those candidates, upon completion of their programs, hope to share their love of language, people, and culture with their own future students at various stages of that target language study. To that end, and with a focus on language *acquisition* as opposed to one of language *learning* (Ponniah, 2010), world language (WL) education candidates should understand that their ability to speak the target language is what will make them the experts in their classrooms. However, often due to the design of teacher education programs, there may be a lapse in a candidate's own language use or study and his/her entrance into the profession. Assuming a non-native speaker's 4 to 5-year undergraduate degree in the target language is requisite to entrance into a certification or licensure program, that lapse of intentional language usage could be one of a year or more. Knowing that a world language teacher candidate must achieve a level of Advanced Low on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Scale (ACTFL/CAEP, 2013, n.p.) to gain entrance into the profession in most states in the U.S., this article poses the following questions with regard to a teacher's level of oral proficiency: What are the implications of teacher education program design, candidate preparation, and opinions regarding teacher efficacy as related to the use of the target language? Moreover, once teachers achieve the level of Advanced Low, why do they tend to revert to their own L1 for instruction? Lastly, with a teacher's supposed focus on lifelong learning, how is the target language proficiency maintained?

Rationale

Armed with acceptable standardized exam scores, courses on content knowledge, and classes in pedagogy, designed by teacher education preparation programs to guarantee teacher efficacy, qualified world language candidates advance into the language classroom clad in proof of their mettle. One of the most recently debated, top-down initiatives comes in the form of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, an exam meant to document a teacher's facility within the target language, a purported indicator of a teacher's future success. However, much discussion and even anxiety surrounds the OPI. Even after having once attained the generally national requisite level of Advanced Low, many in-service teachers revert to speaking their own first language (L1) for instruction. Moreover, once in the classroom, there is little support or content-specific professional development available to teachers to maintain or enhance their second lan-

guage (L2) proficiency. With the objective of World Language educators being that of modeling the target language while working toward ACTFL's goal of 90% + usage in the classroom (ACTFL, 2012, n.p.), having educators primarily use their L1 to instruct is tantamount to failure in achieving this goal. Nevertheless, educators cannot necessarily be blamed. In order to address these issues highlighted above, clarification about the Oral Proficiency Interview and the need for its use in the profession, will be the focus of this paper.

<div align="center">

Review of the Literature

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History of the Language Proficiency Movement

As undergraduate students working toward certification/licensure to teach in a World Language classroom, many pre-service teachers dread the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (Brooks & Darhower, 2014). This reporting of a candidate's measured facility in both interpretive (the ability to extrapolate information and glean meaning) and interpersonal (the ability to produce language to communicate specific meaning to another individual) language skill is meant to guarantee, to a certain extent, that, once licensed, the candidate will be successful as a world language educator. However, in order to discuss concerns that arise upon completion of the OPI, one needs a brief history of what *proficiency* is and how it is evaluated.

Nearly 80 years ago, during a communications-focused time of international political strife, it became apparent that military officials and other key players in the United States were lacking the global linguistic skills necessary to compete with their world language-literate opponents (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003). Out of this need was born the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP); its job was to prepare trainees with the skills they would need to communicate effectively and at varying levels within differing linguistic situations to ensure global security. At the end of World War II, interest in military language programs waned and was not rekindled again until the Korean War (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003). During that time the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) designed a "six-band scale that rated the oral language proficiency of personnel…the lowest band (or level) as 'no ability' and the highest band as 'native speaking ability'" (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003, p. 499). Over time and with varying degrees of interest in its implementation, several agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Language Institute, and the Peace Corps, came together to adapt the FSI scale to their own needs. To that end, in 1968, the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) was achieved; it is still in use today. Chalhoub-Deville and Fulcher (2003) report that, thanks in large part to the success of the FSI interview procedure, many schools and universities adopted the rating method in the 1970s.

In the 1980s, as needs became more widespread and application of linguistic knowledge more specific, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and ACTFL became involved in revising the ILR scale to meet their own needs (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003). In addition to its work with ETS, ACTFL created its own professional testing agency, the Language Testing International (LTI) to "handle the growing demand for OPI ratings" (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003, p. 501).

As Glisan, Swender, and Surface (2013) attest, the final OPI "was developed as a structured 10- to 30-minute recorded conversation between a certified OPI interviewer and the individual whose proficiency is being assessed" (p. 267). Over the course of the interview, candidates are measured by the following criteria: global tasks, contexts/content areas, accuracy, oral text types.

Today, ratings achieved on the OPI hold high-stakes value and are used to make decisions "that have a considerable effect on individual lives in terms of licensure and certification, employment, promotion, admission, and graduation" (Chalhoub-Deville & Fulcher, 2003, p. 501). Although results of the OPI are often used to make weighty determinations about a candidate's ability to be effective, some argue that it is not defensible to use this scale because it "lacks a theoretical construct and its validity has not been verified through empirical research" (Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, & Foell, 2006, p. 510). Glisan, Swender, and Surface (2013) indicate that "while the majority of candidates are achieving the standard, data reveal large and important differences across languages" (p. 282). They further admit that although the differences are hard to attribute to any one thing without more analysis, the discrepancy "may possibly be attributed to learners' differing language backgrounds, including length of time studying the language and presence or intensity of study abroad experiences" (p. 282).

Advanced Low = Success

Success to some individuals seeking initial teacher certification/licensure seems to be achieving the anticipated rating of Advanced Low, the level most often required by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) of teacher education programs in order to maintain accreditation (Brooks & Darhower, 2014). Other candidates may say that success can be defined as being able to maintain that same rating. Still others would argue, as teachers are thought of as being, and encouraged to be, lifelong learners, that the real aim toward success should be consistent and continued growth of that proficiency over the course of one's career. However, once pre-service teachers enter their own classroom spaces and get on with the business of teaching, their focus is often unknowingly shifted away from their own proficiency toward grammar-based curricula and standardized tests. Thanks to those top-down initiatives, a teacher's focus on his/her own productive use of the language can often wax and wane. Many language teachers did not start out as native speakers of the languages they love; they began their own linguistic journeys in elementary, middle, or even high school, then nurtured it throughout their undergraduate programs. Once these pre-service teachers decided that the classroom is where they want to be, their focus then shifted to how to become a teacher; the assumption is that the language learning they have already done can be paused to focus on educational coursework and pedagogy.

World Language Teacher Education Programs

Even with a renewed focus on language *acquisition*, as opposed to language *learning*, and teacher education programs that are required to qualify candidates at the level of Advanced Low, Kissau (2014) insists that such "a rating… is not easily attained" (p. 529). Fraga-Cañadas (2010) agrees, noting that "a large number of teacher education programs fail to provide language teachers with adequate support to reach this level of proficiency" (p. 395). She further asserts that "most teacher preparation programs do not have a system in place to address nonnative language teachers' need to maintain and improve [their L2]" (p. 396). The lack of support and effective attention to growing or maintaining a teacher's level of proficiency has led to world language teachers in schools who "have neither the communicative competence nor the confidence to use the target language as means of classroom communication" (p. 396).

In looking more closely at teachers' perceptions of their own teacher preparation programs, Fraga-Cañadas (2010) found that although teachers felt that their programs had helped them to differing degrees with methodology, grammar, reading and writing, 48% of the respondents in their research study claimed that their respective programs "had prepared them only to some extent in listening and speaking [in the world language]" (p. 400). Additionally, Fraga-Cañadas (2010) shares that when teachers reflected about how their programs could have been more helpful in preparing them for a proficiency-based classroom, they reported the need for courses in speaking and conversation. Whereas teachers indicated what would have been helpful in growing their proficiency before arriving in the WL classroom, they also shared information pertinent to the proficiency struggle once in the classroom.

Assuming that a teacher preparation program is strong and focused on growing a teacher's proficiency, a candidate leaves that program having achieved the level of Advanced Low. However, assuming that same candidate is now a new hire, focused on working only with students at the beginning levels of the language, it is likely that, over time, the teacher's skill will stagnate and may even drop without some concerted effort to maintain a high level of L2 proficiency. One testimonial from Fraga-Cañada's research asserted the same: "I've been teaching level one and two and have really forgotten stuff like the subjunctive that is not part of my curriculum" (p. 401).

It is clear that world language teachers face challenges, especially after attaining the level of Advanced Low. Assuming that their preparatory program was successful in making candidates ready to achieve the required level, once in the classroom those same, once qualified, individuals may focus on grammar-based approaches, not feel confident in speaking the target language or may only teach the lower levels of that language, with the end result being a drop in L2 proficiency. The real question then must be, if teacher education programs are preparing world language teachers to achieve Advanced Low (to be effective speakers of the target language), yet, teachers feel they are not using that language effectively in the classroom, what can they do to bridge the gap in their own proficiency?

With regard to teacher education programs that aspire to receive national recognition by CAEP, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, and ACTFL, they must "demonstrate that their teacher candidates achieve a minimum passing score on the OPI of Advanced Low for commonly taught languages and Intermediate High for less commonly taught languages" (Kissau, 2014, p. 528). Should candidates not achieve that level on their first attempt, programs are required to offer "planned remediation experiences in order to help those candidates enhance their target language speaking skills" (Kissau, 2014, p. 528).

In highlighting qualifications of a strong teacher education program, Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, and Foell (2006) state that, "Course requirements in a successfully articulated program ideally include the equivalent of a full double major in language and pedagogy" (p. 511). In addition to those thorough course expectations they attest that "foreign [world] language teacher candidates should not be given the option of fulfilling their course requirements by choosing English language pedagogy courses" (p. 511). They further assert that "teacher candidates who shy away from upper division courses taught in the target language because they are 'too hard' are not themselves ready to teach" (p. 511).

Perhaps it is necessary to understand why candidates may shy away from what they perceive to be courses that are *too hard.* Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, and Foell (2006) attest that "attention to learners' language skills decreases after the completion of lower division coursework" and that "the development of linguistic proficiency is seen to be the primary responsibility of the learners themselves" (p. 512). Due to the fact that second language acquisition is "a long and complex process" (p. 512), their solution is clear; candidates must have coursework at higher levels that supports their continued growth in the target language. The goal of teacher education programs should not be forgotten---that of preparing candidates for the classroom. To that end, preparatory programs must also address skills for classroom management.

In an effort to build classroom management strategies and to encourage the use of the target language, candidates could take coursework highlighting appropriate techniques, but taught in the target language. "Such a course would incorporate classroom management to aid foreign language teacher candidates to teach in the target language" (p. 513). The underlying issue with such a logical solution to preparing candidates for the challenge of using the target language, while maintaining the leadership of their classroom, is that different departments may have to collaborate and share the pedagogical responsibility. However, as Tarone (2013) relates, world language teacher candidates take coursework in language departments; their classes cover language/linguistics, literature, and culture and are generally located in a College of Liberal Arts. To learn curriculum design, assessment, and pedagogy (tools of the teaching trade), those same candidates typically take courses in a College of Education. The research suggests that in order for these world language teacher candidates to be fully prepared and confident, these two departments should continuously collaborate.

