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Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Multicultural Perspective

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Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Multicultural Perspective

by

Nouf Ali Alotaibi

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Logan, Utah

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Multicultural Perspective

by

Nouf Ali Alotaibi: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2015

Major Professor: Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is a compilation of the author's beliefs and practices of what constitutes effective second language teaching. It is based on the author's teaching philosophy and the work has been done during two years of study at the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. The teaching philosophy centers on how to implement communication inside the language classroom, develop literacy, integrate culture teaching into language instruction, and how to use technology to facilitate language learning and teaching. The teaching philosophy is followed by three artifacts, which review the literature addressing different topics on language, literacy, and culture. The language artifact discusses the concept of error correction in the language classroom, the literacy artifact presents the use of dialogue journals to develop writing abilities, and the culture artifact addresses teaching the appropriate ways of performing refusals in English. Finally, the portfolio is extended and concluded by an annotated bibliography exploring the four themes of the teaching philosophy. (180 pages)

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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio includes the work I have done through the two years of my study at the MSLT program. It includes papers I wrote on topics that determine my beliefs and goals for my future teaching of English as a second language. My teaching philosophy section includes my own second language learning and previous teaching practices. Moreover, how I view my future EFL classroom, based on interactive communication with the students. My teaching philosophy also includes a reflection on observation of other teachers in language classrooms at Utah State University, and a reflection of my own teaching video.

My personal teaching philosophy statement is based on four different themes that I see are key elements for any language learning context. The first theme is the communicative approach of language teaching; where I explain different ways and strategies that can be used to give the students a major role in their own learning. This is based on using the target language and implementing interactive activities that engage the students in meaningful ways. The second theme is improving the students' literacy skills in reading; where I present what targets I want to achieve for my students in order to raise their love for reading and facilitate their reading abilities. The third theme is teaching culture, where I present my understanding of how and what to teach students in order to raise their cultural awareness of the second language. And the last theme is the use of technology inside the language classroom in a way to find new venues where students can have multiple language exposures.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

Ever since my early years in education, I loved the language classes. My teachers taught me Arabic grammar, literature, reading tasks, and composition. This love grew within me for the second language as well. I began learning English in first grade, as I was enrolled in a private school - a common situation in Saudi Arabia among students whose parents want their children to learn English from childhood. Public schools do not teach English until middle school which makes it more difficult to become fluent in the second language. However, I did not learn very much English when I was in elementary. I felt excited every time it was the English class, but my teachers were not. They typically used Audio-lingual methods in teaching English - the same way they did with other subjects. They simply consider English class as an extra class that does not deserve much attention.

The method primarily used in my English classes was "Repeat after me." Language class was like any other class because the teachers used the first language the entire time in their instruction. Their classes were teacher-centered and the only materials the teacher used in class were the textbook and chalkboard. My fifth grade teacher used to hold the book in her hands while teaching and looked at it while she talked. The English teachers never had any visual aids; the best they could do when they wanted to introduce new vocabulary was to draw a picture of the word on the board. I remember, we used to evaluate a teacher by how good her drawings were. The only interesting activity for us as students was when the teacher asked us to come to the front and write a word on the board. It made us feel special to go up to the front to write. In addition to all

of that, the main focus of teaching English was grammar. Grammar drills were the main part of each class.

I remember an English teacher who came to class once in 4th grade and took a nap on her desk. She had no intention of teaching, I still don't know why, and she asked us to do something "useful". I cannot forget how the students laughed at her. English classes were always boring yet despite that, I stuck with my passion to learn. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I had a fascination with English that was noticed by my teachers in all different grades. That interest was evident especially in comparison to the other subjects. I was not a fan of science or math, as I was with language classes (Arabic and English classes).

