The TFLTA Journal

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TFLTA
Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association

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 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; and/or focus on trends, issues and practices of interest to K-16 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 6, Spring 2017
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Original Articles

Message From the Editor

The Spring 2017 issue of the on-line *TFLTA Journal* offers four original, research-grounded articles crafted by world and second language educator-scholars from the United States and abroad. This unique collection of manuscripts addresses a variety of topics germane to the WL and ESL/EFL classroom, ranging from teacher reflections, and pedagogical tools to language assessment and performance/proficiency issues. The creative work in this issue brings to the international readership of the *TFLTAJ* unique perspectives, integrating the authors' hands-on experiences in the world and second language arenas with the published literature supporting the foci of the articles.

Jeremy Bachelor leads this issue's article line-up with a compelling empirical research study examining the role of the *flipped* classroom in a world language setting. Implications from his study should be of great interest to both teachers and students of second languages.

Our second article, written by Ali Akbar Ansarin, Farahman Farrokhi, and Mina Rahmani from the University of Tabriz, Iran, presents still another research study in their series of articles dealing with Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward reflective teaching. This sequel specifically uses a qualitative medium to examine Iranian teachers' knowledge of reflection and the barriers they are confronted with when employing the reflective process in their classrooms.

M.J. Warsi from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, crafted our third article. He deftly presents some of the relevant aspects that the role songs can play in the teaching–learning process of Hindi-Urdu as a second/ foreign language, drawn from the perspective of using the communicative approach to language teaching and learning.

In this issue's fourth article, Robin Barnard Bachelor examines the perspectives of first-year world language students in a Midwestern United States high school toward three different alternative assessments used in their classroom: Dynamic Assessment, Task-based Assessment, and Formative Assessment using self- and peer-evaluation. The researcher correlates the WL students' perceptions to their assessment scores.

Our last article in the Spring 2018 issue of TFLTAJ, written by Darren Broome, presents a meta-analysis of the literature examining the impact that the study of world languages has on English writing skills, written through the lens of his first-person experience.

Please enjoy this issue, it's a good one. *Bon Appétit*!
PDW, Editor

Call for Manuscripts and Submission Guidelines for Authors
The TFLTA Journal
Volume 7
Fall 2017/Spring 2018

The Editorial Board of *The TFLTA Journal* welcomes original scholarly, research-based articles that *have not been previously published or are under review by another journal at the time of submission*. Manuscripts will 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 educators in the global arena. Topics may include: original, empirical research studies; meta-analyses; 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. Although early submissions are always welcome and encouraged, the absolute *deadline for the Fall 2017/Spring 2018 issue of The TFLTA Journal is March 15, 2018.*

Absolute Submission Guidelines:

1. Submit your *original* manuscript electronically to Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley, Editor, *The TFLTA Journal (*pdwiley@utk.edu). Manuscripts may not have already been published nor may they be currently under review by another journal.
2. Put *TFLTA Journal article submission* in the subject line of your email and include your name, title, school/office affiliation, email address, contact phones numbers and working title of the manuscript in the body of the email.
3. The manuscript maximum length (double-spaced throughout) is 5,000 words with 1" margins. It must be submitted as a Microsoft WORD document, Times Roman 12 font; *do not right-justify margins*.
4. Follow APA '09 (6th edition) format in the manuscript for levels of heading, references, figures and tables; *only manuscripts using APA '09 will be considered.*
5. Include two title pages: *one with* author name/affiliation and *one without* this information to expedite the blind review process; paginate the article.
6. All graphics must be *original* or be part of the public domain. *The TFLTA Journal* will not violate copyright. Therefore, the author must include copyright permission granted for inclusion of any table or figure appearing in the manuscript that was not created by the author or authors.
7. Place each table and figure on a separate page *at the end of paper,* following notes, references and appendices. Use [*insert Table X here*] or [*insert Figure Y here*] in the *body of the text* where tables and figures need to be placed; tables and figures may need to be re-sized for publication; save them as high resolution *jpeg* or *.docx* files. APA '09 format must be used for Table and Figure titles. *Do NOT use pdf file formats*
8. Include a brief (150-word maximum) abstract of the article on a separate page, following the title page; include a 25-word maximum biographic statement for each author as the last page of the manuscript.
9. Manuscripts are accepted year-round, and authors are encouraged to submit them well ahead of the deadline for the Fall 2017/Spring 2018 issue.

Increasing Student Communication And Spontaneous Language Use in The L2 Classroom: A Careful Consideration of The Flipped Classroom Model

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Abstract: *There is an ongoing debate among L2 educators regarding the best way for students to achieve effective communication and language spontaneity. The flipped classroom refers to an educational model where the traditional practice of dedicating class time to direct instruction is flipped so that students receive initial instruction at home and then spend class time working with peers in a collaborative environment. Language instructors hope to promote conversation and communication among students, but with so much time spent on grammatical explanations in class, it is difficult to give communication the attention it deserves. The participants in this research study included community college Spanish students from sections 1 (the control group) and 2 (the experimental group) of SPAN 101 and lasted the duration of an academic spring semester. The findings are discussed, followed by a discussion on the applicability of this educational design.*

With the ongoing paradigm shift in teaching languages with communication as the central goal (Poehner & van Compernolle, 2011; Sidek, 2012; Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011), world language educators face the challenge of meeting the needs of all students as well as the demands of accrediting bodies. This leads to a debate among instructors as to the best way for students to achieve a level of language that leads to effective communication. This article suggests the implementation of the *flipped* classroom model to attain this goal. The flipped classroom, often referred to as the inverted classroom, refers to an educational model where the traditional practice of dedicating class time to lectures is *flipped,* meaning lectures are assigned as homework and class time becomes a collaborative environment (Johnson & Renner, 2012). That is, less active pursuits are removed from the classroom so that it may become a communicative environment. For the world language classroom, students receive instruction and review grammar at home, often through interactive videos via learning management systems. Later, the classroom becomes an environment fully dedicated to communicative practice, such as role-plays, interviews, and information gap activities.

The current study employed the flipped classroom method in a community college beginning level Spanish course (the experimental group), while another section of the same course (the control group) remained traditional. During the semester, the experimental group explored all grammatical concepts and vocabulary items at home via the textbook's learning management system, *MySpanishLab*. Class time was devoted entirely to group work and peer interviews, simulation scenarios and role-plays, and other activities that promoted communication in the target language.

Importance of the Study and Research Questions Guiding It

From a personal level, the researcher was intrigued by the idea of the flipped classroom, as he had received criticism from language teachers who reported that they wanted to find a way to spend more time working on conversation and communication among students, as recommended by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages or ACTFL (1998). But with so much time spent on grammar explanations in class, according

to informed colleagues, it was difficult to devote the amount of attention that communication deserved. Furthermore, explanations were often given via projected slides, and much time was wasted while students took notes and asked for additional information. It was not uncommon in the classroom to hear students say "don't change the slide yet," "I'm still writing," or "can you go back?" This, of course, occupies a large percentage of a class session that lasts simply 50 minutes at most American colleges and in some high schools.

The concept of the flipped classroom is gaining increasing attention (Gojak, 2012; Gorman, 2012; Green, 2012; Pearson & Flipped Learning Network, 2013) for its distinct advantages: Students can see and review the material at their own pace and according to their own needs; teachers can structure class time to optimize individual attention to students; and students have the opportunity to make use of the material they are learning in an enhanced environment (Muldrow, 2013). Educators are often able to repurpose time to incorporate activities that previously did not fit due to time constraints.

Moreover, ACTFL (2010) explains that "effective language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication [...] in the target language in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency [...]. [L]anguage educators and their students [should] use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus)" (para 1). While world language teachers try to find a way to speak in the target language for 90% of the class session, many of them struggle to do so, especially in explaining grammatical concepts. According to Crouse (2012, p. 27), "[teachers] are running into grammar-driven settings in which the first language predominates." The flipped classroom may be the solution to this problem. With its implementation, grammar instruction takes place mostly outside of the classroom; thus, teachers do not have to face the difficult task of explaining the more difficult syntactic concepts to students in the target language.

So far, there have been very few studies regarding the use of the flipped classroom in the teaching of world languages (Dill, 2012; Egbert, Herman, & Chang, 2014). One of the only available studies is that of Dill (2012), who made her thesis available on the effects of the flipped classroom on her middle school French students; however, no L2 studies exist at the high school or college levels. Additionally, most flipped data focuses on core subjects, such as biology, mathematics, computer science, engineering, statistics, and chemistry (Bergmann & Sams, 2009; Chaplin, 2009; Gojak, 2012; Johnson & Renner, 2012; Papadapoulos & Roman, 2010). There may be several reasons for this deficiency in information: a lack of knowledge of this method of instruction within the L2 educational community, limited technical support for language teachers, and programs that follow rigid curricula.

Regardless of the reasons for this paucity of published works that explore flipped instruction in the world language classroom, anecdotal evidence (Muldrow, 2013) seems to support the idea that the flipped classroom might be a good fit for the L2 students. This is due to the fact that the flipped instructional model innately contains elements of an optimal language learning environment. Learning strategies for the flipped classroom naturally align with research regarding the ideal language learning context. Through these issues, the following research questions emerge:

    *What effect does the flipped classroom have on effective communication among L2 learners?

    *What effect does the flipped classroom have on summative student assessments?

    *What effect does the flipped classroom have on the educator's ability to speak exclusively in the target language?

Indeed, it is vital to analyze previous and current studies about the flipped classroom while applying these results to the acquisition of world languages.

Review of the Literature

The flipped classroom is a specific type of blended learning that uses technology to remove lectures from the classroom and replaces them with practical learning activities. Open-ended questions and problem solving activities can be conducted within the classroom environment thus permitting more engaged pedagogies (Kellogg, 2009; Strayer, 2012).

Anecdotal reports on flipped instruction abound on the Internet (Egbert, Herman, & Chang, 2014). From these reports, the following section outlines major components that make up a flipped classroom, per Egbert, Herman and Chang.

Videos replace direct instruction as a central component for the flipped classroom. Students are required to watch videos at home created by teachers or publishers and come to class prepared to work with the concepts they studied. During school hours, the most common component is discussion, either in small groups or with the class as a whole. Time is also spent solving problems (Bergmann & Sams, 2012), working on projects, and tackling tasks in varying ways.

While the benefits found in the literature on the flipped classroom align well with the theories of optimal learning environments for student participation (Lin, 2012), there appears to be a lack of rigorous empirical evidence. Still, there is some available theory on the use of the approach in question. For example, Lage and Platt (2000) introduced the concept of the flipped classroom in a course on economics at the college level. Students were given multiple methods to learn the most important concepts outside the classroom; students could read a textbook, view a PowerPoint presentation, or watch a video conference online. The aim was to allow students to choose the learning methodology best suited for their individual learning styles. Lage and Platt found that students enjoyed the flipped classroom more so than the traditional classroom and also performed well on their assessments.

Similarly, Marcey and Brint (2011) studied the flipped classroom at the college level. Two sections of an introductory biology course took place at the same time; one section was taught via a traditional method, with lectures given during class time. The flipped section removed reading assignments and in-class lectures. Instead, students were assigned online lectures for viewing outside of class. In class, students were divided into small groups and were involved in active learning tasks. In the end, it was discovered that the flipped section performed significantly better on all tests and examinations.

Within studies on the teaching of world languages is the research conducted by Dill (2012) who examined the effect of flipped education on student achievement and participation in a French course at a middle school. The researcher also looked at the completion of tasks, mastery of grammar, and writing proficiency. The study compared and contrasted the data with a control group where traditional teaching strategies were used. The results of the data supported the hypothesis of the author in the sense that student proficiency increased significantly with respect to the mastery of grammar and writing.

Methodology

In the spring semester of 2015, two groups of beginner students of Spanish at the terti-

ary level were chosen. The two groups represent a different section of the same subject, Spanish I. During the semester, the same content was provided in the two groups via the communicative teaching method. However, the second section of students, referred to as the experimental group, watched grammar explanations and videos online through the learning management system provided by the textbook, *MySpanishLab*, instead of receiving direct classroom instruction. Students of both groups were given two oral exams during the semester and a comprehensive final exam.

Venue

The location in which the study was conducted is a town in the Midwest of the United States. The area has about 80,000 inhabitants. The college in question has more than 5,000 students and the male-female ratio is comparable to the national average of approximately 47:53, with a predominantly female student body and with an average age of 24.9 years old. About 79% of the population is White 7.3% is African American, and 4% is Hispanic. The college is accredited and offers degrees in 21 fields of study (US News and World Report, 2013).

Subjects

The population of the study included all beginner students of Spanish as a world language at the designated college during the spring semester of 2015. According to the administrator for the Department of Humanities, there were 57 students studying beginner Spanish during the semester in question. Consent forms to participate in the study were sent to 30 students and 27 of them participated (16 in the control group and 11 in the experimental group). According to Gutzman (2013), a population of 57 students and a sample of 27 students has a confidence rate of 90% and a margin of error of 11.5%. There was no bias in the selection of the groups. The researcher did not have access to group information when selected.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

Instrumentation for data collection included two oral exams (to answer Research Quetion 1, quantitative component), a final exam (to answer Research Question number 2; quantitative component), and an instructor journal (to answer Research Question number 3; qualitative component).