Teacher Efficacy

To the extent that individuals are unique, so too, is the definition of an effective educator. In addition to being cognizant of the needs of their students, teachers should also be culturally literate, well-traveled, gregarious, engaging, and inspiring. It is these qualities that make a student dig into content and achieve success. If the objective is to have well-qualified and proficient teachers facilitating target language acquisition, what happens when those same classroom leaders cannot speak the language well? They, in all likelihood, "will not use the language as frequently in their own classrooms nor will they use it outside the classroom. Hence, how can we expect them to raise the level of their students above their own level (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010, p. 409)?"

In a study of teacher efficacy, conducted by Kissau and Algozzine (2017), based on edTPA scores, Praxis Subject Assessment, and OPIs, the researchers determined that there are four types of content knowledge required of effective world language teachers. Spurred on by other research that indicates that "candidate performance on measures of content knowledge, like the OPI, is not an accurate predictor of performance on measures of teaching effectiveness" (p. 115), Kissau and Algozzine (2017) further imply that if advanced levels of oral proficiency were all that was required in order to be effective in the classroom, then native speakers of a language should be guaranteed to be successful, yet, many struggle. In ad-

dition, the researchers question why some teachers with less than advanced proficiency achieve success at all in the world language classroom. As results of their research indicate, achieving a level of Advanced Low on the OPI is not enough to be classified as being an effective teacher; possessing other types of content knowledge is required. Kissau and Algozzine outline which qualities effective WL teachers possess: strong language skills, connecting with students, successful lesson planning and classroom management, and strong teacher training and classroom instructional experiences.

Although the qualitative and quantitative data in the previous study is promising, it could also be argued as being narrow in scope. In order to get a broader view of how efficacy is defined, it is important to have a student perspective as well. In a study conducted by Brown (2009), designed to compare perceptions of the *ideals* of teacher efficacy, data indicated that the majority of the students surveyed preferred a grammar-based approach as compared with the more communicative approach of their teachers. Brown further asserts that "the intersection of the two belief systems has ramifications for students' language learning and the effectiveness of instruction" (p. 46). This study not only challenges thoughts on how teachers are deemed effective but also about how students place value on language learning. Findings indicate that due to a student's perception of the importance of language learning, the methods used to deliver the information, and the teacher's intention with regard to teaching, the definition of teacher efficacy can vary (Brown, 2009). Regardless of how *efficacy* is defined, most educators would prefer to see themselves as lifelong learners. To that end, they should want to focus on increasing their proficiency and strive to find ways to do so. Fraga-Cañada purports that "to stop learning about your subject matter is, in effect, to stifle the learning process in both teacher and student" (p. 409).

Maintaining and Improving Proficiency

Study abroad. For many world language teacher candidates, study abroad was a required part of their undergraduate program. Regardless of length of stay, many programs maintain that participating in study abroad, within the context of the target culture, is a means to ensure that the candidates have a sincere interest in language acquisition within a culturally-appropriate context.

According to Allen (2013), in a study of French teachers during a 3-week study abroad program in Lyon, France, "taking teachers out of their habitual milieu and placing them in an environment where they must speak the language they teach may cause the teachers to re-examine their beliefs about developing language proficiency" (p. 135). The results of her study indicate that, in fact, the teachers "self-reported improvement in their language skills and increased cultural knowledge" (p. 136).

More importantly, Allen 's (2013) study outlined five specific beliefs that the French teachers in this research study had with regard to how their proficiency improved while participating in the study abroad program. Through the use of their required daily journal entries, Allen shared the teachers' conclusions. First, they recognized that there are differing levels of the language, in formality, vernacular, and intonation. Second, teachers admitted that achieving proficiency in a second language is time-consuming and can be emotionally weighty. Third, that in order to make *significant* progress, one should surround oneself with the language through cultural immersion, "reading, watching TV, going to the movies, and talking with members of the host family" (p. 141). Fourth, improving proficiency "requires going beyond one's personal set of vocabulary" (p. 142). One teacher noted that "each individual seems to have 'pet phrases' or words that s/he employs very often… It seems that a way to look at the problem of language acquisition is increasing the repertoire of these pet phrases" (p. 142). Fifth, "when learning another language in an immersion setting, it is counterproductive to switch back and forth between French, the L2, and one's native language, the L1" (p. 143). This sentiment was summed up best by a teacher who reported that "each time that I write, read, or think in English, I regress" (p.143).

These same sentiments were echoed in a study conducted by Brooks and Darhower (2014) with students who also participated in study abroad programs. The authors assert that, " although the candidates felt that they had gained a great deal of language experience abroad, one of them stated that the experience would have been richer had they spent less time socializing with other American students and speaking English" (p. 601). Additionally, as Allen (2013) reports, even in a program with a term as short as 3 weeks, teachers' beliefs about their progression toward proficiency while in an immersive study abroad program,

are valid and support the claim that study abroad can positively affect proficiency.

Not only does evidence indicate that study abroad can be beneficial for teacher candidates, researchers are arguing the need to use study abroad for in-service teachers as a way to enhance oral proficiency and overall content knowledge. Jochum, Rawlings, and Tejada (2015) indicated that although "it is important to have minimum proficiency requirements for new foreign [world] language teachers, practicing teachers should also take steps to maintain and/or improve their oral proficiency in order to be effective in the classroom" (p. 121).

Moreover, while discussing school districts' tendencies to adopt professional development structures that can be applied to multiple content areas, Jochum et al. (2015) added that content-specialized trainings "can be especially important for foreign language teachers due to their need to maintain and/or improve their proficiency in their respective languages" (p. 122). While it should go without saying that world language teachers should continually strive to work toward higher levels of proficiency, Jochum et al. insist that "school or district-wide professional development programs are not enough for in-service foreign language teachers" (p. 122). They argue that for many teachers, "especially those who are unable to use their foreign language outside of class in meaningful, native-like interactions, studying abroad is the most appropriate viable option" (p. 122). Not only is travel abroad to affect proficiency seen as crucial, research indicates that the length of stay plays an integral part in candidates' success. Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, and Foell (2006) "recommend studying abroad for an entire academic year, since this length of time has shown to be the most effective for achieving the Advanced-Low rating required to meet the ACTFL Program Standards" (p. 515).

Additional Considerations

World language teachers know all too well that public education functions on a budget. Therefore, it is not likely that most districts would be able to afford to send its teachers for a study abroad summer. What is readily available to most in-service teachers are other schools in which the target languages are taught, particularly public colleges and universities that likely have teachers of the same target languages who could offer support and potential professional development opportunities. When Fraga-Cañada (2010) surveyed teachers about professional development activities they would find valuable, those teachers noted two types: content knowledge based (i.e., immersion opportunities, cultural activities, conversation tables, study abroad, discussions with native speakers, graduate-level work, community involvement) and pedagogical knowledge based (i.e., curricula, implementation of best practices, improvement of instruction through technology, individualized instruction, methods for improving students' speaking skills). Not only did Fraga-Cañada's (2010) research highlight teacher's opinions about professional development opportunities outside of the school that could positively affect a teacher's proficiency, it shed light on ways to improve L2 proficiency within the school building as well.

Similar methods for improvement were suggested by Sullivan (2011) based on a survey she conducted with 734 teacher candidates. In her study, candidates were categorized into two groups: the *successful group* (whose members had achieved the level of Advanced Low on the OPI) and the *unsuccessful group* (those who did not achieve the level). Sullivan found that "nearly three-quarters of the SG [successful group] spoke daily or weekly with native speakers, whereas just over one-half of the UG [unsuccessful group] did" (p. 247). Other notable self-improvement strategies with similar results in Sullivan's research included corresponding with native speakers through texts and/or emails, and reading articles and writing letters in the target language for pleasure. Most significantly, the researcher noted a telling discrepancy in the amount of contact hours with the target language the two different groups recorded, stating, "the SG reported 19.2 hours per week to the UG's 6.2 hours" (p. 247).

Implications for the WL Classroom

Although world language teacher candidates begin their programs focused on achieving a proficiency level of Advanced Low on the OPI in order to be qualified to teach, not all teachers, once in the classroom, feel confident using the target language. Although reasons for this insecurity vary, research data corrobo-

rates the fact that teachers need more support in order to feel competent. Researchers report that teacher preparation programs should offer more coursework that marries content knowledge, toward oral proficiency, and pedagogy in an effort to better equip teachers for life in a real language-focused classroom (as prescribed by ACTFL). In addition, once a high proficiency level has been achieved in the L2, teachers should try to, at least, maintain that level and, ideally, improve it.

Not all teacher preparation programs are created equal, however, and with candidates having to divide their time between matriculating language content knowledge courses and classes in pedagogy, they can lose sight of the quest to achieve and maintain a high level of their own L2 oral proficiency. The challenge herein requires that teachers push themselves to seek opportunities to practice their target language in contexts that are as close to immersion-like as possible.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Though there may be numerous ways in which to support a world language teacher in pedagogy, there is inconsistency regarding what are considered to be viable and effective options for continued professional growth within the context of content area knowledge and L2 proficiency. The research indicates that the most effective methods to enhance and maintain a teacher's oral proficiency are immersive, culturally relevant, and consistent. Ideally, school districts should consider offering professional development focused on content-specific sessions that give teachers the opportunity to learn from and with each other. Moreover, as teacher preparation programs have a major role in making candidates ready for the classroom, they should continue supporting these candidates once their licensure qualifications have been completed. In an effort to draw more potential teacher education candidates into quality preparatory programs, and thereby work to reverse a national teacher shortage, candidates and in-service teachers should work together to share new and best practices, respectively. Finally, the onus falls on each individual in-service teacher to decide how s/he defines success in order to determine the next steps in the quest for heightened L2 proficiency.

This article was written with the assumption that teachers want to improve their interpretive and interpersonal L2 skills and are in search of ways to accomplish this goal. However, the reality is that each individual teacher has his/her own motivations for teaching a world language and his/her own accompanying talents in so doing. More research (both quantitative and qualitative) needs to be conducted examining teachers' personal views about the importance of speaking and using the target language in the classroom and the most effective and efficient vehicles to accomplish these goals.

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Best Practices in Writing Instruction with Chinese-Language Undergraduate Learners

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Abstract: *This paper is a beginning metacognitive review of the literature regarding composition instruction strategies for Chinese-speaking undergraduate students, based on the writer's experience as a basic writing skills instructor for a small group of language learners at the university level. Particular attention is given first to challenges, and then to strategies outlined that specifically address the language needs of this group of students. Tomlinson's (2008) guidelines for effective language instruction serve as a framework for elaborating on the strategies shared throughout the article. Strategies relate to both the context for learning, as well as the nature of second-language writing curriculum.*

Keywords: writing skills, composition, undergraduate, EL instruction, strategies

Introduction

The impetus for this review of the professional literature was the writer's opportunity to serve as an instructor for an undergraduate basic writing skills class for students from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, including two students who spoke Mandarin as their primary language. Although there were other courses in his load, and the class presented many hurdles, this group of second language learners quickly became one of this writer's favorite classroom experiences and served as a starting point for an investigation into strategies that had the greatest potential for teaching English composition to students who speak Mandarin.

Taking on the challenge of teaching writing to a group of learners from a wide variety of backgrounds led to a desire to research techniques and approaches that would create effective instructional opportunities, and these opportunities were explored further in an online advanced language course with graduate and undergraduate peers. That challenge has led to the formation of this paper as a crystallization of several ideas gathered throughout a semester of instruction.