However, the situation with teachers who were unqualified to teach remained the same until the last year of high school. During my senior year, I had a teacher who changed all my views regarding English language learning. She was amazing in the intonations she used and in her creativity for conveying ideas. She was good because she was so passionate in her desire to help us learn even though she used the traditional methods of teaching. She was kind and cared about her relationship with the students. She never had a negative attitude towards any of them. She introduced extra vocabulary words that were not in the textbook and asked us about them the next day. I remember how I used to recite them, and how she was amazed when she saw that I had managed to memorize every single word.

When I was sixteen, during my second year of high school, I came to the U.S. for the first time. It was during a summer vacation with my family that my fascination with English was magnified. I realized how kind and friendly people were; they greeted us

frequently, spoke with us in elevators, and were quick to offer help. I was interested to listen to people's pronunciation in speaking the language. I remember how I loved helping my mother when she paid for things at stores. I was careful to grasp the price of items and to learn the way the numbers were pronounced. I realized how different it is learning a language in its native-speaking community. I thought to myself that no teacher could possibly teach me in a classroom the things I was learning outside of it. It was a great opportunity for me to practice the little English I had learned during my school years with cashiers, waiters, and housekeepers.

I had always heard and admired my father when he spoke English over the phone with his non-Arabic speaking friends, or his brothers when they wanted to tell each other secrets. On that family trip to the U.S., I tried to learn from him as he confidently spoke in English. For me, he was the role model I had as a language learner, but he never taught me. I helped him in the streets when he drove and learned how to follow directions on the map like how to find places in Disney World and ask where the restroom was. I had a dream deep in my heart that I would come back to this country, not for fun, but to obtain an education and become more proficient in English.

A year later, I went to college and majored in English Language and Literature at Taiba University in Medina, Saudi Arabia. The classes I took were taught by lecture. In the translation classes, we had some interaction with the teachers, which made them my favorite. After I graduated, I got a job teaching English at a private school for two years. My experience as a teacher was good and I did my best to implement everything I had learned. I was not familiar with communicative teaching at that time but I liked putting my students in groups. I asked them to complete the 'workbook' exercises in groups or

pairs. I gave the instructions, modeled the first part of the exercise, and asked them to continue doing it on their own. Even though few of the students had the courage to speak in English, they were gradually improving and participating more in class by saying a sentence or two. That was because I did not use the first language as I had been taught; I instinctively used the target language during more than 95% of class time. My students felt overwhelmed at the beginning of the year, especially the ones in 7th grade who came from public schools where they did not study English in elementary school. Before long, they began to show improvement and interest in learning. While I did not have a computer or projector in my class, I tried to use as much authentic material as I could to better explain the lesson. The students began falling in love with the goal of learning English and their initial hesitation began to give way to acceptance.

My dream of returning to the United States came true when my husband accepted a scholarship to study in the USA and I accompanied him. We went to Charlotte, North Carolina to study English and had our language learning experience there. For the first two years of my stay, I did not have many opportunities to practice the language because I had to stay home to take care of my two small daughters. Having the desire to continue improving my English proficiency, I tried to compensate by watching TV and listening to English music but music and TV are inadequate sources for language learning. It was important to me to have my daughters learn English and be raised bilingual so they would naturally feel comfortable with both Arabic and English. I succeeded in having them become native speakers of English and now they teach me the right words, even though they sometimes do not like to, which gives me a sign of their intercultural understanding of people with different backgrounds. When my elementary children corrected me, I

began to realize that the things I had learned in school and the teaching experience I had gained were still sadly lacking. What I lacked was not simply a proficiency in the language but rather a proficiency in the culture itself, which only became apparent after living in the States. Culture is conveyed in everyday conversations and in the way a person speaks and acts. I realized that learning a language also involves learning a culture.

Following two years of living in the U.S., I started studying English at an English Language Institute (ELI) in Charlotte. I learned about how to write essays, how to read faster, answer questions quickly, and how to use grammar structures correctly. Still, I was unable to use the language in socially appropriate ways. In short, my experience at language institutes in North Carolina fell short of my expectations. The teachers at the institutes varied from good to bad. Some were rude and showed disrespect to international students, so their classes were poor. On the other hand, others were much better. They incorporated games and activities but the class was still teacher-centered with the main focus on grammar instruction.