The oral exams were created by the instructor of the course and consisted of role plays with scenarios that were ramdomy assigned to students. Students conducted role plays with a partner in front of the teacher, although they received individual grades. Evaluation criteria were based on a point system according to the specified category. For example, to receive between 90-100 points out of 100, the student had to:
- use the grammatical concepts covered throughout the semester and incorporate them into his/her speech.
- incorporate semester vocabulary use full sentences instead of isolated words.
- use his/her imagination to develop themes.
- be enthusiastic, understandable, and avoid English.

Conversely, a student would receive between 50-64 points out of 100 for:
- failing to contribute to the conversation.
- using monosyllabic answers
- lacking enthusiasm or involvement.
- making so many grammatical errors that speech was almost incomprehensible.

An example of one possible role-play required students to find a time to meet to study for the final exam.

The final exam for the course included sections on listening, reading, and writing, and covered grammar, vocabulary, and culture. The exam was cumulative and assessed students on the present tense in all its forms, the present progressive, expressing desires using *gustar*, the basic differences between *saber* and *conocer* and *ser* and *estar*, demonstrative adjectives, and direct object pronouns.

Results and Limitations

For research methods one (oral exams) and two (final exam) , an independent *t* test was used to determine whether two sets of scores were significantly different. For Research Question 1, examining the effect of this design on effective communication that corresponds to the oral exam, the following was found:

Control group: M = 78.56, SD = 26.90; experimental group: M = 72.41, SD = 30.68. According to SPSS, by conventional criteria, it is considered that this difference is not statistically significant.

For Research Question 2, investigating the effect of this design on summative assessments corresponding to the final exam, the following was found:

Control group: M = 59.31, SD = 26.09; experimental group: M = 55.64, SD = 28.71. According SPSS, by conventional criteria, it is considered that this difference is not statistically significant.

As for the daily teaching journal regarding the experimental group, the instructor found that his use of the L1 (English) was slightly reduced, that L1 use by students also subtly dropped, and that the use of the target language increased slightly among students and that students seemed more confident in using the L2 spontaneously.

Some limitations that must be taken into account include the size of the sample (27 participants) and the fact that the present research study was conducted in only two beginning Spanish college classrooms single during only one academic semester.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results of the present study, the author would like to suggest that the flipped classroom may produce equally positive results as a traditional classroom. This conclusion is based on that fact that there were no statistically significant differences between the control and experimental group scores. in this study. Therefore, it is suggested that the flipped classroom should be considered as a viable alternative to the traditional classroom for world language classrooms.

As a viable alternative, this study cautiously suggests that the flipped classroom may indeed be superior in nature to a traditional classroom based on conclusions drawn from the instructor journal. The flipped instructional model contributes to reducing the use of the L1 among teachers who struggle to explain grammar in the target language and thus, subsequently diminishing the use of the L1 among students. Likewise, the use of the L2 among

among students increased, especially because there was more time for communicative activities (i.e., role plays or information gap activities), thus contributing to increased spontaneity among students.

In terms of educational implications, this method (the flipped classroom) may be the best method for teachers to use in study abroad programs or for teachers who are already exclusively using the L2. Beginning students often struggle to understand lessons presented in the target language and could benefit from external or tutorial videos that can be viewed several times (outside scheduled classroom time) until they grasp the material.

Generally speaking, the author recommends that L2 educators implement the flipped classroom design and compare scores with a control group or with scores from previous semesters as well as keep a journal of observations. They should ask themselves, did L2 use among students increase? Did spontaneity and risk-taking increase? Were summative scores at comparable or better?

Finally, all educators who try out the flipped classroom should create accountability among students for viewing videos or other pre-class materials, such as giving students occasional pop quizzes or tying participation points to the videos. Many learning management systems allow instructors to check whether or not individual students watched videos or not.

While L2 educators are constantly trying to find the best way for students to speak more effectively and are trying to reduce the overall use of the L1 in the classroom and increase spontaneity, the flipped classroom design may be the best solution.

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Iranian EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards Reflective Teaching: Perceptions and the Barriers

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Abstract: *An important characteristic of an effective teacher is the ability to think about his/her practice with a look towards improvement. Reflective teaching provides an excellent means to achieve this purpose. However, some teachers hold misconceptions and uncertainties about the concept. The present study aims to probe into Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding reflective teaching. Twenty-four EFL teachers took part in a structured interview which asked about their knowledge of reflection and the barriers they confronted when employing the process in their classrooms. Qualitative analysis of interview results showed that although Iranian EFL teachers had a general understanding of the concept, few of them recognized the critical and social aspects of reflection in their definitions. In addition, prescribed syllabuses and textbooks, ineffectiveness of teacher preparation programs, and teachers' resistance to change were the major obstacles identified by the teachers. The results have implications for teacher educators and curriculum designers.*

Keywords: reflective teaching, Iranian EFL teachers, perceptions, barriers

Introduction

Due to the significant role of teachers in the learning process, several approaches have been designed over the years to assist teachers in dealing with the complexities of classroom life. One of these earliest attempts was made by Dewey (1910) who suggested that by reflecting on their experience, teachers can overcome the uncertainties that arise in their practice. He differentiated between human behavior that is guided by habit, tradition, or impulse and that which involves the careful consideration of beliefs and values and their influence on our actions. Dewey (1933) also identified three main characteristics of a reflective teacher, namely open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. Open-mindedness refers to teachers' ability to consider different alternatives in their decision-making. Responsibility describes teachers who consider the consequences of their actions on learners, and wholeheartedness demands a commitment to continuous learning and development and criticizing the assumptions that work against it.

Schon (1983, 1987) further developed the concept of reflective teaching and connected it to the actual classroom experience. He described the occurrence of reflection in two time frames: *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*. Reflection -in-action refers to teachers' analysis and modification of the teaching situation in the moment. Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, happens when the action has been completed. Here, the teacher thinks about his/her performance, tries to find strengths areas of difficulty, and develops plans for the future.

The concept of reflection is understood differently by researchers and teacher educators and is dependent upon the context in which reflection takes place (Brookfield, 1987; Grimmett, 1989; Schon, 1987; Van Manen, 1977; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Loughran (1996) views it as "the deliberate and purposeful act of thinking which centers on ways of responding to problem situations in teaching and learning" (p.14). Farrell (2004) sees it a systematic

procedure in which individuals inquire into various aspects of teaching and learning cycle resulting in a more effective practice.

Other scholars try to move beyond a concern with the effective practice and bound reflection with broader social and political dimensions of teaching. Zeichner and Liston (1996) define a reflective teacher as one who "assesses the origins, purposes and consequences of his or her work at all levels" (p. 12). Johnston and Bradley (1996) point out that a reflective teacher takes a critical position towards his own performance and that of his peers. Indeed, critical reflection challenges the hidden assumptions and beliefs underlying practitioners' work.

Different scholars view the development of reflective practice as the foundation for the highest professional competence and put an emphasis on teachers' analysis and understanding of their beliefs and practices (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Jay, 1999; Larrivee, 2000; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). Through reflection, teachers can come to an understanding of their classroom context, identify the uncertainties embedded in their practice, and critically explore their attitudes and beliefs (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). Reflective teaching requires practitioners to consciously examine their teaching, call some aspect of it into question, analyze it, and makes plans for improvement (Harris, 1998).

Pedro (2005) explored how five pre-service teachers constructed meanings of reflective practice. Thematic analysis of data showed that teachers had a general understanding of reflection although they possessed varying notions of reflective practice as interpreted in their definitions. For example, two pre-service teachers viewed reflection as simply looking back on action.

Otienoh (2011) sought to explore teachers' understanding and knowledge of reflective practice. The participants were eight graduates of a six-month Certificate in Education Programs. Semi-structured interviews were the sole method of data collection to find out what the participants were thinking about. Qualitative analysis of interviews showed that teachers' understanding of reflective practice was determined by how it was introduced to them by teacher education programs. The introduction of the concept lacked the essence and details of the process of carrying out analytical reflections. Moreover, teachers' lack of critical thinking abilities, incompetence in English language, and their dismissive attitude towards new concepts made it difficult for them to conceptualize the process of reflective practice. It seemed that teachers had varied definitions and descriptions of the concept. Also their reflection was mainly of a descriptive nature as their interpretations did not show that critical analysis is part of reflective practice.

In another study, Yassaei (2012) inquired into four teachers' (TESOL graduates) perceptions of and engagement with reflective practice. The results of semi-structured interviews indicated that participants had generally understood and appreciated reflection and reflective practice, were aware of its values, and used different forms of reflection in order to reflect on their practice. However, they are busy with their classroom teaching and they did not have time for reflection. Some of them said that they sometimes find it difficult to reflect on their teaching since reflection might uncover some unpleasant things about one's practice.

In a study of pre-service teachers' reflective teaching reports over a six-week period, it was found that a supporting educational system as well as providing a low affective filter

influenced teachers' reflective ability (Liou, 2001). Moreover, reflective training needed to be incorporated in teacher education programs.

Similar studies found that lack of time and experience, insufficient training, teachers' unfamiliarity with the concept, their heavy workloads, and lack of cooperation among teachers were the major factors affecting teaches' of reflective practice (Kuit, Reay, & Freeman, 2001; Tsukamoto, 2013; Zhu, 2011). In a study of Iranian EFL teachers, Sangani and Stelma (2011) found that teachers' limited engagement with the literature and the hierarchical nature of educational system influenced their ability to apply reflective practices.

Considering the important role that teachers' understanding plays in their reflective process, the present study is an investigation into Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding the concept. Attempts are also made to identify the factors which impede the use of reflection by teachers. Specifically, the study seeks answers to the following research questions:
1. What are Iranian English language teachers' attitudes towards reflective teaching?
2. What are the barriers to employing reflective teaching from Iranian English teachers' perspectives?

Context of the Study

English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching in public schools in Iran is characterized mainly by the grammar translation method and pre-service teacher training programs do little to challenge it. Farhady, Hezaveh, and Hedayati (2010) observe that, on the university level, English language teaching also tends to be grammar-translation, as it is aimed at enabling students to read content that is published in English. The result of such an educational system is unmotivated teachers who can not meet their students' language needs. On the other hand, Grant and Zeichner (1984) argue that since no teacher preparation program can prepare teachers to perform effectively in different types of context, it becomes necessary for teachers to be reflective in order to consciously apply the knowledge and skills gained through teacher education programs to situations that may be different from their previous learning experiences.

Method

Participants

Twenty-four EFL teachers were selected to take part in the interview sessions. Their time, motivation, and willingness to respond to interview questions were the main criteria for choosing them as research participants. Another reason was their accessibility for conducting the interviews. Four of the participant teachers were male with the remaining 20 being female. Their teaching experience also ranged from 4 to 10 years and all of them had an MA degree in TEFL.

Instrument

Structured interview was employed to gain insight into teachers' beliefs and views regarding reflective teaching. The researcher piloted the interview schedule with four teachers. The purpose was to check for the clarity of the survey and interview questions and obtain relevant feedback. The first section of the interview asked for background information such as the participants' names, genders, years of teaching experience, and their education. The questions asked about respondents' familiarity with reflective teaching as well as their understanding of the term. How they defined the concept; whether they had any training relevant to reflective teaching; if they discussed the topic with their colleagues or read about the recent trends in the field; and the barriers they confronted when employing reflective teaching in Iranian educational context were other issues highlighted in the interview. A list of

questions used in the interview appears in Appendix A.

Procedure

Each interview session lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and was digitally taped. The researcher took notes during the interviews and tried to engage the participants in the discussion. Also, the researcher explained to the teachers that she might need their help during later phases of the study, such as data processing and they kindly agreed to stay in touch with her via e-mail and/or phone.

Data Analysis

After the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. The purpose was to identify the themes or categories across cases and discern those that are common to all cases. Individual responses to the interview questions were also considered in order to become familiar with each respondent's unique perspectives.

Findings

This section provides a conceptual analysis of interview results and answers the research questions.

Participants' Definitions of Reflective Teaching

Analysis of interview transcripts showed that to most of the teachers reflection meant thinking about teaching practice, considering whether the goals were achieved, and using the results to improve the future performance. Regarding the time frame, they believed reflection could occur either during the teaching process or after it has been completed. Two of the participants included reflection-for-action which happens before the teaching experience in order to inform the future performance.