In terms of articulating a general approach, Tomlinson (2008) suggested a series of guidelines when working with second-language learners in relation to composition instruction. These guidelines served as a framework of instruction for this writer's instruction and interaction with Chinese-speakers, as well as students from South Korea, Central America, and India. Tomlinson (2008) indicated that effective language instruction involves a learning experience that occurs in context and is "comprehensible," a need for the learner to be "motivated, relaxed, positive, and engaged," "salient, meaningful" features of content that are "frequently encountered," and the achievement of a "deep and multi-dimensional processing of the language" by the learner (p. 4).

With these guidelines in mind, this paper will explore the available literature for resources and reflections on what is available for teaching writing to Chinese-language speakers at the undergraduate level, drawing on Tomlinson's (2008) suggestions as an organizational framework. Before attending to specific strategies, a series of challenges particular to Chinese-speakers will be offered in the next section.

Focus of the Paper

While this writer worked with a wider range of English Second-Language Learners (ESLs), the focus of this paper will center on one particular group of students: Chinese-speakers, defined as undergraduate students who speak Chinese as their native language, or L1, and enrolled in a basic English writing skills class to develop their composition abilities. This dichotomy indicates that English, for these students, is a second language, or L2. Some strategies and ideas contained within this paper may also have utility for

speakers from other language groups, as well.

Significance of the Topic

A number of challenges face ESL learners and in, this case (Ai, 2016; Fraser, 2007; Hueng & Cowden, 2016; Li & Suen, 2015). Educators who wish to work in ESL environments have a unique opportunity to draw on a variety of strategies to help students move from one language and context to another, while students maintain their L1 skills. Challenges will be outlined in the following section as part of the review of the literature, and then a series of strategies will be shared to help educators meet the needs of Chinese-speakers. These strategies are intended for one particular linguistic population, but might have implications for other language groups, as well. Furthermore, because of this writer's experience, many of these strategies will be explored within the context of working with students at the college level, particularly at the undergraduate level.

Review of the Literature

Specific Challenges

Effective writing is an essential element of English-language instruction. In fact, the English Language Proficiency Standards (2016) outline a wide variety of occasions where proficiency in writing is essential for second-language learners, and multiple writing modes are addressed throughout the standards. Some standards relate to grammatical concepts, while others deal with rhetorical situations.

Moreover, the demands of curriculum include many rhetorical situations, and require students to engage in written and oral communication. Lin (2015) identified several areas of writing instruction that provide challenges for second-language learners in general. These areas included diction, fluency, working with common expressions, as well as feelings of anxiety (Lin, 2015). Much of language instruction can be contained with these concepts, and strategies are needed to help mitigate these difficulties.

Other challenges for Chinese language-learners that have been identified include struggles with reading rate (Fraser, 2007) and "understanding academic lectures, taking notes, writing assignments, and giving presentations" (Hueng & Cowden, 2016, p. 218). These skills are endemic to a university environment, and it seems that students need purposeful strategies when navigating the world of higher education. Many of these challenges have been observed in this writer's classroom, with students sometimes requesting that lectures be audiotaped for later review, and some students taking photographs during lessons to preserve content for study. Adding even more to these difficulties, it has been noted that Chinese-speakers work through a logographic writing system (Li & Suen, 2015). This writing system presents its own challenges in searching for cognates between English and other languages. Thoms et al. (2017) mentioned that the Chinese language is complex, including multiple features.

Expanding on differences between Chinese and English, Wang (2014) noted, "Different nations have their own specific thinking pattern due to the differences from the perspective of history, geography, religion, customs and cultural background" (p. 726). This notion of patterns hints at a more global linguistic transference. There are also specific grammatical features that occur differently between English and Chinese. Wang (2014) explored the nature of adverbial clauses as one particular example of differences, and highlighted the difficulties that can sometimes be presented in their arrangement for Chinese-speakers learning English. For example, a Chinese student might be more likely to place an adverb before the word modified (e.g., "I speak fluently English"), while English speakers would likely move the adverb after the direct object.

Huang (2006) noted a variety of challenges identified by Chinese-speakers. These difficulties particularly included grammar and vocabulary. Huang (2006) went on to report less confidence among undergraduate Chinese-speakers in relationship to writing when compared to Chinese-speaking graduate students. Ai (2016) identified issues of maintaining selfhood and moving from "imitator" to "playful creator" p. 286) when gaining English second language proficiency. The researcher reported that with so much challenge in mind, having some effective strategies for mitigating language instruction would be helpful.

In the next section, this paper will outline salient strategies culled from a variety of sources to form a growing metacognitive review of the literature.

Best Practices in Writing Instruction

Language and context.　When it comes to language learning, research has indicated a question of context for the language practice, as well as a consideration of the environmental practices happening simultaneously with language study (Angelova & Zhao, 2016; Li & Brand, 2009; Thoms et al. 2017). Language learning, according to Tomlinson (2008), relies on context as an initial guiding force. Tubbs (2016) echoed this concern with attending to the context for language instruction, both in terms of phonemics and in terms of graphemes. With this guideline in mind, examples have been drawn which relate particularly to the wider social context in which students find language opportunities.

As Angelova and Zhao (2016) noted, "The learning of a foreign language cannot be isolated from culture learning" (p. 169). Thoms et al. (2017) described the challenges particular to the Chinese language system, and conducted a qualitative research project which examined the comments Chinese-speakers made when reading in digital contexts. Thoms et al. (2017) called for attention to digital reading practices as students explore content in classrooms, in line with the digital writing practices that exist in society. Given the ubiquity of these digital practices, it seems that students can benefit from using technology as a starting place for practicing written language in a real-world format.

In a similar digital vein, Angelova and Zhao (2016) described an online tutoring system, which they termed "computer-mediated communication," or CMC (p. 167). This approach emphasized the importance of a tutoring approach, whether tutoring is completed in a face-to-face interaction or accessed through a digital platform. Communication practices also travel beyond the digital to specific instances in culture and society. To that end, Angelova and Zhao (2016) suggested that maintaining an approach with cultural awareness means that teachers will "incorporate culture teaching," including the "need to point out the culturally appropriate way to use language in specific situations" (p. 170).

In terms of a literacy environment, Li and Brand (2009) advocated for the use of music in working with Chinese-speakers learning English.   This finding from the professional literature aligns with Tomlinson's (2008) second general guideline, which ties closely to the affective domain of the learner. This use of music resulted in a higher rate of achievement in terms of both "listening comprehension" and "grammar and stress patterns" (p. 78). Focusing on particular linguistic strategies, Li and Suen (2015) suggested that developing phonological awareness could serve as a starting point in writing instruction, working between languages, and emphasized teacher-modeled thinking aloud during instruction.

Moving from one language to the next.　Sometimes the movement from one culture or language to another involves questions of making meaningful connections between both experiences, and making sense of the transitions that learners face in this exchange. Ai (2016) mentioned the creation of a "third space" (p. 289) as being helpful in his own migration from Chinese-speaker to English-speaker and called for a conversation among or between languages as part of the learning process. This *third space* could serve as a bridge between languages, as well as a place where issues of identity could be explored, moving beyond what Ai (2016) called "traditional methods of English teaching" (p. 289). In order to make sense of personal learning experience, moving from Chinese-speaker to English-speaker, Ai (2016) utilized an auto-ethnographic approach. This approach afforded this researcher the opportunity to explore his own identity in relationship to language learning.

What was especially striking about Ai's (2016) observations was that this was a voice from the research of a language learner who was moving from Chinese to English. Ai (2016) expressed a desire to maintain identity, even while learning how another language works and becoming proficient as a writer and speaker in academic communities. This need for a positive environment for identity consideration aligns with Tomlinson's (2008) recommendations, as well as with Krashen's (1981) discussion of the "Affective filter hypothesis," which calls for "low anxiety," as well as motivation and self-confidence (p. 56). In practical terms, teachers of composition at the college level might use writing as a means of exploring cultural awareness and identity, providing a place where students can explore their own process and

transformation in a comfortable and inviting way.

Morawski (2017) expanded on this concept of a third space as a "thoughtful and place-based exploration" of the way students learn (p. 556). The researcher went on to explain, "Lives of individuals are always in flux, moving back and forth along a socio-cultural spectrum affected by numerous factors such as neighborhood, self-confidence, parental involvement, learning style, perceived sibling position, gender, race, and much more" (p. 557). Given the flux in which learners find themselves, Morawski (2017) suggested that an approach to language learning can include the student's voice. This approach also asks educators "to recognize and embrace the diverse vehicles of student expression and representations" Morawski, 2017, p. 563) given the many abilities and experiences students arrive with in classrooms Third space, under this consideration, relates to the placement of value on the individual student's voice and experience as a learner, and whose language abilities are to be seen as resources and not challenges to be flattened out with the blunt edge of a curricular tool. What is more, students can explore their voices in their own self-created compositions.

As reported at the beginning of this paper, the L1 of any group of ESL learners can be maintained while acquiring a second language. Allington and Cunningham (2007) emphasized that the first language or home language of ESL students should not be sidelined or devalued in the interest of the second language. Rather, one language can serve as a bridge and support for the next language.

A comprehensive curriculum. In some cases, it may be that students are not exposed to the full range of writing situations that are often expected at the college level. Such gaps in writing begin early. Zhao and Hirvela (2015) pointed out that Chinese-speaking students often are not exposed to writing instruction in elementary school, with instruction usually focusing on verbal aspects of the English language, including vocabulary.

When students are asked to write essay responses, they tend to be "descriptive" or "narrative" tasks based on images or more simplistic and isolated tasks, rather than connecting to more complex writing tasks based on outside texts (Zhao & Hirvela, 2015, p. 225). In order to understand this difficulty, Zhao and Hirvela (2015) completed a qualitative study that focused on two participants for data collection. The two participants were exposed to synthesis writing and using sources throughout their writing course. At the onset, both undergraduate students indicated that they had not encountered instruction dealing with these two elements of writing.

In the final analysis, one of the students struggled more than the other, given the newness of the task. A comparison was also made between rhetorical tasks in Chinese writing instruction and tasks in English writing instruction. The use of sources was one area of difference, as indicated by one of the participants.

Zhao and Hirvela (2015) noted that, in Chinese rhetorical situations, the use of a highly-quoted source carries weight on its own, while in English composition citations are more frequently employed regardless of the source. This issue of trustworthiness and reliability has special implications when considering how English speakers position concepts of citations and citational authority. Following from this, attention should be given to the particular rhetorical situation required by instruction, and specifics about reliability among sources might be shared as part of instruction. Li and Wharton (2012) pointed to the variety of "writing in different disciplines varies systematically along a range of macro and micro dimensions of text" as "well established" (p. 345). Composition instructors might take this as an indication that situation and audience can play a powerful role in helping Chinese-speaking students draft papers that meet the expectations of English-speaking curriculum. Given this established understanding, it seems reasonable that educators critically approach the demands of writing approaches and that context then leads to clearly designed instruction.

The sounds encountered in language interact with the graphemic representations of words. Tubbs (2016) applied writing to the process of learning phonemes, with an instructional procedure that included partner feedback and brainstorming words together. Once students brainstormed words, they were encour-

aged to practice writing "short dialogues" (Tubbs, 2016, p. 21). Feedback was mentioned as a feature of instruction that occurs, in this case, at the end of the lesson. Tubbs (2016) went on to note that instructional procedures can be used that greatly emphasize grammar and vocabulary. Dialogic exchanges might provide opportunities for students to practice their newly-acquired and growing language skills, and might have particular applications to the point-counterpoint nature of academic argumentative writing.