With time, my confidence in communication improved which allowed me to focus more on content rather than structure. As I communicated with American people, I realized many had inaccurate notions about Arab women, especially in Saudi Arabia, where women are oppressed, but this does not mean they are uneducated or superficial. In several circumstances, I was offended in the street at times by people who insulted me, but years of living in this society has given me a sense of motivation to maintain my beliefs, keep my identity, do my best to succeed, and change the reality that brought forth this idea.

From North Carolina, we moved to Logan, Utah, where I began preparing to complete my education. After all these years, I still have a passion for teaching that has not diminished. When I volunteered at my daughter's school in her Kindergarten class a number of times and at the English Language Center of Cache Valley, I again experienced all of the good feelings that came with teaching English.

After two years of my preparation for the master's program, I was accepted at the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University. And now that I am done, I want to go back to my country armed with the knowledge I have gained and the unique experience I've had so that I can put them all to good use. I hope to work on pushing the teaching profession in Saudi Arabia into a new direction from the one in which it is currently in. I would like to be able to see an improvement in the quality of teachers and the educational program and help make it happen.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The goal of my future career has always been teaching EFL. However, as I lived in Logan, I decided to join the Sunday school in the Islamic Center of Logan. I am teaching the children Arabic and I enjoy it. So I decided that throughout my stay in the U.S., I see myself either teaching Arabic as a tutor/instructor anywhere in Utah, or volunteering at ESL classes in Logan elementary schools. I want to help immigrant children accelerate their learning of English through incorporating with ESL teachers to implement communicative activities during ESL classes.

Studying at the MSLT program has broadened my sight into teaching and showed me different ways and perspectives of L2 teaching. I long for the day when I return to my country and add to the EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia a new way of teaching based on communicative interaction. I taught different grades of school in the past and I am planning to teach university students in the future. I love teaching adults and I want to help them learn about the target culture and moreover, to compare the L2 culture and their own culture, and to maintain their identities.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Considering my entire experience as an EFL learner, I decided that, as a teacher, I would diverge from the method in which I was taught. My English teachers employed a mix of Audio-lingual and Grammar-Translation methods, devoid of communication or interaction from the students' side. In order to help my students achieve fluency—the goal of learners of any language, especially a global language like English—I have decided to apply the strategies that produce competent language learners. Through my study in the Masters of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program, I have learned these strategies, reflected upon my experience, and developed my own view of effective language teaching to best enable my future students to succeed in learning the second language (L2). I will discuss many of these aspects and strategies in my teaching philosophy. Developing my philosophy has shaped the way I envision the teaching and learning processes. Among the aspects I believe are integral to successful language teaching are the communicative classroom, target language use through task-based activities, integrating culture teaching, improving students' reading skills, and teaching through technology.

Communicative Classroom

According to Lee and Van Patten (2003), in the Audio-lingual (ALM) and the Atlas-Complex approaches, the teacher is the source of knowledge, the expert, and the person in charge of controlling the process of learning. In other words, the teacher spends the whole class time providing students with the information supposedly needed to acquire a language. The communicative approach re-envisioned the role of the teacher, diverging greatly from more traditional approaches. The Audio-lingual and Atlas

Complex approaches give teachers the responsibility to be the experts, as they pour knowledge into students' heads and drill them, while students passively listen, and parrot back what they hear without any information exchange (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Such information exchange is called *negotiation of meaning* in the field of second language acquisition (SLA); it occurs regularly in the communicative classroom imitating how such negotiation happens in the real world. Negotiation of meaning is the interaction through which students exchange thoughts and ideas and feel free to ask for clarifications. "Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language—natural communication—in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding" (Krashen, 1981, p. 1). This is the atmosphere I want to foster in my language classroom, wherein I expect to find a student asking "What does that mean?" or "Can you explain?" to negotiate meanings he or she does not understand.