The purposes they mentioned for undertaking reflective teaching included maximizing students' learning, finding areas of weaknesses and strengths, making informed and meaningful decisions, examining the relationship between their beliefs and actions, obtaining feedback on students' learning, and freeing teachers from acting in automatic and routine ways. What follows is how some of the teachers defined reflective practice in their own words:

> *Reflective teaching means when you think about your practice either before the act or after the experience so that you can maximize students learning. It is a means of questioning your teaching.*
> *In my experience, reflective teaching refers to thinking about and questioning one's teaching in order to find areas of weaknesses and strengths. It can provide a fresh perspective on an established practice.*
> *Reflective teaching means thinking about and reflecting on your method of teaching while you're doing it. Without it, teachers may behave in automatic and routine ways that don't lead to innovation and variety.*
> *Reflective teaching is a new concept in the field of lg teaching which recognizes teachers as active agents who can transform their students' learning.*

Some of them defined it in relation to the Iranian educational context. For example: "I think reflective teaching is a requirement especially in Iranian educational context. It frees our teachers from routine behavior and equips them with tools to improve their practice."

Seven English teachers considered the critical and social dimensions of reflective teaching in their definitions. Here are some examples from the interview transcripts:

It is a feature of any responsible teacher who knows the effect of his teaching on students' life and the broader social and cultural factors affecting the curriculum and takes action to rectify it.
It's a kind of teaching that makes teacher consider the consequences of their actions. Considering the social, technical and political factors can help teachers overcome the limitations and achieve the desired goals.
Taking into consideration individual variation, socio-cultural background and context and adapting as far as possible the materials to be presented to the unique circumstances of every single session of teaching.

One of the teachers regarded reflective teaching as a kind of meta-cognitive activity which involves planning for teaching, self-monitoring while teaching, and self-evaluation after teaching and using the results of each stage for self-improvement. Another one described it as the teacher's attempt to break out of the stereotypical role of transmitter of knowledge to the passive recipients in predefined and rigid ways and take on the role of an influential participant in the learning process. It means that no matter how a syllabus is defined and how things might seem to happen in the classroom, there is always the possibility of improving students' performance through reflection. Only one teacher mentioned it as a group work with colleagues: "...and then comparing it with new theories and approaches and even with what other teachers employ in their own classes in order to improve your teaching and find weakness and strength points of your teaching method."

For three teachers, reflective teaching meant just a way of thinking that could happen subconsciously. Moreover, four of the teachers were unfamiliar with the concept.

Previous Training on Reflective Teaching
None of the teachers mentioned that they had been introduced to reflective teaching through any formal or informal teacher training programs. However, most of them were familiar with the concept through the theoretical courses they had passed in their graduate studies.

Reading the Recent Articles in the Field
Most of the teachers stated that they had not enough time to get in touch with the recent trends in the field. They were too overloaded with their classes. They also didn't feel the need to read the latest articles because they could manage their classes without doing so. Furthermore, they didn't find enough time to discuss their teaching problems with their colleagues.

The Barriers to Employing Reflective Teaching in the Classrooms
As Russo and Ford (2006, p. 2) state, "reflection can be a painful process because it disrupts our taken-for-granted ways of thinking and acting." Although the participant teachers believed that reflective teaching is a requirement in the educational context of Iran, they encountered some obstacles in applying it in the classroom.

Time was the major barrier mentioned by the teachers. They felt they were too overloaded with the teaching tasks to devote some time to reflecting on their practice. Another barrier was the lack of motivation on the part of teachers. Being too obsessed with matters

like the low income and deficiency of the educational system was the reason teachers stated for their low motivation. Prescribed syllabuses and textbooks constituted another obstacle. The teachers struggled with the robotic finishing of pre-assigned tasks at a predetermined time. As stated by one of the interviewees, "A fixed curricula in which teachers are transmitters of knowledge and students are passive recipients could be a major barrier." Moreover, the dominant teaching approach used by most of the teachers in the classrooms was a traditional approach which hindered reflection. It caused a lack of flexibility in their orientation to reflective methods.

Unfamiliarity with the concept was another issue identified by the teachers. Related to this was the ineffectiveness of teacher education programs in Iran. Teachers believed that the concept was not emphasized in the training courses they had attended. In addition, lack of theoretical knowledge and expertise due to the inattention given to the notion in university courses was the other reason cited for their unfamiliarity with reflective teaching practice. Development of a reflective culture necessitates expert guidance, support, and providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching. Lack of teaching experience also affected teachers' ability to employ the skill in their classrooms. The powerful cultural, psychological, and political contexts may create challenges to employing reflective practice in the classrooms. For example, one teacher said, "The Iranian context doesn't let teachers to be reflective or innovative since by questioning the assumptions they may get into trouble." Teachers' resistance to change was another hindrance mentioned by teachers: "Habit is a major barrier since teachers have always done the things in the same way and don't want to bother themselves."

Employing reflective teaching may raise psychological reactions in teachers. It may be a painful experience especially for some inexperienced teachers. Some of the participants believed that the emotional factor of criticizing one's way of teaching may hinder the use of reflection by them. Reflecting on something unpleasant would be annoying for them. The large number of students also inhibited teachers from reflecting on their actions. They felt too occupied with classroom management and controlling the students to allocate time for reflection. Table 1 shows the most important barriers to teachers' reflection and their respective proportions in teachers' responses.

Discussion and Conclusions

Qualitative analysis of interview results showed that the Iranian EFL teachers participating in the present research study had a general understanding of reflective teaching, acknowledged its benefits, and employed it in their practice. They also recognized the fact that reflection could happen during or after an experience. Even two of them identified reflection-for-action, which plays an anticipatory role for future actions. The EFL teachers believed that reflective teaching aided teachers to improve students' performance and get feedback, find areas of weaknesses and strengths, make informed and meaningful decisions, and most importantly examine the relationship between their beliefs and actions.

These results confirm the results of previous studies on teachers' perceptions of reflective practice (Pedro, 2005; Yassaei, 2012). Some of them even considered it a necessity in Iranian educational context (Sangani & Stelma, 2011). They viewed it as a tool that freed teachers from performing in automatic and routine ways. Reflection helped them to apply even the most prescribed syllabi in creative and flexible ways, thus enhancing students' performance.

Table 1
The Barriers to Employing Reflective Teaching

Barriers	Proportions
Lack of time	20%
Lack of motivation	8%
Prescribed syllabi and textbooks	10%
Heavy load of teaching tasks	7%
Unfamiliarity with the concept	7%
Ineffectiveness of teacher training programs	12%
Lack of knowledge and expertise	6%
Contextual problems	4%
Habit	3%
Emotional barrier	7%
Lack of experience	8%
Class size	8%
TOTAL	**100%**

Of particular interest to the authors is that some of the teachers (n=7) included the social and critical aspects in their definitions of reflective teaching. They seemed to understand that reflection is not a mere description of classroom events and situations but entailed critical and analytical skills. One teacher defined it as a meta-cognitive ability which involved planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation of one's teaching with a look towards improvement. However, for three teachers reflective teaching just meant simple thinking about classroom issues which could occur in a subconscious manner (Pedro, 2005), and for some (n=4) it was a completely new idea. Surprisingly, none of the participating teachers were familiar with the concept through teacher training courses. Also most of them didn't have enough time and incentive to read about the most recent trends in the field of language teaching.

The interviewees mentioned several factors impeding their employment of reflective teaching practice. The most important barriers were lack of time and motivation, the influence of context, prescribed syllabuses and textbooks, the heavy load of teaching tasks, class size, and the lack of experience. Some believed that reflection was difficult since it might uncover some unpleasant things about their practice. The failure of teacher training programs to prepare reflective practitioners was another barrier felt by teachers. The results of the present study appear to be consistent with the previous published literature on reflective practice (Kuit, Reay, & Freeman, 2001; Lee, 2005; Russo & Ford, 2006; Liou, 2001; Zhu, 2011). A noticeable point stated by teachers was habit formation. That is, they had always done their jobs in the same way and didn't like to change it.

Although Iranian EFL teachers were familiar with reflective teaching, appreciated its benefits, and employed it in their practice, some of them had some misunderstandings about the concept. It appeared to be vague for some of the teachers. Few teachers emphasized the critical and social dimensions of reflection in their definitions. None of them had received any training about reflective teaching in the teacher preparation courses they had passed. They also experienced several barriers to their employing reflection in the classroom.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research
Results of the present study have particular implications for teachers, teacher educators,

and curriculum and materials designers. Teacher education programs should develop a reflective culture among pre-service teachers. They must address the issues of how the concept is taught and how to enable teachers to develop the skill in their practice.

It is recommended that Teacher education programs raise their social and political awareness about various aspects of Iranian educational context and that curriculum designers be required to pay due attention to the inclusion of a reflective element in all aspects of planning, execution, and evaluation of the syllabus.

The Iranian teachers in this study emphatically pointed to the influence that the educational context exerted on their actions. Consequently, they should be provided with opportunities to address the contextual issues via reflection. Moreover, the milieu of the educational system should be inquiry-oriented in terms of the relationship between teachers and students rather than traditionally oriented.

The interview results showed that teacher reflection was viewed as an individual activity rather than in collaboration with other colleagues. The dialogic function of reflective teaching also needs to be emphasized in teacher preparation programs. Considering the powerful influence of context on teachers' reflective ability, future studies could examine the role of context and how it could be utilized to facilitate teachers' reflective practices. Repeating the study with a broader sample would yield additional perspectives on teachers' perceptions of reflective teaching and the barriers they confront in employing it. Efforts are also needed to examine the role of teacher preparation courses in fostering reflective ability in teachers and raising their awareness about the critical and social dimensions of educational context.

The present study focused on in-service teachers; however, due to the importance of pre-service training on teachers' efficiency, other studies might explore pre-service teachers' knowledge and perceptions of reflective teaching.

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Appendix A
Reflective Teaching Interview Questions

Name:
Teaching experience:
Gender:
Academic Degree:

Thanks for devoting your time and answering the following questions. This is part of a study to investigate reflective teaching among Iranian EFL teachers.

1. Are you familiar with reflective teaching? If yes, please provide a definition of the concept in your own words.
2. Have you received any training on reflection in your teacher education programs?
3. Do you think about your practice while you're teaching?
4. How do you think reflective teaching can help you improve your practice?
5. Do you read the recent articles in the field to stay in touch with the new trends?
6. Do you discuss your teaching problems with your colleagues and friends?
7. What do you think are the barriers to employing reflective teaching in an Iranian EFL context?

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Toward A More Effective Pedagogy: Film As A Pedagogical Tool
For Teaching South Asian Languages

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Abstract: *South Asia presents the linguist with a bewildering variety of regional dialects, social dialects, formal and informal registers, literary standards, languages, writing systems, and language families. For many, South Asia is also considered as the richest linguistic region of the World. Due to the fact that diversity is the cornerstone of any country, the importance of understanding different cultures and their languages cannot be overlooked.*
The use of films adds yet another dimension to learning language, as it allows students to experience different cultural and traditional connotation that are not always accessible by grammatical text alone. It gives them the opportunity to understand oral dialogues in real situations as well as through non-verbal behavior, such as tone of voice for linguistic accuracy. This paper is an attempt to discuss and present some of the relevant aspects of the role of songs in the teaching–learning process of Hindi-Urdu, as a second/ foreign language from the point of view of the communicative approach to language teaching and learning. The paper also focuses on some of the expressions which need to be correlated to social contexts and situations. This kind of correlation becomes quite relevant and necessary, as these expressions and features introduced in the lessons and exercises not only help the learner to develop and enrich both their language skills and communicative skills. The paper will analyze the different shades of select Hindi songs that have played an important role and its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool in language teaching.

Introduction

It cannot be said that learning a language is completely separate from learning the culture of the people for whom the language is native. A language may be thought initially to be a collection of phonetics, vocabulary words, and verb conjugations. The culture, however, is what puts those intricacies into a context which can be easy and fun to understand. Most world/second or foreign languages, however, have cultural backgrounds which may be completely alien to those who are studying the language. Distance and technology make it impossible for students to completely soak in the culture from which their academic endeavors are being drawn. Language learning takes dedication, persistence, devotion, motivation and support from everyone living in the community. Culturally, elders of Indian and Pakistani families are respectable mediums of ethnic education. Elders are recognized as the primary source of language expertise and cultural knowledge. Historically, India has been an epicenter for many of the world's greatest scholars, poets, writers, scientists, artists, and historians, and this trend is only becoming more pronounced as the decades roll by. The extensive talent that is present within the Indian population is globalizing at a tremendous rate. Students from India who are completing all of their high school and secondary school requirements are being accepted into many of America's universities in both undergraduate and graduate school programs. In all areas of academia, from literature, language, culture, science, medicine, mathematics, and physics, students of Indian origin are enrolling in educational programs at universities of higher education in the U.S. Additionally, Bollywood has become a prominent player in creating images of how people in India live and make use

of their language. The use of these depictions allows students to gain a more full under-standing of the culture in India and how it affects the use of the language they are studying.