Implications for the ESL/EFL Classroom

The challenges and strategies presented in this paper have a number of implications for the ESL/EFL classroom. Of primary note here is the consideration of context for Chinese-speakers. For example, digital environments can serve as one relevant context for language interaction (Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017). Moving beyond purely digital encounters, face-to-face or face-to-digital work with English-speaking tutors can serve as another valuable context for learners (Angelova & Zhao, 2016). In this writer's experience, a roundtable discussion of the differences between English and Mandarin has served as a space for creating a positive community of learning, as well as for exchanging information and instruction. This exchange has created what is hoped to be a space where students can consider their own heritage and identities and move into experiences with both a new language and new contexts.

Educators might also consider the demands of their curriculum when examining their teaching practices with writing (Zhao and Hirvela, 2015). As noted earlier, ESL learners are required to achieve proficiency in writing in a variety of ways. These approaches can be narrative based, or extend to other modes of writing, including explanatory, analytic, or persuasive texts (Oshima & Hogue, 2017). A curriculum which does not address this variety of rhetorical situations has the potential to deny students the opportunity to practice and develop valuable composition skills. Moreover, a curriculum that explicitly focuses on only one mode of writing (e.g., narrative), fails to meet the rigorous variety of rhetorical demands that all students, including those who speak Chinese, can expect that face in their undergraduate work.

While the Chinese language might have significant differences from English, educators can still work to find a space for students to openly explore their language and how it interacts with other languages. Tubbs (2016) pointed out the importance of context for Chinese-speaking students, and opportunities for students to begin writing with dialogues to explore phonemes and graphemes. The first language, or home language, can serve as a support rather than a replacement for the second language for learners from all linguistic backgrounds. Approaching English language instruction with this idea in mind might lead to a reconsideration of standards, curriculum, and the ways in which systems and schools plan and implement instruction for second-language learners. At the very least, at the university level and beyond, valuing and utilizing the first language of students might serve as a transformative element for the instructors of composition themselves.

Particular attention can also be given to the kinds of writing that students are expected to produce in relationship to specific courses. Once these writing demands have been identified, educators can then evaluate curriculum to ensure that the tools exist for helping students to move from one level of achievement to the next and become expert speakers and writers. At the same time, educators can work to create positive environments where positive engagement can occur. Instruction in these positive environments should reflect the context of what students are expected to learn and do as a result of the course.

Drawing from Zhao and Hirvela's (2015) notes on two particular students, it seems evident that learners will also be working at a variety of levels, even within the same classroom. This calls for an observant teacher with a variety of strategies and resources at their disposal. Educators can focus attention on helping students at different levels of achievement, sometimes drawing on narrative or dialogue-based writing for early phonemic awareness, and proceeding to more difficult writing tasks.

Given the importance of maintaining identity for language speakers, this paper has indicated a continuing recommendation for considering the ways in which systems treat second languages in English instruction. This move is a philosophical one in which educators can value all language, and this value can be expressed in policy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Working with students moving from language to language can be challenging, and writing can be a challenge in itself. From the experience of this writer, the challenge of teaching students to move back and forth between one language and another can be accomplished in positive ways. Writing practices can be simple or complex, and addressing composition needs requires attention to a number of factors, including wider concerns of thought patterns and more specific concerns of particular grammatical or alphabetic features.

Finally, educators can draw on a variety of means, including music and digital tools, for creative approaches to instruction which create positive engagement experiences and allow students to access language with freedom and comfort. In this way, educators can take full advantage of the tools they can find in the world around them and construct classroom environments where all students are valued, in spite of where they are on a language learning continuum.

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Incorporating Pop Culture in Formal and Informal Learning Environments for L2 Students

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Abstract: Second language (L2) learners may lack the necessary cultural literacy to communicate effectively with native speakers in both formal and informal environments. L2 learners need to be prepared to communicate in a wide range of situations which require varying degrees of cultural knowledge. To address these concerns, instructors can integrate pop culture into the curriculum for educational purposes. By incorporating pop culture into formal instruction through structured classroom discussions, thematic units, and activities designed to increase students' media literacy, teachers can increase students' knowledge of the L2 culture. Teachers can also promote the development of students' cultural literacy through informal environments such as book clubs or English Corners. By utilizing both informal and formal learning strategies, L2 students can increase their L2 cultural schemata and become better prepared to participate in a range of activities in and out of the language classroom.

Keywords: cultural literacy, L2 instruction, EFL

Introduction

A language instructor's "job is not to just teach language, but also to teach culture" (Rucynski, 2011, p. 8). Research findings have revealed the profound role of culture within the classroom to help all students thrive intellectually. When instructors integrate culturally relevant materials into classroom instruction, it results in promoting understanding, "breaking down stereotypes, fostering livelier and better informed class discussions, and preparing students to succeed in an increasingly diverse society" (Wells, 2014, p. 6). When introducing pop culture into the language classroom, additional educational benefits emerge as students cultivate both cultural and media literacy as well as autonomous learning. The aim of this paper is to analyze the exiting published literature on the integration of pop culture into the second language classroom and provide suggestions on how to apply it in practice as an effective pedagogical tool to best motivate students.

Significance of the Topic

Regardless of native language background, second language (L2) students need to be prepared to participate in a variety of classroom discussions, readings, and writing activities which require a varying degree of knowledge of the target language's current culture (Duff, 2001). However, L2 students, and in particular, those studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners may lack the necessary cultural schemata to interpret texts or respond in spontaneous discussions and "consequently [may] be denied access to the narratives and social networks of their local peers and teachers at school, at university, and in the workplace" (Duff, 2004, p. 237). Mainstreamed ELLs often express a "perceived lack of integration within the larger English-speaking community at school" and view their lack of conversational language ability as a greater obstacle than their lack of academic abilities or cognitive skills (Duff, 2001, p. 10). In order to have the ability to communicate effectively with native speakers, students must possess a level of cultural literacy (Rucynski, 2011) and linguistic proficiency.

Consequently, "Domain 2" of the standards presented by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL), advocates for cultural awareness and development (2002, para. 4-6). Standards 2.a and 2.b call for instructors to "know, understand, and use the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to the nature and role of culture and cultural groups to construct learning environments

that supports ESOL students'." (TESOL, 2002, para. 4). In addition, instructors should also acknowledge how cultural groups and cultural identities may affect language acquisition (TESOL, 2002, para. 6). Thus, it is important for teachers to be knowledgeable of methods and strategies to implement to address the needs of a diverse student population and language levels.

While it can be hard to find common ground in diverse language classrooms, teachers must "confront and honor the differences" (Greene, 1997, p. 9) in experiences between those of the L1 (first or native language) and L2 (i.e., second language). Thus, research suggests that the role of the teacher is to showcase an "acceptance of norms" (Greene, 1997, p. 9) for the community that is forming within the classroom and the school environment (Greene, 1997). While L2 teachers are often accused of imposing the standard, western culture upon ESL students, it is possible to create an open dialogue between the two cultures (i.e., L1 and L2). Even though providing shared cultural references becomes more difficult, teachers can formulate activating questions to help make these cultural allusions "deeper, richer, [and] more expansive" (Greene, 1997, p. 10). In this way, the knowledge can emerge through "dialectical relationships" as discussions arise not from just one source authority, but as the "product of dialogue between and among individuals" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 473).

In addition to shared cultural references, pop culture can be incorporated into curricula as a rich, powerful education tool for language learners (Duff, 2002). When carefully and systematically incorporated into instructional units, pop culture can invigorate class instruction by making the curriculum more interesting, engaging, and relevant to English language learners' (ELLs' or ELs') lives. These references to pop culture, in formal or informal learning environments, can contribute to the co-construction of knowledge, social identities, participation, patterns, self-reflexive practices, and subsequently result in prolonged discussions with peers (Duff, 2002; Wright & Sandlin, 2009).

While learning takes place as students engage with products of pop culture (i.e., news/magazine articles, authentic video clips, radio broadcasts), it should be noted that references to the dominant culture can be intriguing but also confusing for some language learners (Wright & Sandlin, 2009). There is a need to unpack the authentic materials used to ensure that teachers (and students) understand the linguistic aspects, new systemic data, and the obstacles that may be present for some students (Alptekin, 1993; Duff, 2002). Additional resources and discussions should be given for students to draw meaning from such as newspapers, entertainment programs, magazines, radio stations, or peer discussion (Duff, 2002). When implemented with supplementary discussions and materials connect to the overarching unit, "pop culture can function as a facilitator of, and catalyst for, self-directed learning can bring about learning that is more powerful, lasting, and lifelong" (Wright & Sandlin, 2009, p. 135).

Review of the Literature

What is Pop Culture?

Merriam-Webster (2017) describes culture as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social groups or the characteristic features of everyday existences (such as diversions or way of life) shared by people in a place or time" (p. 286). Alptekin (1993) expands on this definition by referring to culture as schematic knowledge, or knowledge that is socially acquired to fit in. Pop culture can be further explained as "music, TV, cinema, books, etc. that are popular and enjoyed by ordinary people, rather than experts or very educated people" (Cambridge, 2017, p. 362). Further, pop culture is a vital aspect of learners' lives, thus it may influence their interactions, discussions, understanding of the world (Duff, 2002) and can impact identity-construction (Wright & Sandlin, 2009). Notable pop culture artifacts from the past decade would be the *Harry Potter Saga, Britney Spears*, in addition to common brands such as *McDonald's* or *Lily Pulitzer*. The majority of L1 English speakers will be aware of such artifacts and freely reference aspects in conversations that would be obscure or difficult to grasp for an individual without the correlating culture schemata.

In the field of education, pop culture expresses itself in the form of a learners' cultural literacy. Cultural literacy refers to the shared knowledge learners need "to be able to communicate effectively with everyone else" (Runycski, 2001, p. 7). In order to have the ability to communicate effectively with native speakers, L2 students must possess a certain level of cultural literacy to do so. With this in mind, instruc-

tors must careful design objectives, lessons, activities and units to continuously integrate elements of pop culture to facilitate increased cultural awareness and literacy for L2 students.

English Corners as a Way of Implementing Pop Culture into the EFL Classroom.

Over the past decades, language learning strategies have gained substantial attention among language researchers and teachers due to the growing importance of English proficiency (Sauer,2012). Studies have backed the argument that learning opportunities outside the classroom when supplemented alongside classroom learning lead to more successful language learners (Sauer, 2012). After all, sufficient access to an authentic language environment is essential for a learners' language acquisition (Krashen, 2003). However, EFLs often find it difficult to find opportunities for authentic language input and output due to the lack of English language environments (Sauer, 2012) in their home countries. Despite the lack of opportunities, there is evidence that suggests that establishing social gatherings of L2 learners for the purpose of acquiring language proficiency in English has significant advantages (Sauer, 2012). Hymes (1972), known for his communicative functional theory, and Brown (1994) agree that language learning needs to be obtained through a process of communication when learners use authentic language in meaningful ways in social context.