Input Hypothesis

In order to engender communication among students, the teacher is placed in charge of providing different kinds of materials containing comprehensible input. Input is what a learner needs for L2 learning, and as Krashen claims, comprehensive input means that a learner understands messages he/she receives (1985). Krashen, the developer of the *Input Hypothesis*, views acquiring a language as best occurring through exposure of the learner to input that is clear, comprehensible, and a little beyond the learner's current level of language competence. In other words, this input hypothesis has a feature called "the natural order" signifies that the input has to have $i+1$ to be useful for language

acquisition, where *i* expresses the learner's current competence and *I* expresses the next level of language learning.

Krashen's hypothesis makes me realize why it is important to urge students not to rely solely on class time to receive input that will help them acquire the language, but to continue working on their own, at home and everywhere they can to hear, read, or speak the L2. When students are linked with real-world situations it becomes easier to accommodate and comprehend input.

To help make input comprehensible, it is essential to use authentic materials and examples from the students' lives to facilitate their learning and comprehension (Galloway, 1993). Authentic materials are defined as language elements existing in their real form and use in the community (Kilickaya, 2001). A teacher can, for instance, use pictures from magazines or other images that express some of the L2 culture—e.g., pictures of a family having dinner can express an element the L2 culture's daily life, such as foods they would eat for dinner. Students can relate these images to their own lives when they comment and compare with their own dinner foods. Such pictures can express the topic of the lesson and at the same time relate to students' lives and interests.

Besides the requirement that input provided in class should be clear, interesting, and a little beyond the students' level of proficiency, it should not be grammatically sequenced. Because comprehension depends on students' background knowledge, the context, as well as other cues such as gestures and intonation, (Shrum & Glisan, 2010) work together to make input comprehensible (Krashen, 1985). Such comprehensible input applies both to L1 and L2 acquisition (VanPatten, 1996). I want to ensure that the input is suitable to students' level of proficiency with a level beyond to employ their

cognitive skills. In my L2 classes—and this applies equally to the Arabic or EFL class—I will seek first to activate students' prior knowledge before I start introducing new input. I can achieve this through reviewing the previous lessons, by asking few questions, or through a short warm-up activity at the beginning of class to assess students' background.

Modes of Communication

Current research has shown that communicative language teaching (CLT) is an effective method for students to learn to use the second language for real-world purposes (Bell, 2005; Lee & Van Patten, 2003). Obviously, when language learners travel to a country where their target language is primary, they will not recite the grammatical rules they learned in class as much as they will apply what they practiced through meaningful exchange of information and communicative interaction. I believe one key for teaching L2 is when the four skills of language—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—are focused on the real world and used for interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational purposes (Swender & Duncan, 1998). To grow these skills in the L2, the teacher should develop lessons and cultivate an environment that fosters each of the three modes of communication, i.e., the interpersonal, interpretive and presentational. I will briefly describe each mode of communication below, but for now, suffice it to say that focusing on these three modes can give students many opportunities to practice using the language in different ways (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, Mandell, 2001).

The ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners, along with the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL), set goals for students in each school year to receive standards- and performance-based language instruction. The guidelines were developed to promote instruction that gives students more exposure to language and

culture content facilitated by the teachers (Swender & Duncan, 1998). It could also be enhanced by the integration of the five Cs of foreign language education:

Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). I intend to be on track with the ACTFL guidelines of emphasizing the five Cs through using the three modes of communication. Swender and Duncan characterize these three modes stating “Developers of the standards viewed the use of language ‘modes’ as a richer and more natural way of envisioning communication than the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing” (1998, p. 481), because adopting these language modes puts the focus on context and the communication process rather than on each specific skill of learning. In the old methods, for example in completing a listening activity, students would listen to an audio and be asked to answer questions upon what they heard, without any type of interaction or connection to their real life. Within an interpretive mode, on the other hand, students are placed in situations where they listen to audio materials or each other’s stories about culture, community, or any topic that connects to their learning of the foreign language. They could also listen to a story by the teacher and answer questions to engage in discussion.