In the winter the Agarwal family decided to take a family ski trip to Vermont. The family lived in New Jersey and making the trip to Vermont took 4 hours. Pooja and Aalok, a junior and senior, respectively, at Hill Crest High School, were born and raised in a quiet New Jersey suburb. Nemi and Harsha left their lives in Bombay, Bollywood, in 1980 to create a new life for their children in America. Nemi was a researcher for a pharmaceutical and Harsha worked at a local public library. However, Harsha's more notable career was raising her three children, Aalok, Pooja, and, of course, Nemi. Although their parents strictly spoke Hindi to each other in the house, Aalok and Pooja always vacillated between Hindi and English throughout their lives. *Khanna* was not food in the Agarwal household and Pooja never uttered Aalok's first name, as he was exclusively *bhaiya*. In school they never spoke Hindi to one another. Nevertheless, Nemi always serenaded his children with the tunes of *Lata Mangeshkar* as he drove his children to school in the morning. Pooja rolled her eyes, as her father would stretch his voice higher than seemed natural and Aalok listened attentively. He would sing along secretly in his head. He remembered to words to the great songs from *Mughal-e-Azam* as he would later surprise his parents that he could play their tunes on his violin for gatherings with all other closet Bombayites in New Jersey. But the *Hindustaniness* did not disgust Pooja on the drive to school. Rather, she looked forward to Friday night when she accompanied her mother to the latest Bollywood film. She knew all the stars—from Aishwarya to Sharukh. After the film, Pooja and Harsha sang the songs to one other—repeating the catchy phrases, accentuating the parts that they enjoyed most with their own personalities.

To this musical family the 4-hour trip to Vermont offered an opportunity for their beloved sing-a-long game of *Antakshari*. When a song, such as *Khabi khusi khabi gham* ended on *ma*, the next person would start a song with *ma*. Nemi would always atart the game and he sang:

बैठे-बैठे क्या करें, करना है कुछ काम   *baithe, baithe, kya Karen, karna hai kuch kaam*
शुरू करो अन्ताक्षरी, लेके प्रभु का नाम   *shuru karo antakshari, leke prabhu ka naam*

In this way, the children used what they knew from the songs that they heard through films and from their father in the mornings. They tested each other on the words and Harsha corrected Aalok as he mispronounced the *hai* from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* कुछ-कुछ होता है as if it were pronounced as *hay*. In Antakshari, it was evident that despite Aalok and Pooja's upbringing, they still possessed an imperfect knowledge of Hindi and consequently made mistakes in pronunciation.

How heritage language learners acquire their version of the Hindi-Urdu or Hindustani language marks a complicated question with a diversity of answers and several approaches to teasing out those answers. Yet, it undoubtedly rests on a particular individual's experience and this analysis does not ignore the variations that heritage language learners present. Not everyone's story fits into the model of the Agarwal family. But how, besides first exposures to parental voices speaking Hindustani, do heritage language learners acquire language? This paper proposes that Hindustani film songs serve as an effective pedagogical tool to teach Hindustani. The songs covered here span a range of generations starting in

1953 with a song from the film *Anarkali* and ending in 1998 with a song from *Dushman*. Not every aspect of the song is covered, rather only points that seem noteworthy for language pedagogy. They also attempt to cover a wide range of linguistic and grammatical issues. Songs cannot exclusively inform a language learner's ability to speak a language. A heritage language learner will undoubtedly have to fill in the gaps by learning Hindi or Urdu through formal means. This analysis presented in this article also evaluates the usefulness of actively listening to Hindustani film songs for language learning.

Examples of Hindustani Film Songs as a Pedagogical Tool
Mera Juta Hai Japani" मेरा जूता है जापानी from *Mera Naam Joker* (1970)

Adjectives

Moving on to a more direct grammar lesson, *Mera Naam Joker* with Raj Kapoor exemplifies how a song can teach how to use Hindustani adjectives. The Charlie Chaplinesque character of Raj Kapoor throughout his film endears the viewer to his character. This means that children at a very young age can pick up on the simple lyrics of the song. The lyrics of the song follow a very basic pattern that starts with:

मेरा जूता है जापानी	mera juta hain Japani,
यह पतलून इंग्लिस्तानी	yeh patloon Englishtani,
सर पे लाल टोपी रूसी	sar pe lal topi Rusi,
फिर भी दिल है हिन्दुस्तानी	phir bhi dil hai Hindustani

An English translation of this line is: "my shoes are Japanese, these pants are English, on my head a Russian hat, still my heart is Hindustani." The first line utilizes the first person ownership marker of 'mera,' which Kapoor's character assigns to his 'juta' or shoe. The auxiliary of *mera juta'* is *hai* which signifies the verb *is*; *Japani* means Japanese. Kapoor moves to singing more playfully as he states that *yeh patloon Englishtani*; he leaves out the extra auxiliary verb *hai* allowing him to craft a cadence within the line flowing from the several syllables in *Englishtani*. Moreover, *yeh patloon'* uses the word for *yeh*, a masculine article that denotes *this* in English translation. *Englishtani,* another adjective like *Hindustani* ends in the *ee*, sound perhaps giving an unaware listener an indirect sense of how the adjectives, particularly adjectives that mark nationalities or ethnicities, work. *Sar pe lal topi rusi* begins with the postpositional phrase *sar pe* meaning *upon the head*. *Rusi*, as one may be able to gues, means Russian, yet again ending in the long *ee* vowel. Finally, the phrase *phir bhi dil hai Hinudstani* introduces a non-native speaker of Hindustani to the transitional phrase *phir bhi*, meaning *but still*. The line returns to utilizing the auxiliary verb '*hai*' (is) and ends with the word *Hinudstani*.

A listener in the Diaspora culture may possess a familiarity with the way these adjectives function linguistically (i.e., adding a long *ee* vowel to the end of nationalities or ethnicities makes them function as descriptive words). But what makes the experience of listening to this song is the repetition of the words like *Japani* and *Rusi* These serve as denoting different nationalities, words that would most likely not appear in a single conversation with a native speaker or with one's parents. The song therefore is transformed into a lesson to learn adjectives. While acquiring the skill of assigning nationalities, the learner engages in phrases and verbal constructions as well. Even though these fail to stand at the heart of the grammar that the song teaches, it exemplifies an added benefit of the song for students

learning the language. The character of Raj Kapoor, for a viewer who has had no exposure to Hindustani culture except within a classroom, also tells a story. The image of a circus clown poking fun at how his clothes come from all over the world, with the changes of modernization on Indian society, sticks with the listener. The venue of a film thus makes this grammar lesson a more appealing and indirect format of grammar instruction, which has a distinct, cultural and linguistic value.

Eek Do Teen एक दो तीन from *Teezab* तेज़ाब (1988)

Numbers

Perhaps the clearest example of how Hindustani film songs play a role in instructing students of Hindustani grammar serves as the notably catchy song *Ek Do Teen* from the *Teezab*. For students of the Diaspora culture, *Ek Do Teen* typifies a route for learning the Hindustani language. The lyrics are not complicated like the *Ye Zindagi Usi Ki Hai Jo Kisi Ka Ho Gaya* from *Anarkali*. Rathe,r the poetic words of the song consist mainly of a repetition of the numbers *ek do teen, char paanch che saath aath nau, dus gyarah, barah tera.* Like other counting songs, though, this one is definitely a play on the numbers. For example, in one of the verses, the singer states that *satrah ko samjhi saang toot gaya, Atharah ko dil toot gaya.* This roughly translates to: *Of seventeen, think that our bond broke, of eighteen, my heart broke.* Here the repetition of *toot gaya* meaning *has broken*, parallels the two numbers. The contiguity of the numbers in the song also furthers the lesson within the song. The playfulness that the singer evokes throughout the song helps the song achieve splendor and stay away from sounding redundant.

For heritage language learners, this piece certainly carries the ability to help them remember the numbers of a system that they most likely are not using. They will play along with the jokes that the actress makes with the numbers and indirectly internalize the language. Again, like the songs from *Anarkali* and *Mera Naam Joker*, it is the poetry of music that enables the song to successfully teach the language, itself. The absence of lyrical playfulness makes the song more difficult to connect to and thus less susceptible to being a strong tool for edification. It is worth noting that without all the pieces that encompass a film song—its place in a story, the upbeat melody, the actor who plays the role of the singer, and the simplicity of lyrics, functioning together in harmony, it is not as helpful of a teaching mechanism than one may presuppose. A scholar of music may argue that the musical simplicity and dependence on foreign musical influences to construct a melody may make these film songs not acceptable to a higher musical culture. Despite this, they definitely function as successful teaching mechanisms as evidenced by their capability to inform individuals living in a Diaspora environment where access to these films may be more natural and expected.

Kya Karte the Saajna from *Lal Dupatta Malmal Ka* (1990)

Past Habitual Tense

The song, "क्या करते थे," from the movie "लाल दुपट्टा "is helpful in learning the habitual tense. Some of the verb phrases that it contains are:

1. करते थे = used to do
2. पूछा करते थे = used to ask

3. देखा करते थे = used to see

4. रोया करते थे = used to cry

5. मांगा करते थे = used to ask

6. भरा करते थे = used to fill

The first three phrases are in the past habitual tense, while the last three phrases are in the iterative tense. Both tenses call for the repetition of an action (doing, asking, seeing, crying, or filling), but in slightly different manners, by repeating these (and other) verb phrases throughout.

This song makes it easier for a beginning Hindi student to understand what the song means and how the habitual tense works. The verbs are also relatively simple, so it is even more accommodating for new Hindi speakers. The song exemplifies teaching the past habitual tense through a song. The past habitual tense attaches the meaning that is in a sentence such as *I used to + verb*. The lyrics of the song consist of a dialogue between two lovers who express their love for each other through nostalgia. The situation in the film between the two characters calls for a flirtatious interaction between them and therefore, the listener is primed to listen to a song that expresses love. With this text, the listener also fills in the gaps in meaning from the film.

Therefore, it is not necessary for the audience to know all the words, as context, especially within a Bollywood film, facilitates one's ability to take context markers to derive meaning. The female singer begins the song by asking her lover *Kya Karte The Saajana Tum Hamase Duur Rahake /Ham To Judaai Mein Akele/Chhup-chhup Ke Roya Karate The*. A rough translation of this is: *what you used to do, my love, when you were far from me/ I used to cry is separation, while away from you.* The repetition in this piece comes through in the words *karte the* which expresses the habitual tense of the verb karna or *to do*. The past habitual tense in Hindustani is conjugated by adding the *ta/te/ti* at the end of the root of a verb and an auxiliary *tha/the/thi* after that conjugation. It translates to the English *used to do*. The male singer also repeats to his female lover that he also *used to* feel similarly towards her. In order for him to express his love for her, however, he also utilizes the habitual tense *karte the*. The repeated past tense across genders even further creates an opportunity for a student to learn how to construct the tense.

Maine Dekha Tune Dekha Usne Dekha मैं ने देखा, तूने देखा, उसने देखा"

Dushman दुश्मन (1998)

Ne ने Constructions

The song *Maine Dekha Tune Dekha Usne Dekha* from the film *Dushman* can be used to teach the heritage language learner the *ne* construction, a grammatical rule which has no English equivalent. The repeated line throughout the song *Maine Dekha Tune Dekha Usne Dekha Sabne Dekha* means *I saw, you saw, he saw, all of us saw*. Here, students are exposed to transitive and intransitive verbs, which is very important for language learners. The use of *ne* is very unique due to the fact that it has no equivalent in English. Hence, the use of *ne* in songs gives students an idea of its correct use. Grammatically, *ne* is only used with transitive verb forms in perfect tenses. The *ne*'construction dictates that the verb take the simple masculine past form and a *ne* is added as a suffix to the particle. For example, the word *us*

is the oblique form of *vah*, signifying *he, she, or that*, becomes *usne* in this grammatical construction. The auxiliaries *tha/the/thi* are not used; the meaning remains the same in either case. Thus, this song introduces heritage language learners to a construction that forces them out of a familiar territory in English grammar.

Above all, how the dance in the film vividly depicts the language that the singers use to express their messages gives further reason worth mentioning for this film song. The actress Kajol basically dances out all of the words through her motions. She points to her- self when she says *maine* and she points directly to the camera when she states *tune*. When she states *usne*, she strikes a pose that substitutes for the unknown other that *usne* stands for. With the final statement *sabne dekha*, Kajol gesticulates all around herself, physically acting out the expressions that she is articulating. The viewer undoubtedly connects meaning with these movements and can easily piece the physical dance steps to the simple vocabulary that the singer uses. The logic of how she goes through the particles establishes simplicity, with which she coyly flirts with her lover.

Somvar Ko Hum Mile सोमवार को हम मिले'' from *Apnapan* अपनापन (1977)

Weekdays

Somvar ko hum mile from the Hindi movie *Apnapan* is a great tool for teaching begin-ning Hindi students the days of the week. The repetition of the days starting from Monday (*Somv*ar) through Sunday (*Ravivar*) helps the students hear each of the days in an order that is easy to remember. The best part is that students can easily get an idea for both Hindi and Urdu names of the weekdays as Thursday in Hindi is *Guruvar* while in the song it is *Joom-eraat* and Sunday is *Ravivar* and in the song it is *Aeitvaar*. The song presents the days in their proper grammatical context followed by *ko*, further helping students learn how to use the days of the week in complete sentences.