Traditional classroom methods of language instruction, which are based on direct instruction, or output, may result in further language development or result in only modest improvements (Krashen 2003). English Corners aim to offer students the opportunity to improve speaking ability through consistent use and communication that stimulate the learner's interests in informal environments (Zhang, 2008). It is acknowledged that both the language input and output found in English Corners, or informal gatherings of students to practice English, can be emphasized to improve ELs' language ability and motivation (Fangfang, 2002). This improved motivation encourages L2 learners to frequently use new and previously learned language structures to advance language proficiency thus avoiding the fossilization of language (Fangfang, 2002). This increased motivation can encourage learners to engage in topics related to pop culture or media that do not arise in more formal environments.

A major challenge of language acquisition is that the student's capacity for autonomous learning is not realized nor is it enriched through the traditional classroom pedagogical process (Gao, 2009). In most universities, classroom experiences often halt the development of students' autonomous learning capacities and negatively impact their language learning process (Gao, 2009). In these situations, teaching practices may be constrained by official curriculum, textbooks, and required or standardized objectives. These constraints may shift the classroom focus to the outcomes of standardized tests rather than on cultivating student's communicative development. Krashen's *affective filter hypothesis* proposed that a "learner's feelings or attitude [can act as] an adjustable filter that freely passes, impedes or blocks input necessary to acquisition" (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p.183). Learners that possess a low affective filter may display high motivation, self-confidence, and low levels of anxiety; while learners that possess a high affective filter may display low motivation, low self-esteem and/or a higher level of anxiety. Negative learning experiences such as anxiety or disinterest can directly affect learners' affective filters, making language acquisition more difficult (Yang, 2014). Under the traditional teaching methods in most schools, ELLs' affective filters are easily increased, creating a state of anxiety and fear which leaves little room for comprehensible language input (Yang, 2014). However, simply providing adequate opportunities for students to read or speak in relaxed environments is not enough. It is crucial to provide engaging and meaningful materials in order to get students to care about what they are learning (Heyden 2001). English Corners provide the opportunity for increased student autonomy by allowing learners to select and direct their own learning. Along the same lines, this type of informal learning environment supplies ELLs with materials that are more engaging and relevant as the learners are able to select content that is meaningful to them and their peers.

Second language acquisition has been shown to be inseparable from the process of socialization and mutual belonging with other language learners (Gao, 2009). English Corners can provide the opportunity needed for learners to acquire an L2 through social contexts (5 Things, 2007) in a relaxed environment in contrast to the structured classroom and opportunity to select topics or materials. This type of informal

environment recognizes learners' capacity for "organizing and sustaining their own language learning efforts through developing their own communities or social groups" (Gao, 2009, p. 65). Activities, such as English Corners, can facilitate students' ability to utilize autonomous learning inside and outside the classroom (Krashen, 1976). Increasing autonomous learning in the language selection process effectively stimulates learners' interests especially when elements such as music, movies, or popular figures are incorporated (Chen, 2009). Consequently, increased student interest has been correlated to improvements in a learner's communication ability and cultural quality (Chen, 2009).

Implications for the ESL/EFL Classroom

Formal Environments

Formal learning environments provide students with information in concrete and accessible ways as the teacher is able to design activities, facilitate discussions, and supply support. Classroom curriculum spans a wide array of themes and topics, lending itself to numerous opportunities for the inclusion of supplemental materials related to pop culture or cultural events. In order to incorporate pop culture into formal environments, teachers can devote time to 1) developing students' media literacy, 2) incorporating frequent in-class discussions on pop culture connected to the unit, 3) designing thematic units around pop culture themes to "aid understanding [of] deeper issues about American culture" (Rucynski, 2001, p. 15) and 4) addressing pop culture references as they naturally arise in classroom discussions.

Media literacy. In order to enhance students' media literacy, instructors can create and give surveys to their L2 students that are related to media such as music, movies, or television shows. Survey questions could include: Who is your favorite actor/singer? What magazines do you read? What TV shows do you watch? The instructor could then compile the information and share with the class or "students could discuss results in heterogeneous groups to identify items they were most/least familiar with" (Duff, 2002, p. 486). The most or least common answers could be singled out for further analysis or discussion which could lead into cross-cultural discussions based on the most commonly-selected topics.

Classroom discussion. In the classroom, learners enjoy hearing about movies, TV shows, and major events; however, learner participation in open discussions requires a familiarity with pop culture of the L2, such as the L2 names of people, places, and events in addition to sufficient content to introduce a topic and process information (Duff, 2002, 2004). ELLs with limited L2 listening comprehension may only understand a finite number of key words and may need to research the information later on. While L1 peers can provide some latent scaffolding (Duff, 2002), L2 students need more general pop culture literacy. "More repetition, reformulation, and expansion of important student contributions for others in class might expand bilateral student involvement and increase mutual understanding" (Duff, 2001. p. 121). For example, discussions can be structured towards ELLs by having the instructor write topics on the board as they arise with key names, vocabulary, and a note about it for students to refer back to. This can help to engage students and provide additional cultural schemata and linguistic skills to interpret the references to pop culture (Duff, 2004). Additionally, to encourage frequent discussions of culture related to students' experiences, instructors can have students suggest topics at the beginning of discussion by submitting slips of paper with proposed topics or keywords students would like to discuss or have explained.

Thematic teaching. In thematic-based teaching, the instructor's primary goal is the content knowledge learners will attain, while language and linguistic aspects take a secondary role during instruction. Richards and Rogers (2007) maintain that, "people learn a second language most successfully when the information they are acquiring is perceived as interesting, useful, and leading to a desired goal" (p. 209). Thematic units are a successful way to achieve such results as they encourage meaningful, productive, and authentic language learning experiences in a context that learners find useful and relevant to their lives. By extension, pop culture can provide an excellent tool for use in thematic teaching as it is can be tailored to the learner population and contributes to the "co-construction of knowledge, social/cultural identities, and participation patterns" (Duff, 2004, p. 261). By devoting more time to developing instruction that effectively integrates pop culture, instructors can improve students' media literacy in innovative ways that encourage ELLs to actively engage in activities and discussions connected to cultural content.

The first step to a successful thematic unit is to select a topic of interest that is both prominent in

the L2 culture and relevant to students. In addition to being of interest to students, the topic chosen should also be of interest to the teacher. If the topic is of deep interest to the instructor, then it is likely that passion will be transferred to the student audience as they are presented with new cultural information.

Following the selection of a culturally relevant topic, the instructor should take time to become familiar with the subject. Even if the teacher does not have much additional time to prepare the thematic unit, students are likely to appreciate the effort as long as they are fun and interactive as well as informative. During the preparation for the thematic unit, instructors can look towards prominent movies, television (TV) shows, or other media such as radio broadcasts or viral videos. Clips from movies or TV shows can be utilized throughout the unit as excellent tools for thematic teaching and can help students understand deeper issues about the L2 culture (Rucynski, 2001).

Considering that content is the primary objective, pop cultural references should be used subsequently with pre-viewing activities or pre-teaching of vocabulary to enhance learners' foundation of the language and enhance the cultural learning experience. If there is a mix of language proficiencies, teachers should consider how to make materials more accessible to students (i.e., video clips could be slowed down, subtitles could be provided L1 and L2, close-reading/listening transcripts created, or multiple viewings). In addition, by incorporating communicative teaching procedures (i.e., Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw readings, collaborative dialogues, debates, etc.), teachers can give students opportunities to practice what they have learned while sharing experiences with peers. These thematic techniques are especially useful in diverse classrooms as it can be used to encourage cross-cultural communications. The following examples show these theories in practice as they incorporate pop culture from TV Shows as well as famous musicians and songs.

Rucynski (2001) presents sample pop culture excerpts in a unit on Health and Lifestyle that addresses America's fast food and obesity epidemic. Rucynski (2001) connects this thematic theme with two clips (i.e. *Lisa the Vegetarian* and *King-Size Homer*) from the popular American animated sitcom *The Simpsons* which has aired since the 1980s. By including two separate experts, he can introduce contrasting views of how the health issue is addressed in American society. In doing so, he not only expands on the content of the unit, but introduces students to an American cultural TV phenomenon. To extend on the cultural significance of the lesson, additional aspects of the local culture could be discussed. For example, popular restaurants (i.e. McDonald's, Taco Bell, Burger King) or foods (i.e. McRib, tacos, chicken nuggets) could be covered with students in relation to the obesity epidemic. Finally, learners could be asked to expanded their experiences with these places or share information about the popular foods, restaurants, or dietary problems within their L1 culture.

Similarly, when designing a spiral thematic unit pop culture can easily be integrated into instruction. For instances, on a unit related to Rock music, Robinson (2011) includes a sampling of popular rock songs spanning several decades from 1950 to 2010 (i.e. Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, Guns and Roses, Kings of Leon, etc.). In a sample lesson provided on the founding of *rock 'n roll,* students are introduced to the founders of rock music along with sound bits of their most noteworthy songs. This introduces students to several cultural elements such as the names of famous musicians and samplings of famous songs from the genre that are common knowledge among most native speakers. To amplifying students' acquisition of cultural literacy, learners are then provided a short biography of one of the musicians to reconstruct and share with the class. Not only does this provide students with additional cultural information, but it encourages students to actively engage with the cultural material as well as participate in collaborative tasks. Moreover, when used in coordinating with engaging materials, these types of collaborative task give students additional opportunities in class to apply their new cultural schemata and practice the new language in a structured environment. In conclusion, the wide availability of pop cultural material provides instructors with an inclusive range of topics and themes to introduce into the classroom. In turn, these materials and concepts can complement the required curriculum and enhance learner motivation.

Informal Environments

For the purposes of this paper, informal learning environments refers to "settings outside the formal classroom where learning takes place experientially and often through social interaction … a fun atmos-

phere, group activities, an absence of formal teachers, curriculum or grading scale" (Feuer, 2009, p. 652-653). While students benefit from culture inclusion in the formal classroom, it was concluded by Fangfang (2002) that adults can increase their second language proficiency in informal environments. Wright and Sandlin (2009) assert that "personal, public, and informal learning… is the most pervasive aspect of learning" (p. 134). As aforementioned, Gao (2009) assert such informal environments helps to recognize students' ability for autonomous learning through the development of social constructs with peer. In turn, this cultivation of autonomous learning in informal environments may help to simulate ELL's interests and increase both communicative ability as well as cultural knowledge (Chen, 2009; Gao, 2009).

Pop culture provides instructors with a rich and powerful resource that can make discussions more interesting, relevant, and appealing while enhancing rapport between peers (2002). With this in mind, to incorporate informal learning teachers can 1) facilitate community book clubs using popular literature, 2) encourage students to watch popular television shows with English subtitles, and 3) facilitate student English Corners.

Book clubs. One of the most effective ways for ELLs to increase competence in both vocabulary and spelling is through exposure to "comprehensible input in the form of reading" (Krashen, 1989, p. 441). Book clubs are an effective way to promote opportunities for ELLs to engage with authentic texts while enhancing the benefits of reading through collaborative discussions. Participating in a book club offers ELLs a way to share books, experiences, feelings, and gain useful cultural references. Instructors can facilitate class or community book clubs in the classroom or at local libraries, cafes, or within their own homes (Wright & Sandlin, 2009). When materials are selected by instructor, care should be taken in selecting a book that is appropriate for the language proficiency of students that also has a wide appeal in the target language culture. In order to tailor the selection toward student interests, teachers should ask for suggestions from students prior to the implementation of the book club or nearing the completion of a previous selection in regards to topics or specific titles. This would assist the selection of a book that is relevant not only to the L2 culture, but to the learners' interests and needs. For added structure for emerging or intermediate learners, the instructor could create guiding questions to aid the discussion of ideas. If appropriate, the teacher could have students co-write questions that related to the content or culture expressed within the book.