In the *interpersonal mode*, students negotiate meaning through their communicated intentions and conversations. According to Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, Mandell, the interpersonal mode is the most basic application for L2 students because it has the potential to guide them, more than other modes, toward the goal of successful communication (2001). I would focus on this mode to enhance the students’ interactions with one another and provide opportunities for them to produce and perform what they know of the language. Students could practice the interpersonal mode when they

converse, exchange knowledge, negotiate meaning, and request clarification of any unclear information, which will improve their speaking skill. In my classroom, I also want to provide opportunities for students to get involved in interpersonal reading and writing. They will exchange personal messages through writing or commenting on their peers' posts in a class wiki, for example. An interpersonal mode can also reach skill beyond linguistic competency. It could be employed to increase abilities to organize information, express an opinion, or infer and engage into a situation with previous background, which means that it enhances the communication abilities and L2 confidence (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, Mandell, 2001).

The *interpretive mode* relates to an L2 learner's pragmatic cultural interpretation of the meaning of speech or written text. This mode does not allow for negotiation of meaning or knowledge exchange, characterized as it is by a one-way reading or listening type of communication (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, Mandell, 2001). Cultural interpretation of texts, radio, movies, or speeches are some examples of the interpretive mode, each of which requires wide knowledge of the culture associated with the language, namely the 'cultural literacy' that allows one to read between the lines. I want to employ what Glisan, Uribe, and Adair-Hauck suggest for an interpretive mode for my reading tasks. For example, I can have the students read an authentic text, such as a newspaper article or folk story and interpret what they understood, Which I can use to assess their comprehension and background knowledge (2007). Discussions that promote an interpretive mode among students can also be achieved by assigning reading tasks about topics they have shown interest in, so that they are motivated to speak and interact thoroughly.

Finally, the *presentational mode* is the creation of messages presented orally through a speech for example, or a written message such as an article, a poster, or a brochure, used to facilitate the interpretation I described above. This mode lacks any direct negotiation of meaning between presenters and interpreters. Members of the target culture (C2) can create messages in a form of a written text, an oral presentation given in a one-way mode (Swender & Duncan, 1998), or a film, to help others read between the lines. The presentational mode is effective in amplifying students' pragmatic awareness and cultural knowledge of the L2. For a presentational mode of communication, I would, for example, assign a weekly schedule for students to prepare a PowerPoint presentation that each student presents in a week, describing their lives in their home countries, their family members, and interesting aspects of their lives to their peers and the teacher. It is fun to see students in a speaker role, expressing themselves openly, and the most importantly in the L2.

Utilizing these three modes of communication in the classroom will provide students with opportunities to learn how to exchange knowledge and thoughts in interpersonal communication, how to reach a moderate level of pragmatic competence that enables them to interpret a fluent speaker's text or speech, and how to develop oral and written presentations on different topics (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

Grammar Instruction

Teaching a second language is challenging not only in developing communication skills, but because an important part of a language is its grammar structures and rules. As communication fluency is the primary goal, however, it is important to implement

teaching grammar in a way that does not contradict with the communication focus. In light of this challenge of balance, the grammatical forms (such as phonological and morphological forms, lexical items, or syntactic patterns) of a language must be learned in order to create effective communicative functions (i.e., discussing, apologizing, inviting, describing, etc.) (Canale & Swain, 1980). This can be achieved by teaching grammar communicatively, attaching real-world situations in cultural contexts (Frantzen, 1998). I remember spending hours teaching grammar rules by illustrating verb conjugations to my students when I could have implemented it through context instead. This can be done using stories to teach grammar through its context, by introducing and emphasizing rules through visual aids and bolding grammar details such as verb tenses, adjectives, adverbs, etc.