Ye Zindagi Usi Ki Hai Jo Kisi Ka Ho Gaya ये जिंदगी उसी की है जो किसी का हो गया''

from *Anarkali* अनारकली (1953)

Pronouns

One of the most respected classic Hindustani films is Nandlal Jaswantlal's *Anarkali* (IMDb). This film stars Pradeep Kumar and Bina Rai. C. Ramchandra composed the musi-cal score. The plot of this film consists of the story of the Mughal Jehangir. The song in focus is *Ye Zindagi Usi Ki Hai Jo Kisi Ka Ho Gaya* performed by Lata Mangeshkar. Mangeshkar begins the song by fully repeating the line *Ye Zindagi Usi Ki Hai Jo Kisi Ka Ho Gaya* twice. This musical line sets the melody for the song and reemerges throughout the piece. Mangeshkar finishes the line by singing *pyaar hi mein kho gaya* which means *who has been lost in love*. This line in its original form as well as in English has a very complex meaning. It discusses two very heavy concepts—love and life. However, in its Hindustani form, the line flows naturally. The words seem to rhyme one after another. *Zin-dagi* rhymes with *ki* and *usi* rhymes with *kisi*.   *Ki*, *kisi*, and *ka* alliterate. As a whole the song emphasizes a strong *ee* vowel that comes across through *zindagi* and *kisi*. This shows that the line in its Hinudstani is poetic in both its message and form.

This single line also boasts several important aspects of Hindustani grammar. *Yeh* de-noting *this* is the pronoun that modifies *zindagi*. The word *usi* assigns is an indiscriminate possessive for *zindagi*. *Ye zindagi* or *this life,* is completed by the auxiliary verb *hai*. *Ka ho gaya* means *has happened.* *Jo* literally translates in English *to the one which* and *kisi* is the

oblique version of *koi* meaning *anyone* or *someone. Ka ho gaya* means *to fell in love with someone. Ka* signifies possession and *ho gaya* means *has become*. Two ways of expressing possession as well as two verbs emerge in this compound sentence. But the repetition and rhyme scheme does not make the grammar sound at all complicated or confusing. In fact, the fluidity of the statement helps one sing it to oneself even if one stops listening to the piece. The tune makes the grammar accessible to listeners of many ages. Also, as one follows the rhyme in *ye zindagi usi ki hai jo kisi ka ho gaya* between *zindagi* and *kisi*, the two phrases are bound together by the music. Whether or not listeners are cognizant of it, as thes understand this piece and are able to follow a very complex grammatical structure that spans several lessons in Hindustani pedagogy. Therefore, for heritage language learners in the Diaspora culture, listening to this piece as children, they can certainly acquire some important linguistic tools in order to begin learning Hindustani. The structures found in this piece from *Anarkali* are used in common vernacular but not necessarily with the degree of complexity presented in this one line. Nevertheless, formalized training in the second language will still be needed to strengthen one's command of these grammatical and linguistic structures.

Conclusion

Based on these five Hindustani songs, it is evident that there are several ways in which a film song can aid heritage language learners to become more familiar with a second language. The range of songs selected in this article implies that it is not only simplicity in structure that allows the grammar to become understood by the heritage language learner but how the film song presents grammar to the viewer which would lead to the learners' success. The presence of stories, poetry, rhyme, repetition, and dance build a joyful language learning experience and this aspect of enjoyment motivates students to become more interactive listeners as well in order to remember the songs. Students cannot passively watch film songs, however, to fulfill the cycle of learning a language; they must activate the language through speaking. The skills that one gains through activation enable the language to be retained within the minds of the learners. The re-performance of Aalok's listening to his father's singing in the morning, and the imitation of film actresses by Pooja after watching a Bollywood film, is the type of activation, which leads to a successful language learning experience. Perhaps the aspect of engagement is the aspect of Anthakshari that makes it such a powerful tool to learn language.

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Alternative Assessments and Student Perceptions
in the World Language Classroom

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Abstract: *World language educators are constantly tasked with evaluating appropriate and beneficial assessments for their students. This study investigated how first-year students in a Midwestern United States high school perceived three different alternative assessments in the world language classroom: Dynamic Assessment, Task-based Assessment, and Formative Assessment using self- and peer-evaluation. The researcher correlated the perceptions to the students' assessment scores. Additionally, the researcher compared final exam scores of the control group with those of the experimental group. The results indicated that the experimental group students favorably perceived the alternative assessments types, chose Formative Assessment as their most preferred and Task-based Assessment as the least desired, and scored equally as well as the control group students on the final exam.*

Keywords: world/foreign languages, student perceptions, alternative assessment, dynamic assessment, task-based assessment, formative assessment, self- and peer-evaluation, world/foreign language policy

Introduction and Rationale

In the ever-evolving world of education, practitioners are faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of all students as well as the demands of state performance evaluations. In an effort to address this quest, educators must research best practices in the areas of both classroom methodology and assessment and must create a perceived value to students. According to Morrow, Shanahan, and Wixson (2012), future state and federal requirements will necessitate appropriate assessment choices which, in turn, will drive curriculum and instruction. They go on and argue that assessment choices are crucial for successful student preparation; the assessments should emphasize critical reading, writing, and higher-order thinking skills. These assessments are not remotely similar to the former, traditional state assessments but will be used to measure teacher success, evaluation, and retention. Teachers now find themselves in the position of designing alternative assessments that measure reading, writing, and higher-order thinking so that students are better prepared for college and the real-world. This task is further complicated for foreign language teachers who are instructed to uphold all of the following standards: National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, existing state standards, and, in some states, the Common Core State Standards (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 1998; Illinois State Board of Education, 2012; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). As a result, this researcher developed a study to measure the effectiveness of certain alternative assessments that would meet many of the current demands.

The results of this study may be of interest to world language teachers at the high school level in particular as they restructure their curriculum and assessments to meet current demands and state testing measures. Additionally, while many studies have been completed that show the benefits of certain alternative assessments in the world (foreign) language classroom, very few included high school students as participants, most included university-aged students as subjects. Additionally, finding existing studies centered on a variety of al-

ternative assessments was difficult; the researcher chose to use three different types. The primary reason for providing a variety of alternative assessments was to discern student perceptions for comparison purposes and perceived interest.

Literature Review

Using traditional, summative testing in the classroom as a way for preparing for state testing is no longer sufficient. Poehner and van Compernolle (2011) discussed the need for teaching that promoted development and was a process, not just an end-of-lesson assessment. Sidek (2012) explained that traditional testing, which typically required students to comprehend and process specific data, had to be modified to include assessments with meaningful tasks that were more communicative in nature. Possible assessment types that would facilitate this change include dynamic assessment (Antón, 2009; Poehner & van Compernolle, 2011; Wei, 2011), task-based assessment (Byrnes, 2002; Carless, 2007; Sidek, 2012; Skehan & Foster, 1997), and formative assessment using peer- and self-evaluations (Bryant & Carless, 2009; Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007; Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001; Tamjid & Birjandi, 2011).

Dynamic Assessment is based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory that teacher interventions with clear examples and instruction, along with individualized prompts, help students move into self-reliance and mastery. Antón (2009) used a pre/post-test method to go along with Vygotsky's theory. After the initial assessment, the researcher documented specific points of remediation to address during the unit. She conferenced with her students to discuss their individual needs and then retested them. Using a similar approach, Wei (2011), who sought to use Vygotsky's theory, developed a Dynamic Assessment process for her classroom. She discovered her students' needs through an initial analysis followed by goal setting. Wei then planned assessments and made her students comfortable with the testing process. She continuously re-evaluated and revised her plans to meet the needs of her students and gave constant feedback both verbally and through multiple, short assessments during the unit. The format used for the current study was Dynamic Assessment focused on conferencing and group strategy sessions as well as a pre/post-test, similar to the unit designs of Antón and Wei.

Another potential alternative assessment is Task-based Assessment. According to Byrnes (2002), Task-based Assessment focused on language use and meaning that is contextualized in a communicative manner, typically through writing. The purpose of Byrnes' research was to promote a shift from grammar-based instruction through a different assessment approach. Byrnes created rubrics to evaluate students' work to ensure consistency and use as a guideline for students while they worked. Assessments were created with communication in a real-world context, or as close to real-world as possible, at the forefront while still addressing the content needs of the textbook. The assessments were all writing assignments. Ke (2006) also researched Task-based Assessment in order to promote communicative competency. Ke used a combination of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills with real-world task assessments. Carless (2007) continued the Task-based Assessment research by interviewing secondary teachers who used this assessment in their classrooms. He concluded that some traditional teacher methods incorporating grammar should preclude any task-based assessment. For the purpose of this study, teaching grammar, such as Carless suggested, was incorporated, along with the creation of an assessment combining reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, as incorporated by Ke.

Formative Assessment using self- and peer-evaluation forms is another viable alternative assessment. Tamjid and Birjandi (2011) realized a need for altering traditional assessments in order to stay current with the movement toward learner-centered classrooms. In their study, all students were assigned writing prompts that the instructors graded; however, the experimental group also completed self-assessment rubrics and were randomly given another student's assignment to assess using the same rubric. The students all revised their assignments before submitting to the instructors. Tamjid and Birjandi found that the experimental group improved their metacognition which led to better thinking and learning skills that could be used on future assignments. Bryant and Carless (2009), also used peer-assessment methods; they hypothesized that self- and peer- assessments would stimulate more learner independence and create an atmosphere in which students desired improvement through reflective thinking. Their students viewed the peer-assessment rubric as a tool to help them earn better grades instead of a waste of time. The current study made use of Tamjid and Birjandi's process of self- and peer-assessment as a reflective measure to improve student writing while incorporating unit grammar and vocabulary into the prompt.

Student-Perceived Value

To continue the thoughts of a learner-centered classroom with student reflective thinking, the critical part of this research was student perceptions. Students must perceive value for any incentive; this is critical to success in the classroom. According to Palloff and Pratt (2007), student-perceived value is essential. The researchers suggested that educators design activities that interest students by relating to their life activities, communicate clear expectations, create positive classroom atmospheres, and make use of alternative assessments.

Research Methods and Procedures

Venue and Subjects for the Research Study

According to the Illinois School Report Cards (2012), School X was a kindergarten through twelfth grade unit district with approximately 920 students, 300 of whom attended the high school. The ethnicity of the district was primarily White, at approximately 79%. Black students encompassed over 8% of the population, and Asian/Pacific Islanders held almost 6%, as did Multi-ethnic students. Less than 1% was Hispanic or Native American. The percentage of low-income students was 11%. The average ACT score of the previous junior class was 24. The graduation rate was just over 95%. School X's location was metropolitan, lying on a major river, and was approximately 165 miles from two megacities in the Midwestern section of the United States.

School X typically offered three sections of Spanish One each fall. Spanish One is a beginner, introductory course for students to start Spanish language study. This is a high school, freshman-level course. Generally, the students in these classes were eighth graders or first-year high school students; however, a few sophomores, juniors, and seniors comprised the overall makeup.

The classroom teacher taught three sections of Spanish One during the fall of 2013. Typically, a section included 25 to 30 students. Most students ranged from 13 to 15 years of age at the onset of the study. To choose the research sample, the researcher included the first section of the day as the control group, 27 students, in which 14 agreed to participate in the study. This group had 9 females and 5 males. The second and third sections were the experimental group, 54 students, in which 34 agreed to participate in the study. This group had 15

females and 19 males. The researcher designated the experimental and control groups before seeing the lists of students in each class to reduce any possibility of bias.

Pre-Data Collection Procedures

The researcher requested and received approval from a School X administrator to complete this study. After meeting the students in August, 2013, the researcher explained the study and asked for the students to sign a research study assent form. The researcher sent home letters to the parent/guardian and acquired consent signatures. The researcher, in cooperation with the classroom teacher from School X, personally controlled all aspects of the study, including alternative assessment design for each unit, classroom procedures during tests, and data collection and storage procedures. The classroom teacher and the researcher also ensured that all students took the departmentally required summative assessment. Student data was accessed through the school secured server and self-reporting on the surveys.

Minimal risks existed for the participants of this study. The students were treated the same as in any other school year or with any other teacher, using similar methodology, using the same text book, and by following all rules and procedures at School X. The experimental group received the same vocabulary and grammar instruction as the control group, along with the required department summative exam. None of the department goals or objectives for Spanish One were altered for either group.

Research Design

The research was completed during the fall of 2013 over a 15-week time frame. The researcher chose a concurrent nested design study that fell within the mixed-method realm (Robson, 2011). The primary method was quantitative through the analysis of the summative test scores of the control and experimental groups as well as data analysis correlating the perceptions of the experimental group with the test scores. Teacher journal observations stood as a secondary, qualitative measure. The teacher recorded naturally-occurring data, notations of attitudes, behaviors, and comments relating to the alternative assessments used with the experimental group during the study in the journal. Additional qualitative measures required the researcher to note the students' overall preferences of alternative assessment type through a set of post -survey open-ended questions by categorizing the responses into themes.