Television shows. By actively watching native programs, students are exposed to a range of cultural references and norms while simultaneously practicing their listening comprehension. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to watch popular television shows with subtitles in either the L1 and/or L2. Shows such as FRIENDS, X-Files, The Big Bang Theory, or Ellen provide students a range of references to draw on when conversing with peers. By increasing L2s' familiarity with popular television shows, learners can increase their cultural schemata and develop a larger working knowledge based that they can access during conversation and classroom discussion. Instructors can provide learners with a space for viewing such content outside the classroom by setting up *viewing parties* after class or on weekends. In addition, instructors can create classroom video libraries comprised of DVDs of popular shows or movies that students can borrow and then return the following class period. To aid the construction of a communicative classroom environment, teachers could encourage students to share movies from their home cultures with their peers throughout the term. Periodically teachers could hold planetary session were students could discuss the films they had watched with their peers and class as a whole to further the cross-cultural communication of the course.

English corners. English corners can be defined as regular gatherings of L2 and L1 students in a public area with the aim to practice English and discuss popular topics, current events, and people indigenous to the L2. English Corners share similar characteristics with English clubs, however, the former are differentiated in that they are solely organized and directed by the students. While teachers may choose to facilitate, the students select the topics, materials, activities, in addition to selected meeting times. English Corners allow for language to be obtained through communicative activities and authentic language in relaxed, social contexts. Furthermore, the methods utilized in selection of themes and activities promotes autonomous learning as students are responsible for their own topics, materials, and experiences.

In addition to the selection of materials and activities, students can also determine the level of structure they wish to use in the English Corner. English Corners can be rather structured, including a warm, welcoming general discussion about a topic, lists of new terms, movie clips, and/or activities, or they can be less structured, including a simple ice breaker and pictures or terms followed by casual discussion between learners. While intermediate or advanced students often participate in additional pre-planning, students at emerging levels of L2 proficiency often enjoy a less structured model, comprised of mostly causal discussion. For example, in an English Corner designed by beginner ELLs at a Chinese University where this author recently taught, students chose the topic of pop music. For the English Corner, students had a brief warm up where they talked about music they liked and shared songs on a popular mobile app. Following the warm up, the leader passed out the list of 10 popular Western songs selected from an online Top 20 listing. Finally, students looked at pictures of singers, listened to their music, and talked about which they liked and didn't like. In contrast, an English Corner designed by intermediate L2 students, focused on American Slang at the same Chinese university, included additional activities and required increased preplanning by the student leaders.

In the intermediate organization, students included six segments: ice-breaker game, discussion questions, presentation of new information, YouTube video with both L1 and L2 subtitles, discussion, and games. For example, students began the English corner with a game of Fish Bowl where each learner wrote down questions for their fellow learners to answer. Following this ice-breaker, students used discussion cards to discuss the use of slang in their own country. Some questions included were: Do you use slang? What is popular Chinese slang? Do you use slang (OMG, LOL)? Next, students were given a list of American Slang, with their respective meanings and Chinese equivalents. Learners then watched a video and discussed their opinion on American slang such as lit, bro, and on fleek. The leader then implemented a range of games where students practiced their new vocabulary and ended with a Trivia completion on facts the L2 students had gathered on American slang. These activities were able to engage students and provide relevant and current cultural information that would not be present in a traditional EFL classroom curriculum. Regardless of the level of structure during this type of activity, students are actively engaged as the information presented is directly related to their personal interests and they are able to discuss these issues with friends rather than worry about L2 assessment.

While some institutions have preexisting English Corners, other educational settings may not yet have established this type of informal learning. Though English Corners may provide the most benefits when organized by students, there are methods teachers can use to encourage the formation and cultivation of English Corners. At the beginning, teachers can ask students for suggestions of topics and provide a starting point for students. For the first few sessions, the teacher may need to model a successful English Corner. Once students are familiar with the idea of what English Corners entails, the teacher can assign specific students to lead an English Corner until students are able to establish gatherings on their own.

Conclusions/Recommendations

While learning takes place as learners engage with products of pop culture in the L2, it should be noted that references to the L2 culture can be intriguing but also confusing for some language learners (Wright & Sandlin, 2009). Alptekin (1993) and Duff (2002) report that there is a need to unpack the authentic materials used to ensure that teachers (and students) understand the linguistic aspects, new systemic data, and the obstacles that may be present for some students. Additional resources and discussions should be given for students to draw meaning from such as newspapers, entertainment programs, magazines, radio stations, or peer discussions (Duff, 2002).

It should be noted that viewing entire movies or television shows may be too much for the average language learner to comprehend in one seating. To accommodate for this, teachers can create comprehensive chunks by segmenting video clips into 3 to 5-minute segments (Rucynski, 2011). By creating pre-viewing activities such as warm-up questions or pre-teaching key vocabulary, materials can be made more accessible to students. Comprehension questions can be given to L2 groups or individual L2 students, based on listening and/or visual cues to aid student comprehension. After the final viewing, the class can discuss what they have seen, which provides the students with additional opportunities to use their English to prac-

tice pre-taught vocabulary that is specifically related to the recently-viewed video clip.

Careful consideration should also be given to the materials chosen to be incorporated into an L2 classroom curriculum. There is a plethora of available resources for obtaining pop culture primary sources including magazines, TV shows, movies, YouTube videos, commercials, public figures, books, comics, music, and images. The one caveat is that considerations should be made for the selection and inclusion of appropriate pop culture to ensure that both are appropriate to the L2 student population and its own culture.

When embarking on the selection process, instructors should ask, Will the content help students to understand more about the target language? Will the content help students to actually communicate with people from the target language? The author suggests that checklists can also be employed to aid instructors in choosing appropriate authentic content. When sorting through songs or lyrics, teachers should ensure that the words are easily intelligible, song lyrics provide enough repetition to provide oral pronunciation practice, and that the songs are popular and likely to be heard outside of the classroom. Additionally, L2 cultural values/themes need to be introduced or discussed within the framework of a teaching unit (Lims, 1996).

Similar guiding questions (as noted above) can be applied when selecting a text or video clip: Is it relevant to students' lives? What are the common sense or insider terms? What are the parodies, ironies, and metaphors? How are parts of other texts incorporated into the text? Are subtitles in L1 and/or L2 available? (Duff, 2001; Wright & Sandlin, 2009). By answering these questions, teachers can determine what information may need further explanations or illustrations when presenting a pop culture reference to students in an L2 classroom environment.

In conclusion, the current article has attempted to present L2 instructors with numerous formal and informal teaching strategies for incorporating pop culture into the language classroom. The aim of the aforementioned strategies is to promote increased media and cultural literacy of L2 learners through the incorporation of pop culture in classroom discussions, thematic units, and extracurricular programs such as book clubs or English Corners. The researcher hopes that through this collection of research and instruction methods, that instructors can better equip L2 students for a range of activities beyond the traditional language classroom.

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Deaf Multilingual Learners: A Multiple Case Study

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Abstract: *Much attention has been given in recent literature to newcomers (those who were born in another country and who are new to the U.S.) and the specific language needs of students learning English as a second language (ESL). Additional research also exists addressing the gaps in Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students learning English. Over the years, a new type of second language (L2) learner has emerged: the Deaf and hard of Hearing Multilingual learner (DML). A 2010 survey conducted by Gallaudet University indicated that 17,388 out of 37,828 deaf students lived in a home in which neither English nor American Sign Language (ASL) was used (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2011). This fact not only impacts language learning but cultural aspects as well. This paper presents a case study of two deaf children born in Mexico and living in monolingual Spanish-speaking families who do not communicate with ASL. These two students represent the typical educational and social needs of DML students and how they affect both Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Teachers of English as a Second Language.*

Keywords: deaf, d/Deaf or Hard of Hearing Multilingual Learner (DML), diversity, English Language Learner (ELL), multicultural

Introduction

In the most up-to-date information from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, American Sign Language (ASL) is not included as a language used by English language learners. Deaf learners (i.e., learners whose first language is sign language, regardless of the language used in the home) are also not included under the list of students with disabilities who are English learners. Historically, Deaf Education as a low incidence disability, is often overlooked in national reports (Howley, Howley, & Telfer, 2017).   Deaf individuals often view themselves as a linguistic and cultural minority and not a disabled group. Quickly emerging among d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (d/DHH) learners are those who come from a home where a language other than English or American Sign Language is used. Within the group of DHH learners, is a subgroup known as d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Multilingual Learners (DMLs). This paper will examine the educational and social needs of DMLs and the responsibilities of teachers.

Focus of the Paper

As educators, the nature and background of the students is diverse and always changing. For educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, the use of sign language or a sign system with English has been at the core of signing programs ("International Congress on the Education of the Deaf," 2010). What is changing is a new multilingual approach as the needs of DMLs are being assessed and met. For families, the greatest challenge was typically working with educators to learn ASL; for newcomers, it is now apparent a third language is part of the education of DMLs. Research reports that there is an additional need for cultural sensitivity and awareness that is of equal importance. Therefore, this paper will primarily focus on the lives of two students, Juan and Yolanda, who represent the unique needs educators face when working with DML students.

Significance of the Topic

As previously mentioned, d/DHH students as a low incidence disability, are often underserved (Cawthon, 2006). When an additional educational need is introduced, meeting those needs poses a greater problem. DMLs do not fit into a single category; they have needs in basic communication and language in a visual language as well as needs of second language (L2) learners, both culturally and educationally. Thus, more needs to be done in the educational arena to address these needs.

<h1 align="center">Review of the Literature</h1>

Deaf Multilingual Learners

Deaf learners who use sign language as their first language (L1) understand a multilingual and multicultural way of life. Deaf students who use sign language in social and educational settings will return home where typically an auditory language is used. For Deaf multilingual learners (DMLs} who are learning both ASL and English in the educational setting, they have the added challenge of returning to a home in which neither of these languages is used. Recent data from Gallaudet Research Institute reveals that at least 45% of d/DHH (Deaf/hard of hearing) school-aged children are deaf multilingual learners (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2011). These children likely arrived in the U.S. as newcomers (i.e., born outside of the U.S.), facing the additional challenges of relocating to a new country. The particular needs of this group are unique and must be acknowledged in both an educational setting and a social setting.

Needs of DMLs

Research exists in addressing the needs of multilingual learners but is greatly lacking for DMLs. Identifying DMLs is the first challenge. The Office of English Language Acquisition does not include numbers related to d/deafness in the data regarding English language learners with disabilities ("Fast Facts," 2017). d/Deaf students are combined under other disabilities which include deaf-blindness, developmental delay, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment. However, Gallaudet's annual survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and youth in the U.S. identified more than 45% of d/DHH students are in homes where neither English nor ASL are spoken (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2011). Furthermore, relatively little research has been conducted to address the bilingual aspects of d/Deaf learners. These students overcome challenges, lacking early access to language in general and learning English as a second language (ESL) in particular. As with d/DHH students, DMLs must have instruction that is linguistically responsive teaching (LRT). This requires specialized knowledge, pedagogical content, child development and learning in a variety of settings, and a classroom community that supports diverse learners (Pizzo, 2016).