Teaching grammar has become a matter of controversy for language instructors and researchers. Some teachers think, based upon their preference for the communicative approach, that attention should not be given to grammar structures because it has no effect on SLA, arguing that a language is naturally acquired through comprehension (Krashen, 1982). On the other extreme stand teachers who take grammar as a major responsibility, convinced that an L2 learner cannot learn a language without mastering its grammar rules. These teachers seem to teach grammar for grammar's sake, to lead their students to master the language by learning its rules and structures, and this only leads to drilling.

Language teachers need to pursue a medium ground and teach grammar to support communication. That is to say, it needs to be taught in a certain method, paying careful attention to the time allotted for it (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

One way to teach grammar communicatively is teaching it explicitly. Rossiter states, “the range of communication strategies available to L2 learners may be enhanced by explicit instruction” (2003, p. 117). This could be applied through storytelling and task-based activities that help students work with grammar structures in context (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The teacher should manage the amount of grammar and the amount of time spent on it, “taking into account the cognitive psychology of attention” (Jelinski, 1997, p. 812). When there is a grammar rule I need to teach my students, I will keep in mind the psychology regarding the length of time their brain capacity is able to digest the language rules. I will also deliver the rule through context, as Lee and VanPatten recommend (2003), and during the first part of class, when students’ brains are active and ready to receive new information (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Teaching grammar through stories helps students focus on the meaning and the content of the story itself more than the grammatical structure alone. We can implement grammar instruction by incorporating meaningful task-based activities (TBA), emphasizing “[t]he development of grammatical knowledge to express meaning, highlighting the fact that meaning and form are interrelated, and that grammar exists to enable the language user to express different communicative meanings” (Nunan, 2006, p. 4). Grammar instruction using stories is effective because humans, especially children, accommodate narratives more easily than anything else. The human brain comprehends input in the form of stories naturally because

[o]ur world as we view it has a narrative structure ... we recognize the narrative structure of the world—that it is a world full of stories, real and make-believe. We see our own life as a story; history as a story; even humanity as a story. This narrative way of organizing our world is also the simplest, most natural, and most interesting structure within which children can compose (Russel, 1973, p.6) and I think even adults.

When students are asked a question about the story they have listened to, they organize their comprehension and respond with a sentence that they form using, as Russel describes, “a visually perceived real experience,” (p. 6). This means that they can use the verb tense or any taught grammar rule spontaneously. The use of this story-telling method of instruction for teaching grammar rules will add depth to my classes.

Additionally, employing visuals that facilitate vocabulary comprehension (Chun, 2011) aids students in understanding the words in the story. This can be a part of what is called ‘focus on meaning’ as opposed to ‘focus on form.’ I believe in focusing on meaning because, as Lee and VanPatten explain, "Learners process input for meaning before they process it for form" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p.139). As Krashen describes, learners move from *i* to *i+1* when they understand, and they understand when they focus on the meaning not on the form (Krashen, 1982). I plan to apply this theory by focusing on the meaning of the content through which I introduce the grammar rules. When communication is successful and input is understood, the *i+1* is reached naturally, and it is paramount to remember this fact of learning. Furthermore, these communicative methods for teaching grammar can help keep students’ affective filters normalize, and lower their level of anxiety.

Student-Teacher Relationship

The affective filters of students are important factors that need to be minimized inside the classroom. It is important to cultivate an anxiety-free environment and a high level of motivation for language learners in order to foster successful language acquisition (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). With these variables accounted for, students’ level of confidence and healthy self-image will allow them the confidence to speak, interact,

and be creative in classroom activities (Krashen, 1982). When learners have a positive attitude toward learning a second language their filters are set low, allowing them to receive an unconstrained amount of comprehensible input (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). I care a lot about my students' psychological status and our teacher-student relationship, as I experienced in my teaching that after a while of teaching and when I gain my students' trust, this in turn raised their scores in tests and their general learning capabilities significantly. I expect my students to build trust in themselves and in me, to develop high motivation, and let go of anxiety, so their learning process improves with time.