This study was conducted with 48 participants, students in their first year of world language study earning high school credit. The School X teacher assessed the 14 members of the control group using fairly traditional, previously used quizzes and tests throughout the semester. The remaining 34 participants, the experimental group, took alternative assessments instead. The researcher sought the perceptions of these students concerning three different alternative assessments types. This mixed-method study, within the concurrent-nested design (Robson, 2011), assessed students' perceptions.

Data Collection

The researcher began by collecting data from the Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) in School X's confidential computer server space. It would be purposeless to give a pre-test to beginning Spanish learners, so the researcher used the most recent reading score for each student to determine the level of each student in the control and experimental groups. The researcher ran an independent t test on the two groups to show equivalency. The two groups were similar enough to have confidence that any difference in summative assessment data was due to the intervention.

During the 15 weeks of the study, the classroom teacher taught three units to the students while keeping a journal about the process. The teacher used the same teaching methods for covering the required vocabulary and grammar goals for the control and experimental groups. Departmental goals are established at School X and were followed for all classes in the control and experimental groups. The primary difference was in the assessment. The teacher administered the department's traditional, summative final exam to both the control and the experimental groups. In contrast to the control group, the experimental group took a dynamic assessment for unit one, a task-based assessment for unit two, and a formative assessment using peer- and self-evaluations involving writing assignments for unit three. The researcher gave a code word to each alternative assessment type: Blue for dynamic assessment, Red for task-based assessment, and Green for formative assessment using self- and peer-evaluations. At the end of each unit, the students in the experimental group completed a researcher-developed survey with a 4-point Likert scale to measure perceptions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the present study:

1. What perceptions do first-year foreign language students have of dynamic assessment, specifically focused on conferencing and group strategy sessions?
2. What perceptions do first-year foreign language students have of task-based assessment, specifically focused on real world communication?
3. What perceptions do first-year foreign language students have of formative assessment, specifically using peer- and self-evaluations?
4. How do the summative assessment scores of the students who received interventions differ from those who did not?
5. How do student perceptions of the alternative assessments correlate with their test scores?

Data Analysis

To answer Research Questions 1-3, Likert-type surveys were given to the experimental group at the end of the three units and were analyzed. For each survey, the researcher categorized the students' responses and used a bar chart to express the experimental group's agreement level, how the particular assessment reflected learning. Since 4-point, Likert-type data are measured on an interval scale, the researcher gave descriptive analysis of the tendencies. A one-way ANOVA measured the associations between the student choices to show statistically significant differences by assessment type (Leedy & Ormrod). To follow up the one-way ANOVA, a Bonferroni *post hoc* determined where the differences existed. The researcher continued by writing descriptive, narrative accounts to relate the teacher journal observations after transcribing the journal into common themes. The themes revealed student perceptions of the alternative assessments from the teacher's perspective.

Research Question 4 required comparative data analysis to be answered. An independent t test was used to "determine whether two groups of scores are significantly different" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 351). The means of the control and the experimental groups were compared to show any statistical significance using a box plot.

Finally, Research Question 5 required analysis of the relationship between the experimental students' perceived value for each assessment and their test scores on each assessment

Initially, a spreadsheet was composed to display each student's alternative assessment scores. The researcher continued by categorizing the student perceptions of the three alterna-

tive assessments. Correlational research "involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relation exists between two or more quantifiable variables…a decimal number between -1.00 and +1.00" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 624). The researcher used a correlation coefficient formula to determine a positive, negative, or nonexistent correlation between the students' perceptions and their alternative test scores. For each assessment, the researcher correlated the student's alternative assessment score to his/her combined survey answers and displayed the results with scatter plots. The researcher used the student data to rank the three alternative assessments in order of preference, based on information from the post-study survey and then described these results. Narrative descriptions of the open-ended survey questions completed the analysis. The researcher took the students' words, found patterns, and developed themes to reveal correlative information.

Findings

Research Questions 1-3

Research Questions 1-3 required descriptive statistics that measured students' perceptions following the dynamic, task-based, and formative unit assessments. To show the students' perceptions of each assessment type, the researcher combined the two, 4-point Likert-type question scores, for a maximum of eight points and displayed the data using bar charts (Figures 1, 2, and 3). Figure 1 indicates that 25 of the 34 students in the experimental group agreed that the Dynamic Assessment showed the teacher how much they knew and favored using this type of assessment again in the future. None of the students strongly disagreed that this type of assessment should be continued nor that it showed how much they knew. Out of the 34 students, only 6 had disagreement to the Dynamic Assessment.
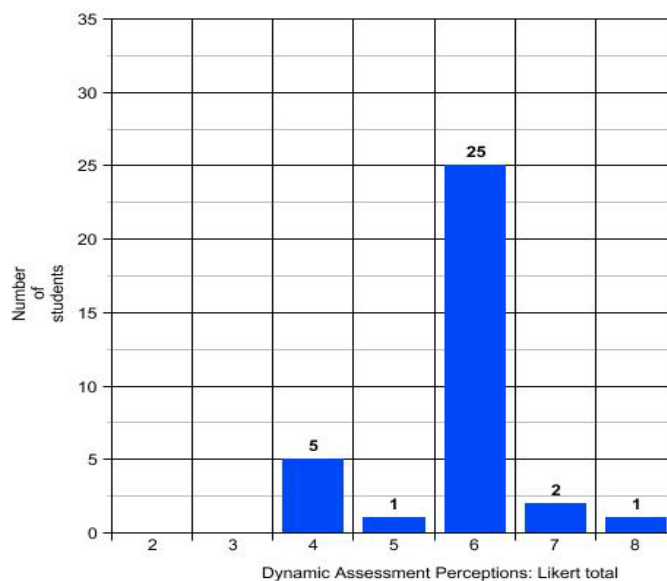

Figure 1. Dynamic Assessment perceptions. This figure illustrates the student's perceptions of Assessment Blue on a scale of 2 to 8.

Figure 2 shows that five of the 34 students strongly disagreed that the Task-based assessment administered showed what they knew and that the teacher should use this assessment type later during the year. Twelve of the 34 had a mixed opinion of agreement with disagreement on the assessment. Overall, no students strongly agreed concerning Task-based Assessment.
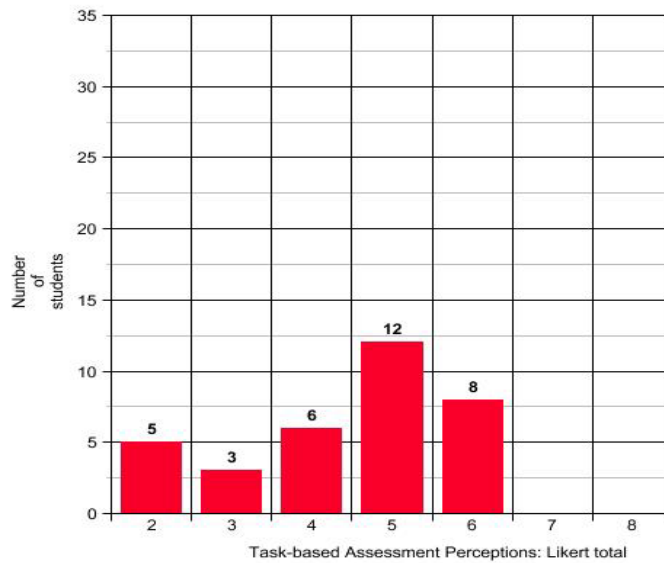
Figure 2. Task-based Assessment perceptions. This figure illustrates the student's perceptions of Assessment Red on a scale of 2 to 8.
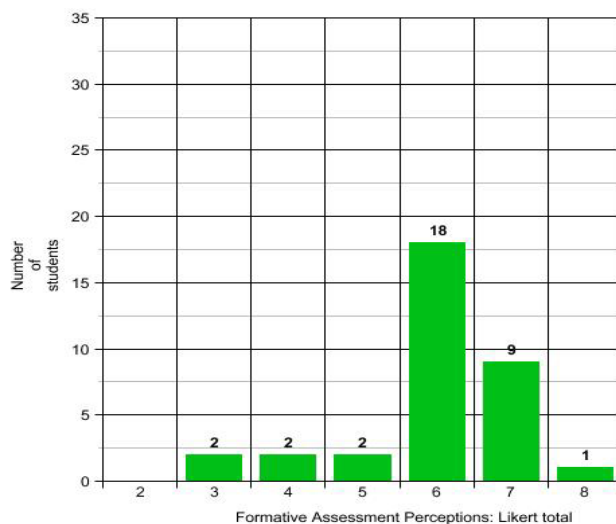

Figure 3. Formative Assessment perceptions. This figure illustrates the student's perceptions of Assessment Green on a scale of 2 to 8.

To finalize the quantitative analysis for Research Questions One, Two, and Three, the researcher computed a one-way, within subjects ANOVA to compare the effect various alternative assessments had on perceptions, specifically regarding Dynamic, Task-based, and Formative Assessment types. The means of student perceptions were associated with the student perceptions at the three different points after each assessment. The researcher found that at least one of the means for perceptions was different from the others: $F(2, 66.0)= 22.75$, $p< .001$, partial $\eta^2= .41$. Using Bonferroni's correction for family-wise errors, the student perceptions of Dynamic Assessment (Blue) did not differ greatly from the perceptions of Formative Assessment (Green): $p=1.0$, which is not significant. However, when comparing the student perceptions of Dynamic Assessment (Blue) to Task-based Assessment (Red), $p<.001$ which was significant, with Dynamic Assessment being better perceived than Task-

based Assessment. Similarly, Task-based Assessment (Red) perceptions compared to those of Formative Assessment (Green), *p*<.001 which indicated significance, as Formative Assessment was better perceived than Task-based Assessment. The students had a lower perception of Task-based Assessment than they held of either Dynamic or Formative Assessment; while their perceptions of both Dynamic and Formative Assessments were similar. An eta-square of .41 showed a large effect size.

From the post-study survey, the researcher tabulated the number of students citing each assessment type as the best and worst for reflecting knowledge of the material. Twenty-five of the 34 students recorded Formative Assessment, in which they wrote and used self- and peer-evaluation, as the type that best reflected their knowledge (see Figure 4).
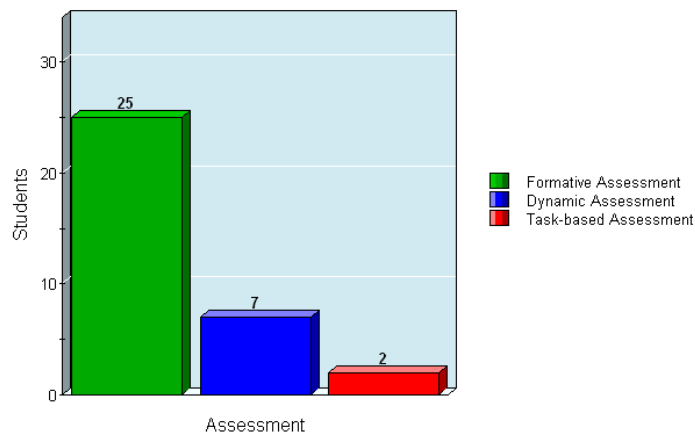

Figure 4. Best-Perceived Assessment type. This figure illustrates the students' perceptions of which assessment was the most favorable.

For the worst-perceived assessment, Task-based Assessment merited 29 of the 34 students' choice as not reflecting their knowledge. *See Figure 5*.
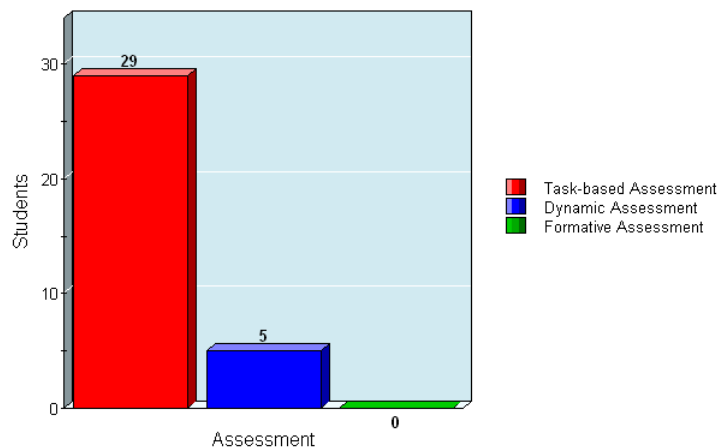

Figure 5. Worst-Perceived Assessment type. This figure illustrates the students' perceptions of which assessment was the least favorable.