International DHH learners. There is currently an increase in the number of international DHH learners in America (Cannon, Guardino, & Gallimore, 2016). Just as countries have their own auditory language, most have their own sign language. An international DHH learner typically navigates through a minimum of four languages; two auditory and two signed languages. For educators of ESL/EFL (English as a second language/English as a foreign language) students, these are populations that cannot continue to be marginalized.

Characteristics of DMLs and d/DHH learners. Characteristics of DMLs along with d/DHH learners are extremely diverse although there are some patterns that emerge within educational settings. Spoken English, Sign language or a mix of both is prevalent in educational settings and Spanish is the primary language spoken in the homes of most DML students as identified by the Gallaudet Research Institute (2011). There is also a greater percentage of poverty among racial groups when compared with their White counterparts (Pizzo, 2016). According to Gallaudet's research, only 16% of d/DHH students' families speak a language categorized as other. With more than 300 reported languages spoken in the U.S., other languages cover a large area and could be a cause for concern when addressing the needs of DMLs. These numbers may be of no surprise to those working in ESL classrooms; for those working in d/DHH classrooms, however, it is likely to be surprising.

Benefits of multilingualism and multiculturalism. DMLs share the same benefits of those who are multilingual and multicultural. Multilingual and bilingual brains are very complex and research has shown that bilingual individuals often outperform their monolingual peers in various cognitive functions (Bialystok, 2009; Marian & Shook, 2012;Pizzo, 2016). For d/DHH learners, however, access to a second language is often limited by lack of fluency or access to a first language, and, this holds a greater impact for DML students. Delayed diagnosis and intervention continue to plague d/DHH children and for DMLs coming from an even greater poverty and language deprivation setting, lack of first language acquisition poses a real threat to learning and social growth (Pizzo & Childers, 2016).

Cultural aspects of the d/DHH. The cultural aspects within the Deaf community are also often over-looked (Erting, 1994). As previously stated, Deaf individuals consider themselves to be a language minority and not a disabled group. There are distinct cultural differences between the Deaf community and the hearing world. d/DHH learners must navigate the Deaf world in which they belong and the hearing world in which they were born but have limited access to. For many d/DHH children who attend public schools, they do not connect with the Deaf community until they are older and may feel very isolated. For DMLs, this is of even greater concern. For these students in a public-school setting, they may not have mastery of ASL, English or the language spoken in the home; they are unable to communicate effectively with peers, teachers or family. This increases the risk of this population being victimized and/or displaying inappropriate behaviors (Lomas & Johnson, 2012).

DML Case Studies

Juan (pseudonym) is a 9-year-old male student attending a state residential school. He lives at home with his parents and 5 younger siblings. Spanish is the only language spoken in the home. Juan does not reside at the school and goes home each day. He had been attending the state school for approximately 3 years and is in the 4th grade. His family had an open case with the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) due to suspected inappropriate behavior from Juan towards his younger sister. This was the second case for the family due to the fact that Juan was believed to be a victim of abuse from the father. (Further information was not available as that case had been closed.) The school had originally reported episodes of Juan's anger and outbursts but later reported that these had decreased. Juan sees the school counselor regularly. The case was opened because of his sister claiming that Juan had inappropriately touched her. Juan was below grade level in all subjects and his only mode of communication was gestures and ASL. DFCS' first home visit was made utilizing a Spanish- speaking interpreter for the family and an ASL interpreter for Juan. This visit was successful in that the case worker was able to gather information from the mother even though the caseworker was not able to illicit any response from Juan. The father was not home and the younger siblings do not have a high level of English proficiency. Juan appeared to understand the questions being signed by the interpreter but would not respond. A second appointment was made to meet Juan at the school. A request was made to utilize a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) in addition to the ASL interpreter for this visit. Juan remembered both the DFCS case worker and the ASL interpreter. When he realized the CDI was also deaf, he became more responsive. Not only was Juan lacking in a fluent spoken language, he was also delayed in a visual language. The CDI was able to utilize her skill and expertise of ASL to elicit responses from Juan. (He is a prime example of the social and educational struggles that DMLs are challenged with.)

Yolanda (pseudonym) was a 6-year-old female student attending a public school in a small southern town. Her father has been in the United States for 3 years in order to eventually bring his pregnant wife and daughter to the U.S. to provide a better education for Yolanda. She was born deaf and had not previously received any intervention while in Mexico. Yolanda was in the U.S. for 6 months when a school bus driver noticed her while picking up a child in the same apartment complex and reported this fact to the school. The bus driver was unaware that Yolanda was deaf. After school officials reached out, Yolanda was subsequently enrolled in the school system and began receiving services daily by the teacher of the d/ Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TOD) in a kindergarten class. An interpreter was hired to provide services as well. Yolanda had several gestures she had created and used consistently at home--- home-signs. Her father had a mustache and Yolanda would put one finger under her nose to indicate father. She would pat her tummy representing her mother's pregnant belly when referring to her mother. She also had several gestures for food and her favorite toys. The TOD, using the school's Spanish interpreter, gained this information from the mother and began with these home-signs to build language with Yolanda. Initial testing indicated Yolanda had a maximum 5-sign vocabulary using formal ASL language structure. After 6 weeks, however, she had mastered up to 100 signs and was using them within the educational setting. Her mother began attending individual sessions with the teacher and Yolanda, during which the mother provided the Spanish words and the TOD provided the signs and English equivalents to Yolanda. Yolanda flourished and by the end of the first year, although she was not at her chronological age, she was scoring at a kindergarten level.

These two students represent both similarities and differences of the DML experience. A traditional d/DHH approach could not have been used and special accommodations needed to be implemented in each situation. For students like Juan and Yolanda, early identification and early intervention are paramount; many factors affect the success of both. Not only are the spoken languages of DML families diverse, 52% use spoken language in school, 33% use total communication and 15% use ASL (Pizzo & Childers, 2016). When he went home each day, Juan was completely language deprived. His mother confirmed that when he was at home, he sat on a bucket in the corner of the kitchen with picture books. The mother clarified it to be a 5-gallon bucket turned upside down and she often used it as a form of discipline, time-out for Juan. Yet, he often chose to sit on the bucket and look at his books. Although Juan was not fluent any neither English, Spanish or ASL, he was able to glean information from the images and text from these books. They were something concrete for him, the words and illustrations never changed and he could create a world he could understand. In many ways, he was thirsty for a language. He could manipulate meaning through these books. The school also confirmed multiple books being overdue in the library and Juan eventually admitted to keeping the books. He did not understand that they were not his books to keep. As a result of these interactions, arrangements were made for a Spanish interpreter to accompany Juan's family to a local agency to learn ASL. Other suggestions made by the CDI and DFCS caseworker for working with Juan included using the closed caption function on the television and language options to view both Spanish and English captions or voice over to aid in language development. Whereby accommodations were made for Juan, the same was not true for Yolanda. Although Yolanda' parents and extended family made attempts to communicate through visual means, Yolanda still did not acquire a formal means of communication.

Implications

When addressing the special needs of d/DHH learners, it is important to note that 95% are born to hearing parents (Pizzo & Childers, 2016). Parents who attempt to learn ASL are typically not able to develop a sufficiently high level of proficiency in such a way to foster fluency with their children prior to the time that they enter school. d/DHH and DML students will often develop home signs or signs created by the family to aid in communication. However, these signs may not be understood by the teacher and must be corrected. It is crucial for educators to fully understand the language, of any nature, used in the home. Parents of DML children have even more limited access to resources in their first language to learn ASL. Therefore, educators, DHH educators, and ESL/EFL educators must work together to provide the necessary and appropriate intervention and resources to this underserved group.

DML students represent a cross-section of educational groups. DHH teachers are considered the experts in the field as are ESL/EFL educators in their content areas. With the ever-increasing population of DML learners, collaboration is crucial.

Conclusions/Recommendations

There has been an increasing presence of newcomers to the U.S. and consequently, a growing population of English language learners in today's schools, some of which are d/DHH as well. Research has reported that DML students have a lower scholastic success than both their hearing and d/DHH peers (Walker-Vann, 1998). Therefore, collaboration between both teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and teachers of English as a second language must take place to meet both the educational and cultural needs of DML students. There is a responsibility to these learners to provide the best education both academically and culturally. For most the journey to this country was to find a better life. It is through knowledge that one has power to change their course in life. As a low incidence disability, d/DHH learners face many challenges within the education system both linguistically and culturally. DML learners face additional linguistic and culture barriers that and needs that must be addressed.

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Providing Equity or Creating Marginalization? ACCESS for English Language Learners and its Potential Effects on the Educational Outcomes for Some of America's Most Vulnerable Students

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Abstract: *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is a relatively new English-proficiency assessment that is widely used for English as a Second Language and bilingual program placement and exit. While ACCESS creators boast that ACCESS creates equity for students, this paper discusses how it may create marginalization for students through questionable validity and unreasonably difficult exit criteria. ACCESS serves to create an underclass of long-term English Language Learners, who may face lowered expectations, stigmas, and reduced chances of attaining positive educational outcomes through their continued classification as English Language Learners.*

Keywords: English Language Learners, proficiency assessment, policy, classification, equity

Introduction

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is an assessment of English Language proficiency widely used in the United States (WIDA, n.d., Consortium report). The ACCESS test, along with its corresponding standards and resources, purports to work towards the academic achievement of culturally and linguistically-diverse students, and WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment), its developer, cites social justice as a value (WIDA, n.d., Mission). This paper, however, argues that the ACCESS assessment may be harmful to the long-term academic achievement for English Language Learners (ELLs) through the unnecessary and harmful retention of students in ELL programs.

Context of the Paper

Access for ELLs 2.0 is an English Language Proficiency test developed by WIDA at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WIDA, n.d., Mission). The assessment is required for ELLs, and students cannot opt-out (WIDA, 2017, 2017-2017 test administration). Currently, 35 states plus the Northern Marina Islands, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands utilize the ACCESS assessment, and about 1,896,480 students take the assessment each year (WIDA, n.d., Consortium report). The assessment is based on Common Core State Standards, and is task-based (Boals, Kenyon, Blair, Cranley, Wilmes, & Wright, 2015). ACCESS designers claim the assessment works to:

> a. Clarify important school-based language expectations, b. inform the educational community about how students are progressing in English language development, and c. provide the information needed to ensure accountability to federal civil rights mandates so that ELLs can receive the educacational support services they need and are entitled to receive. (Boals, Kenyon, Blair, Cranley, Wilmes, & Wright, 2015, p.123)

The assessment was developed from a federal grant (Boals et al., 2015), and testing of ACCESS 2.0 first took place in 2014 (WIDA, n.d., mission).