Using qualitative procedures, the open-ended responses given by the students on the post-study survey were coded. Then they were assigned themes concerning the students'

perceptions regarding why an assessment type was best or worst for knowledge reflection. Tables 1 and 2 depict those themes with the number of students claiming them. The students remarking that test format was crucial for the best perceived assessment also included specific details, such as, appreciating the revision process on the Formative Assessment, feeling advantaged from experiencing the intervention and taking the pre-test on the Dynamic Assessment, and experiencing better success from the Task-based Assessment's separate task sections. When referring to his preference for Formative Assessment, one student stated, "It let me show that I can communicate." Another student commented, "I could pick what to say based on the words I knew." An additional proponent of Formative Assessment indicated, "I could test my knowledge and have someone revise it." In all, the students clearly favored the Formative Assessment as being most reflective of their knowledge.

Table 1
Best-Perceived Assessment: Themes

Assessment Type	Themes Seemed easy/ Knew material	Freedom	Test Format	Practical/ Communicative	Did Not Respond
Formative Assessment-Green	10	9	2	4	0
Dynamic Assessment-Blue	1	0	5	0	1
Task-based Assessment-Red	0	0	1	0	1

In reference to the worst perceived assessment, students mentioned that tasks were overwhelming to them on the Task-based Assessment and that they were unclear on what exactly was expected on this same test. One student wrote, "It was too much…" and another related, "It was confusing and hard." Two students reported that they did not favor a pre-/post-test design, as seen on the Dynamic Assessment. Overall, the students relayed that the Task-based Assessment did not reveal their understanding as fully as did the Formative or Dynamic Assessments.

Table 2
Worst-Perceived Assessment: Themes

Assessment Type	Themes Confusing	Hard/Did not Know or Understand Material	Test Format	Did Not Respond
Task-based Assessment-Red	17	9	5	1
Dynamic Assessment-Blue	0	2	2	1
Formative Assessment-Green	0	0	0	0

The classroom teacher provided limited journal notes concerning students' behaviors and comments at the time of each alternative assessment, but also delivered his perceptions of how each assessment impacted the classroom. He noted that the Dynamic Assessment (Blue) format with a pre- and post-test, as well as an intervention and group strategy session, seemed beneficial to most students. The two test method helped students better anticipate what to expect early in the year. The teacher also stated that the pre-test and intervention guided his instruction to more effectively meet the needs of the students. However, many students complained that Task-based Assessment (Red) was difficult, and some stated it was confusing. The teacher felt that task-based activities may have been better suited as an in-class partner-practice activity or that some sort of task-based activity needed to be used during the unit and not just as the final assessment. Formative Assessment (Green) was well liked by the students. They commented to him that it was beneficial, practical, and allowed them to say whatever they wanted and avoid topics of which they had less comfort. Students appeared motivated to show off their knowledge for this assessment.

Research Question 4

To compare the mean of the final exam scores of the experimental group to that of the control group, an independent samples t test was calculated through SPSS. This information was visually displayed as a box plot in *Figure 6*. There was not a significant difference in the scores of the experimental group's final exam (M= 84.56, SD= 13.96) and from the final exam of the control group (M= 85.00, SD= 15.34); $t(46)$= -.097, p = .923, d= .03. These results suggest that the experimental group had comparable Spanish proficiency at the end of the semester to the control group.
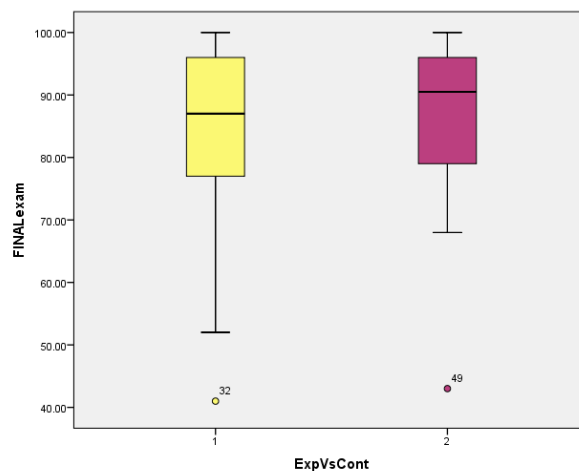

Figure 6. Final Exam scores. This figure illustrates the final exam scores of the experimental group in yellow compared with those of the control group in purple, on a scale of 0 to 100.

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 was concerned with showing relationships and not causes between the students' perceptions of each alternative assessment and each student's score on that assessment. A Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was computed to assess the possible relationships. *Figures 7, 8, and 9* illustrate that the X axis represented the students' perceptions of an alternative assessment, and the Y represented their test scores on that particular assessment.

When analyzed, the Dynamic Assessment (Blue) showed no correlation between the

students' perceptions and their scores, r $s(32)= .29$, $p=.09$, with a medium effect size of .293. Some students positively perceived the Dynamic Assessment and had high scores, while others viewed it similarly but had average or low scores. *Figure 7* summarizes the results with a scatterplot.
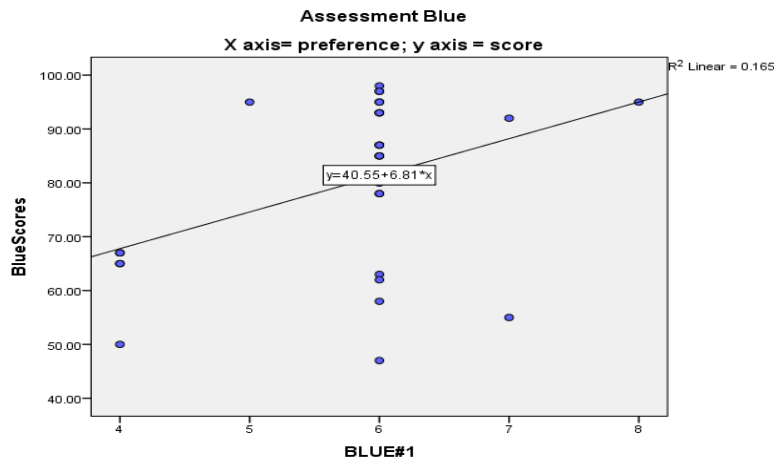

Figure 7. Dynamic Assessment (Blue) Correlation. This figure illustrates the correlation between the test scores (on a scale of 0 to 100) on Assessment Blue and each student's perception of the assessment (on a scale of 2 to 8).

In regard to the Task-based Assessment (Red), there was a significant positive correlation between the students' scores and their perceptions, r $s(32)= .57$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size of .574. As test scores rose, positive perceptions of the assessment also rose; the converse was also true. A scatterplot summarizes the results in *Figure 8*, as well as depicts the positive correlation with the ascending linear regression line.
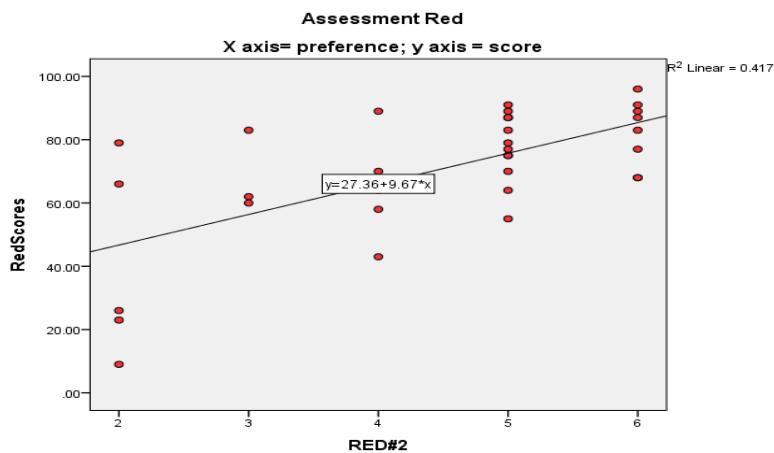

Figure 8. Task-based Assessment (Red) Correlation. This figure illustrates the correlation between the test scores (on a scale of 0 to 100) on Assessment Red and each student's perception of the assessment (on a scale of 2 to 8).

The Formative Assessment (Green) revealed no correlation between the assessment scores and the students' perceptions, r $s(32)= .10$, $p=.57$, with a small effect size of .101. The flat linear regression line on the scatterplot of *Figure 9* indicates that no meaningful relationship existed between assessment scores and perceptions in relation to this assessment type.
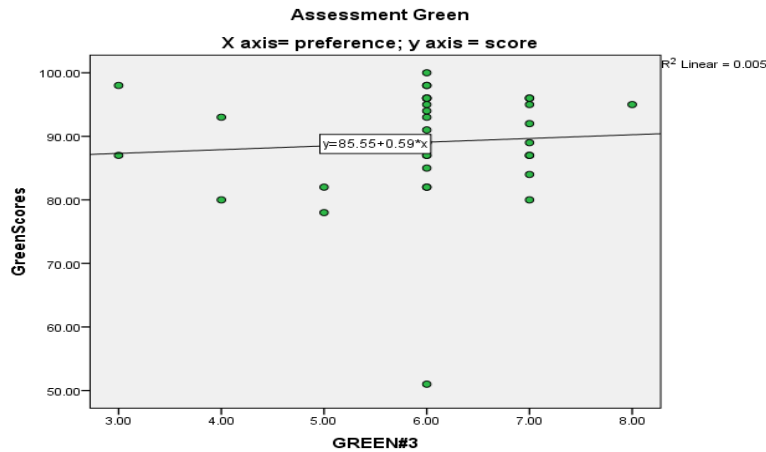

Assessment Green

X axis= preference; y axis = score

R^2 Linear = 0.005

$y=85.55+0.59*x$

Figure 9. Formative Assessment (Green) Correlation. This figure illustrates the correlation between the test scores (on a scale of 0 to 100) on Assessment Green and each student's perception of the assessment (on a scale of 2 to 8).

Conclusions and Implications

Research Question 1 sought to determine the perceptions of first-year Spanish students about Dynamic Assessment. Twenty-eight of the 34 experimental group students acknowledged Dynamic Assessment as agreeable or strongly agreeable, primarily in the agree category. Further, although Dynamic Assessment was not chosen as the best-perceived assessment type during the study, it was also not chosen as the worst. The most noted positive features were the pre-/post-test design and the benefit of the intervention session. This researcher then concluded that Dynamic Assessment was perceived by the students as a favorable alternative assessment for world language classroom teachers.

In regard to Research Question 2, 20 of the 34 experimental group students noted that Task-based Assessment was agreeable to them, in that it demonstrated their knowledge and would be acceptable to use again. However, eight of the 34 students showed disagreeability or even strongly disagreed that Task-based Assessment was preferable. Task-based Assessment also ranked as the least preferred choice of the three alternatives. This researcher determined that while Task-based Assessment may be an acceptable option, it was not found to be highly preferable.

Formative Assessment perceptions' data needed to answer Research Question 3 revealed that 28 of the 34 students agreed or strongly agreed with this alternative assessment's value. Ten of them showed levels of strong agreement. Additionally, Formative Assessment was established as the most favorable alternative assessment of the three, chosen by 25 of the 34 students; not one student ranked Formative Assessment as the worst choice. This researcher established that Formative Assessment was well-perceived by the students in the experimental group and was the popular choice; thus, making Formative Assessment a valid alternative for L2 educators.

Research Question 4 which compared the means of the control and experimental groups on the final exam, showed no significant difference. This researcher concluded that the end-of-semester knowledge for first-year Spanish students was equal. Students in both groups, as measured by a common assessment, had acquired the same knowledge and skills. This researcher recognized that the use of alternative assessments neither advantaged nor disadvantaged the learners; therefore making alternative assessments viable choices for the foreign language teacher.

When comparing the perceptions of the experimental group students to each one's alternative assessment scores, this researcher was able to draw conclusions to answer Research Question 5. A significant positive relationship existed between the students' perceptions of Task-based Assessment and their assessment scores. This researcher surmised that student perceptions concerning Task-based Assessment did factor into performance. No correlation existed between the student perceptions of Dynamic Assessment and test scores or between Formative Assessment perceptions and test scores. Since these analyses established that no statistical significance existed, this researcher inferred that perceptions did not affect performance, positively or negatively, in relation to Dynamic and Formative Assessments.

This researcher concluded that, while student perceptions are important, as long as the classroom teachers design valid alternative assessments, students are agreeable to a variety of types and perceive them as accurate reflections of their knowledge. It may be noted, though, that some assessment types need to be practiced and modeled throughout a unit to increase their effectiveness and perceived value. For example, task-based assessment was perceived as confusing to students when experienced for the first time on an end-of-unit assessment. Overall, data did not support that student perceptions affected the outcomes required on a unit assessment, with the exception of Task-based Assessment, regardless of the testing format. While student perceptions and choices are important, they are not a reliable indicator on which to base the relationship to students' grades.

Implications

The alternative assessments from this study produce equally positive results to traditional methods; students also have positive perceptions of these assessments. With that said, the new, alternative assessments are superior to traditional assessments, as they produce equally positive results and are also compliant with the demands of state, national, and world language standards.

Teachers will continue to design assessments to meet their programs outcomes but should always consider their students' perceptions, alternatives to traditional design, and the bonus effects of creating assessments that lend themselves to higher-order thinking and real-world application. Dynamic Assessment, Task-based Assessment, and Formative Assessments using self- and peer-evaluation should be strongly considered for the L2 educator.

"Assessment is the key to language learning. Only through the assessment lens can learners find out if they are meeting their goals, to what extent those goals are being met, and what they still need to do. Through the feedback received, our students' motivational fires are fed" (Duncan, 2014, p. 19).

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Does Learning a World Language Improve Writing Skills in the First Language?

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Abstract: *There is no debating the fact that being bilingual, or trilingual, is more beneficial than being only monolingual. Proficiency in world languages can be viewed as being empowering. But what other role does it play in the first language other than potentially developing a deeper understanding of the grammatical structures of grammar? Does learning a foreign language make us into better writers in our first language or does having this deeper understanding of grammar interfere with writing in the first language?*

Keywords: world/second language study, language proficiency, writing skills

Introduction and Background of the Study

Frequently, I meet people who are surprised when I tell them I am a world language instructor. When I tell them I teach Spanish and French, I receive these common reactions such as, "I took three years of French in college, but I don't remember a word," or "I studied Spanish for a few years, but I could never really speak it enough to carry on a real conversation." Or they might say, "If languages were taught beginning in elementary school, Americans probably would be more fluent in a second language." Or, they ask, "Why do you study languages?" Quickly, I respond by saying, "I enjoy languages and I think they are fun." Later, I might digress into explaining some of the advantages and benefits of knowing a second language. A few of them I enjoy sharing with students or friends would be: they help us to understand other countries and cultures, knowing a second language could help in the job market, speaking a language enhances the enjoyment of travelling, learning a world language might raise scores on standardized tests, or studying a foreign language enhances skills of English grammar. There is no debating the fact that being bilingual, or trilingual, is more beneficial than being only monolingual. Proficiency in foreign languages can be viewed as being empowering. But what other role does it play in the first language other than potentially developing a deeper understanding of the grammatical structures of grammar? Does learning a foreign language make us into better writers in our first language or does having this deeper understanding of grammar interfere with writing in the first language?

Patrick Hartwell (2003), a nationally-known scholar of literacy and its teaching, addresses a number of issues regarding the value of teaching grammar in composition. In his research, he references a study conducted in New Zealand, where it was "concluded that the formal study of grammar, whether transformational or traditional, improved neither writing quality nor control over surface correctness" (p. 206). In addition, a leading linguist in the field of grammar, Mark Lester, states, "there simply appears to be no correlation between a writer's study of language and his ability to write" (Hartwell, 2003, p. 216). Hartwell also makes reference to Sherwin's (1969) book, *Four problems in teaching English: A critique of research*, in which it is stated that, "instruction in formal grammar is an ineffective way to help students achieve proficiency in writing" (Hartwell, 2003, p. 227). Hartwell and Lester reject the instruction in grammar for proficiency in writing in the composition course, but they do not comment on grammar instruction in foreign language and how it might help or impede proficiency in writing in the native language. One can draw the conclusion that pos-

sibly formal teaching of grammar should possibly be removed from the classroom all together, at least, for its purpose to teach students to write. Another leading literacy scholar, Peter Elbow, differs in his view of the teaching of grammar to improve writing. Elbow states, "treat grammar as a matter of very late editorial correcting: never thinking about it *while you are writing*" (Elbow, 1998, 137). Elbow adds, "Don't let a concern about grammar hinder your effort to improve grammar" (p. 137). Lundsford (2003) , supports Elbow's position on grammar. She alludes to the notion about how writing or grammar "should never be teacher-centered" and "set lectures should always be avoided" (Lundsford, 2003, p. 283). She provides an example of teaching semi-colons where she gives "a passage or short essay which uses semi-colons frequently" allowing students to engage "in inferential problem solving rather than in isolated drill or memorization" (Lundsford, p. 283).

Unlike Hartwell, Elbow and Lundsford do believe grammar should have focus in composition, albeit minimal. Undoubtedly, as already stated, there is argument on the usage of grammar instruction in the classroom. One can surmise that Elbow and Lundsford would agree that the grammar instruction students receive in world languages would benefit the same students in a composition class. But what approach do I employ when teaching grammar in my second language courses? I use both explicit instruction and implicit instruction. By explicit instruction of grammar, I teach grammar by explaining the forms and rules and drilling students on them. Implicit instruction would be follow the notion of Lundsford. That is, students learn grammar in context while absorbing grammar rules as they hear, read, and sue the language in communication activities. A major disadvantage of the implicit response is that the students are unable use one of the major tools they have as learners: Their active understanding of what grammar is and how it works in the language they already know.

Discussion of the Findings

As a world language instructor, I have asked myself on many occasions, if I am contributing to my students' ability to learn the target language while at the same am I improving their ability to write in English from taking my class. At times, I might speak a *tilted* English, that of a literal translation of Spanish to English, when, for example, I teach Spanish reflexive pronouns. For example, I might say, "I woke *myself* up this morning. Then I take the clothes off *myself*, and then I shower *myself*." Or in French, while giving a lesson on demonstrative adjectives, I'll digress to literal translation, "Is it that you see *this* pencil *there* and *this* table *here*." I always hear a few chuckles from the students, and a student might utter, "We don't talk like that!" And I immediately respond, "Yes, you are right because they are different languages and all of them have their own set of grammar rules." My *tilted* English, I hope, imparts to the students a deeper under of grammar in the first language as well as that of the second language. But should grammar terms such as reflexive pronouns or demonstrative adjective be taught in the world language classroom? If not, are students going to adequately process this grammar in both languages?

For someone who has first-hand experience teaching world languages at the college level, I can assert that the majority of my students have a minimal knowledge of English grammar; their understanding of grammar is in bad shape. Most second language instructors in the United States waste considerable time discussing English grammar, resulting in time taken away from speaking the target language in a meaningful context. Unfortunately, in the world language classroom, there is too much of talking *about* the language and not enough of *speaking* the language. Hartwell (2003) arguably would concur with this statement for he explains that writers need to develop at two levels, "involving communication

in "active manipulation of language" (Hartwell, p. 225). However, would this statement apply to students learning a language at an older age? This notion will be addressed later in this paper. Undoubtedly, as just mentioned, learning a second language helps you understand your first language, in particular, grammatical structures, but how much impact does a world language help with one's ability to write in the first language? Does being proficient in a second language make us into better writers in the first language? Or, is someone who only knows English limiting his/her writing potential?

As stated previously, Hartwell (2003) does not agree that students who have minimal understanding of grammar are limiting their writing potential. According to Hartwell, being aware of grammar rules would simply impede the writing process; however, Hartwell's findings are based mostly on monolingual students of English. We certainly can name some great writers who are monolingual but one would wonder if proficiency in a second language influences the writing process. As someone who is proficient in both French and Spanish, I consider myself a better writer in my native tongue English than perhaps someone who only has proficiency in one language.

My aim in this study is to shed light on how world languages affect writing in the first language. This essay will closely examine what leading grammarians, linguists, composition theorists say regarding how learning a world language can possibly improve or even interfere in one's writing.

Course of Action

Some educators have cautioned against the use of two languages in children, claiming that bilingualism causes cognitive, social and emotional damage to children. According to my findings, the correlation between a person's study of world language and his/her ability to write has not been extensively researched:

> The lag in publication or relevant findings in research journals and in secondary sources, such as textbooks, and research on bilingualism and biculturalism has not been a major focus of the US as is reflective in American culture's ambivalent perspective on language maintenance of minorities. (Lee, 1996, pp. 516-517).

According to Hakuta (2007), a great deal of research conducted on bilingualism has been flawed explaining there have been "societal concerns influencing research on bilingualism"(p. 2). He states, "The debate regarding bilingualism in those days concerned not so much issues of mental development and psychology, but rather social issues concerning the new wave of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe" (p. 2).

Social scientists and educators observed that these new immigrants were "performing poorly on IQ tests, and that their children were doing poorly in the schools" (Hakuta, 2007, p. 2) while attributing to racial and ethnic origins. This early research in the early 1900s pointed to the notion that bilingualism causes retardation. Still today, "Some researchers, educators, and laypersons continue to maintain the belief that bilinguality impedes cognitive development" (Lee, 1996, p. 516). However, evidence suggests that children who receive second language instruction are more creative and possibly better at solving complex problems.

Peal and Lamber (1962) conducted a study on bilingualism at McGill University in Montreal, where they examined two groups. The first group consisted of children who were nearly equal in their abilities in two languages while the second was a group of monolingual

children. Both groups came from equivalent socioeconomic backgrounds. Upon completing the case study, the researchers determined that the bilingual children seemed to be superior, in particular, in a skill they referred to as *metalinguistic ability*, which they described as the ability to think flexibility and abstractly about language. These Canadian researchers made the observation that being bilingual gives one "a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, a more diversified set of mental abilities" while "the monolingual appears to have a more unitary structure of intelligence which he muse for all types of intellectual tasks" (Peal & Lambert, 1962, p. 20). Hakuta (2007) mentions that this "metalinguistic ability" can be seen in "poetry where language must be carefully controlled and chose to fit the governing rules" as well as in "the ability to make judgments about the grammar of sentences and to appreciate plays on words in jokes" (Hakuta, p. 4).

Landry (1973) also supports the notion of attaining enhanced cognitive abilities from learning a world language, especially for younger students, "Research studies into the effect of introducing a foreign language into the elementary school curriculum have concurred that the addition of the second language has not impaired the general achievement of the native language progress of children" (Landry, p. 10). Hakuta (2007) also references a study of Puerto Rican elementary students who are still in the process of learning language, and the data indicates they showed superior metalinguistic ability in their native language. In both studies, there is limited information regarding how the testing of cognitive skills was conducted other than using questions employed to measure one's IQ. Nonetheless, it can be concluded from the two case studies that world language study "leads to higher levels of metalinguistic awareness and cognitive ability" (Hakuta, 2007, p. 5).

Findings and Concluding Remarks

It goes without saying that these two case studies provide clear evidence that proficiency in a world language boosts cognitive ability. But do these case studies apply to the typical American student who did not grow up in a bilingual environment or bilingual school?

Currently, in the United States as well as in the state of Georgia, dual language schools are on the rise where the students spend approximately half of their day in the target language and the other half in English. "In 2000, there were about 260 dual language programs operating in U.S. schools" but in the past decade dual language schools have grown tenfold, "with an estimated 2,000 now operating" (Wilson, 2011, p. 1).

Most American students are not afforded many opportunities to grow up in bilingualism such as with the two case studies Hakuta (2007) references in his research. I. myself never had formal study of a world language until I entered high school. A February 1996 *Newsweek* article made the claim that "A child taught a second language after the age of 10 or so is unlikely ever to speak it like a native" (Begley, 1996, p. 57). The average American student begins the study of languages at an older age, not necessarily because of choice, but rather due to there being fewer opportunities for early language instruction. A number of factors are not presented in these studies. The younger students typically do not experience the same level of anxiety in the world language classroom as do adults. The students, in the aforementioned studies, were children rather than adults or college students.

Second language instruction in other countries usually begins at a much earlier age than in the U.S. Further, lack of effort or motivation was not reflected in the case studies previously mentioned in this article. Learning a second language is hard work just like learning

to write. But could we use the case study of Quebecois students and compare them with another group of students in dual language school in Georgia? Would we not be comparing apples and oranges? An elementary student living in the city of Montreal is already hearing, reading, writing, and possibly speaking both English and French outside of the classroom while an elementary student enrolled in a dual language program of French and English, say, in Atlanta, will have few opportunities or reasons to speak French outside of school.

As previously mentioned, research on the benefits of learning a second language in order to hone skills in the first language, and in particular, one's writing ability, has not been a primary focus of higher education in the U.S. A great deal of research has been conducted outside of the United States, as in the case of Canada, while also focusing attention on immigrants who grew up speaking two languages.

Again, returning to the scholar of literacy, Hartwell does not talk about students who have been studying world languages in his courses, partly, because he would have a small group to study. Why is that? High proficiency resulting from extensive study of a world language has never been an obstacle for those wishing to study at American universities. Nonetheless, it has been documented that studying world languages helps with communication skills, both written and oral, and as supported by the studies, younger children demonstrate superior metalinguistic ability as a result of learning a second language. But we cannot forget that in one's native language, before the age of 5, most are already proficient speakers of their first/native language (Nagel, 2017). A person who has never spoken, read or written a language other than his/her native language has little or no perspective of his/her own language.

Undoubtedly, the study of a different language gives someone an understanding of the nature of language itself, and a sense of structure that is difficult to acquire from only studying one's native tongue. Is it not time "to start thinking more seriously about how to prepare 'our' monolingual students to write like the rest of the world" (Matsuda, 2012, p. 80) while honing these metalinguistic skills? To reach this goal in the foreseeable future, possibly our students need more training in world languages, and perhaps study of a second language should be considered an essential skill like writing is in the American education system. For, "Those who know nothing of foreign languages, know nothing of their own" (a maxim attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832).

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