Significance of the Topic

While classification criteria for inclusion and exit of ELL services varies by state (Abedi, 2004), consortium states use ACCESS as a key determiner in classification, placement and exit of ELLs. Both Indiana and Tennessee, for example, required students to score an overall average 5.0 out of 6.0 or higher on the ACCESS test to exit ELL services in 2016-2017 (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d. WIDA, n.d., Chapter 6). ACCESS 2.0 thus has significant power in the educations of ELLs.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Theoretical Framework</h1>

The Habitus

Several theories of the French philosopher Bourdieu are pertinent to this paper. Chiefly among these is the idea of the "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.52), a series of attitudes used in practice. In society, the *habitus* seeks to reinforce itself, and structures of society are setup to align with the habitus. Group habitus practices are taken for granted as logical behaviors (Bourdieu, 1990).

In the context of the education system of the United States, the habitus is Eurocentric and based on English-speaking norms. English is the language of power and language-minority students are expected to comply with the norms of English. If they do not, they are punished through long-term ELL status and, as is described below, what is often an inferior education.

Language and Symbolic Power

Related to the idea of the habitus is Bourdieu's (1991) description of language as symbolic power. In Bourdieu's theory, the official language of a nation becomes an official habitus, and the educational system supports the habitus through the normalization of the official language as legitimate. Languages take on sociological distinctions, and those without competence in the dominant language are forced to either be silent or are excluded from social life where this language is required. Therefore, the social position of the speaker determines the access he or she has to the language.

In the context of public education in the United States, English has symbolic power (de Jong, 2013). It is, in most places, the only language used in instruction, and is valued above all other languages. In fact, the research suggests that bilingualism in minority students has historically often been viewed in educational policy and practice as a weakness, something that must be overcome through intense language and literacy intervention (de Jong, 2013). Even if second language English students have what would be considered an adequate level of proficiency among native speakers, they are considered deficient through a test [i.e., ACCESS] that has unrealistically high expectations and shaky validity. This assessment gives teachers and administrators evidence that the students' home language is deficient (when compared with the dominant language, English) and that students are lacking because of their cultural linguistic differences. This further elevates the privileged positions of Eurocentric culture and English dominance in society.

<h2 style="text-align:center">The Problems with ACCESS 2.0: Review of the Literature</h2>

Questionable Validity

The ACCESS 2.0 assessment has multiple elements that suggest questionable validity. While there has been extensive research suggesting there is validity in question construct, scale scores, and alignment to standards (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2017), many validity questions remain. These primarily concern the formatting and administration of the assessment.

Online Format

While a paper ACCESS test is offered for all grades, most students in grades 1-12 test using an online format (WIDA, n.d., Consortium report). This includes online writing for students after the second grade, although handwritten writing sections are allowed as district decisions in grades 4-5 and as accommodations in the upper grades (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2017). Speaking and listening tests rely heavily on the use of headphones (WIDA, 2017).

There has been little research about the validity of online assessments with language learners, public school settings, or very young children. Jin & Yan (2017) found that Chinese students did significantly better on an English writing test in an online format than on a paper-based test. Furthermore, Jeong (2014) found that on a test of 73 Korean 6th graders, students performed significantly better on paper tests than with online tests on Korean and Science scores (Jeong, 2014). Keng, McClarty, and Davis (2008), found very little difference between item validity on the online and paper-based Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (2008), and Clemens et al. (2015) found that, for Kindergarten and first-grade students, the pa-

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per-based word-reading test was more valid than the STAR Early Literacy online test. These results suggest that the validity of online assessments largely depends on the context, formatting, and test itself.

For the ACCESS test, some administration policies appear to potentially impair students' chances at achieving a high score. First, students cannot change their answers or review their work on the online test (Boals, Kenyon, Blair, Cranley, Wilmes, & Wright, 2015). This alone is likely to lower scores for online test-takers. In addition, 3 to 5 students are permitted to test online during the speaking test (Boals, Kenyon, Blair, Cranley, Wilmes, & Wright, 2015). This means that students in the same room might be distracted by the talk of their peers. This suggests that it is unlikely students will score as high with the online testing as with the paper-based testing.

Are students prepared for online testing? There is also the issue of student computer experience. High minority-schools, including those with linguistic minorities, are much more likely to include students with low socioeconomic statuses. These schools are much more likely to have inadequate resources than schools with more affluent students (Palardy, Rumberger, & Butler, 2015), including access to computers and technology. Holfheld, Ritzhaupt, Dawson, and Wilson (2017) found that in a longitudinal study of Florida schools, schools with students of low socioeconomic status were much less likely to use software with students. If students do not have practice with online testing, they will likely score lower on the online test. This inappropriately sets students up for longer times in ELL services.

Tier System

ACCESS for ELLs is based on a tier system. Tests are written in three versions: Tier A is written for beginner students, B, is for intermediate students, and C is for more advanced students, and each tier has a score ceiling which a student cannot score above. While the adaptive online test determines the students' tiers automatically, teachers must choose the tier for the student ahead of time if a paper test is administered (WIDA, 2017). This practice opens the door for students to unnecessarily score lower than their actual ability, either because their assessment is so difficult they cannot access it, or because they were limited by a test that did not allow them to work up to their potential and score at the highest level possible. This leads to the possibility that students may remain in ELL or bilingual classes longer than necessary.

The High Standards of ACCESS: Social Justice Issue or Impediment?

In 2016, WIDA significantly raised the cut score requirements for each language level and exit on ACCESS 2.0. Stake-holders were cautioned that scores might be lower on the 2017 assessment, and that more students might qualify for ELL services (WIDA, n.d., Access for Ells). This could be seen as an understatement. In Nevada, 12 to 14 % of students exited ELL services per year before the change in ACCESS scoring. In 2017, only 2% exited (Mitchell, 2017). In Tennessee, the state decided to readjust its exit criteria; otherwise, almost no ELLs would transition out of ESL (Mitchell, 2017).

WIDA justified the rise in cut scores as insisting that it was looking out for students' best interests, insisting that it was raising standards to that of other high-stakes tests so that students who exit ELL services would be fully English-proficient (Mitchell, 2017). This ignores the fact, however, that most non-ELL students nationwide are not able to pass a modern high-stakes standardized test given to native English speakers. On the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress, (NAEP), for example, only 36% of fourth graders and 34% of eighth graders scored at a proficient level (Nation's Report Card, 2015). Non-ELLs are not deemed deficient for not passing a test; rather, they are not put into separate programs and forced to take long, arduous tests each year their native English-speaking peers do not have to take. Based on Bourdieu's habitus (1990), what is considered poor academic achievement among ELLs is blamed on a different language background, placing ELLs with a burden other students do not have.

If keeping ELLs in ELL programs significantly helped students academically, then the high standards and questionable variability of ACCESS 2.0 might be acceptable. The research reports, however, that this is not the case. As is described in the second half of this paper, keeping students in ELL programs for long periods of time may be harmful to them on multiple fronts.

Implications for Long-Term English Language Learners

The definitions for Long-Term English Language Learners(LTELLs) varies by state and researcher, but generally refers to ELLs who are in ESL for 7 or more years without testing out (Flores, Kleyn, & Menken, 2015). Spanish and Somali students are much more likely than students from other backgrounds to become LTELLs (Greenberg Motamedi, Singh, & Thompson, 2016). LTELLs are also generally from poorer and less-educated families than current and former ELL families at large, and there is much greater representation of Special Education students in the LTELL population than in the general ELL population (Thompson, 2015). All this suggests that language tests used to reclassify students have already negatively impacted vulnerable students more than others, even before the ACCESS scores were raised.

The rates of LTELL students vary widely, from 16% of ELLs in Washington state (Greenberg Motamedi, Singh, & Thompson, 2016) to 60% of ELLs in California (Umansky, 2014). Who becomes a LTELL is somewhat complicated by the flexibility school districts have in many states to create their own exit criteria for services; some students who are LTELLs would be fully mainstreamed in neighboring districts (Thompson, 2015). Most LTELLs are not seen as academically at-risk by their teachers, and many do well in their classes, but remain ELLs solely due to their low ACCESS test scores (Olson, 2010).

Penalized for Language Differences

Generally, LTELLs do not receive the enhanced services they need to help them exit ESL, but instead face multiple restrictions and challenges due to their LTELL status. Students are often penalized for their language difference in ways that their native English-speaking peers are not. Regardless of their actual language and academic capabilities, LTELLs are assumed to not have competence of the dominant language (English in the U.S.), and thus are not allowed to participate in full educational life, just as Bourdieu (1991) claims in his theory of language and symbolic power. Below, is detailed how LTELLs may be negatively impacted for their bilingualism.

Restricted curriculum. The research reports that ELLs are often tracked into low-level, remedial classes, especially in schools with large ELL programs. Kanno and Kangas (2014) interviewed ELLs and their teachers in a diverse Pennsylvania high school. Students were isolated in ELL classes; if they did well in those classes or were reclassified, they were put into remedial classes, but rarely if ever could take college preparatory or mainstream classes. Staff did this out of concern that mainstream, or college-preparatory courses were too difficult for students (Kanno & Kangas, 2014). Thus, the ELL students were undervalued and considered inferior due to their language, and were not considered worthy of full academic access.

Less-trained teachers. There is a major teacher shortage of bilingual and ELL teachers in the United States, and language-minority students are often taught by undertrained and underprepared teachers. In one large Connecticut urban district, for example, over 20% of ELLs in grades K-1 and 69% of secondary school ELLs are taught by uncertified ESL teachers (Parker, O'Dwyer, & Irwin, 2014). This is a disadvantage non-ELLs do not face.

Stigmatized and shamed. LTELLs often face a stigma and shame about still being classified as ELL. In Dabach's (2014) study of sheltered-English programs in an urban school district, one student said, "we are retarded, and that is why we are in this class called sheltered" (p.116). Students in the same study reported that their sheltered-English classes were "punitive" (p.104), and were a sign of low intelligence and stupidity. Other students in the school called sheltered students "scraps" (p.116), and made fun of them. This perceived incompetence of students in the dominant language (English) led to their marginalization.

Less likely to graduate. Huang, Hasas, Zhu, and Tran (2016) found that LTELLs in Arizona have a much higher dropout rate than any other language group. Less than half of LTELLs (defined as students who are ELL for 3 years or more) graduate from high school. This rate is 13 points lower than the graduation rate for students who recently exited ELL services, and even slightly lower than new ELLs. The former ELL graduation rate matched the rate for never-ELLs, and the LTELL/former ELL gap was significant even when controlling for demographics such as poverty level and Special Educations status (Huang, Haas,

Zhu, & Tran, 2016), suggesting that the primary difference in student graduation success is not cultural or linguistic differences within ELLs but simply time spent in ELL programs. Based on the evidence presented above, it may be inferred that LTELLs receive an inferior education simply by the stigma and structure of ELL programs in which they matriculate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While programs for ELLs help many students succeed in school, research overwhelmingly reports these programs can actually harm some ELL students, especially those who have been in American schools for a long period of time. Instead of promoting equity, a roadblock is created to block student success. Additionally, ACCESS puts students at risk academically through unnecessary retention of students in programs for English Language Learners.

Educators and policymakers need to seriously reconsider the use of ACCESS scores as the primary criterion for placement in and exit our of English as a Second Language programs. Some suggestions might be for states to dramatically change the scoring system using ACCESS scores not as a sole measure but rather in conjunction with other measures for placement and classification of students. ACCESS could also be replaced altogether with a more valid and accurate assessment of student learning. As it stands, thousands of students are currently at risk of unnecessary stigma, low expectations, and poor educational outcomes due to the use of this one assessment.

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