Students' communication in the classroom is necessary. I want my students to be engaged in the lesson, to interact and participate rather than be passive listeners. Whether they have the competence to interact using the target language or not, they will be capable of acquiring it quicker as they get motivated and equipped to do so. An important aspect for students' communicative interaction is motivation. Shaaban and Ghaith (2000), as cited in Shrum and Glisan (2010), state: "Integratively motivated students worked harder if they have a positive attitude about language outcomes in EFL" (p.32). I want to teach my students to set goals for their learning. It is instrumental to set goals to achieve and keep the motivation level high (Robertson et al., 2014). Thus, students who can maintain the proper motivation throughout their developmental learning stages will have a better grasp on their real-life reasons for learning English. Our main goal of teaching communicatively is to encourage students to communicate so they acquire the language as they practice it.

I have also observed an important relationship between students' acquisition of the language and the anxiety level they have inside the classroom. The more relaxed they

are in class, the more productive they become. Some researchers have found that we as teachers can reduce the level of anxiety by introducing materials that help students feel more relaxed in class (Radnofsky & Spielmann, 2001). Their findings were based not on measuring students' anxiety level resulting from the difficulty of the language course contents, but from the type of materials provided during class time (Radnofsky & Spielmann, 2001). In other words, integrating communication through materials oriented toward task-based activities, as Radnofsky and Spielmann (2001) suggest, not only could dramatically reduce students' anxiety level, but also increase their cognitive abilities and contribute to developing their L2 confidence. These elements I discussed could be incorporated to create a communicative classroom environment. In the section below, I will address the role of TBAs in implementing communication.

Activities and the Target Language

One of my teaching goals is to link the learners' outside world with their world inside the classroom. I want to create activities based on behaviors derived from real-world situations, in order to produce comprehensible input and facilitate the students' understanding. An example would be placing students in groups and asking them to discuss their daily routines and exchange each other's interests and preferences (e.g., Do you prefer studying at night or in the morning? Would you rather drive your car or use public transportation? Do you like Arabic or English movies?). After they are done with this speaking activity, I can provide them a worksheet that they have to fill according to the information gathered. A task-based speaking activity like this will encourage students to speak and use the target language to express themselves, which is a primary feature of effective communication.

In some classes I taught and observed, I found some students were distracted, chatting with their classmates and having private conversations in the L1. Involving them in activities can help prevent this distraction. Task-based activities (TBA), as cited in Nunan (2006), are a classroom commitment

...where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome. Here the notion of meaning is subsumed in 'outcome'. Language in a communicative task is seen as bringing about an outcome through the exchange of meaning" (Willis, 1997, p. 173).

That is to say, when we engage students in task-oriented activities, we give them a specific outcome they need to achieve through communicating with each other in the Target Language (TL). Activities can take on many forms and be implemented to get across a variety of different ideas and practices. Role-play is just one example I see as an effective activity. It is a preparatory activity involving a realistic situation that can equip students with appropriate responses for real-life scenarios. I can implement a role-play activity with intermediate students, or even beginners, by asking them to act out being in the hospital—three participants, where one assumes the role of the doctor, one the nurse, and one the patient. These types of activities can link the students to their lives outside the classroom. It allows them to imagine their speech in a hypothetical situation before they are exposed to it in real life. Comparably, a role-play activity such as this can be much more beneficial to students than the fill-in-the-blank sort of exercises commonly implemented in the Audio-lingual approach. "Attaching the real-world context, such as a situational or cultural one, the students must understand in order to communicate" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 64). The activities must be suitable to students' level of L2 proficiency, so they can understand and better enable themselves to communicate.

Classroom activities vary in form and function and can be continually relied upon to create a student-centered environment where students are engaged most of class time to complete a task through student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction. These activities should focus on facilitating the exchange of meaningful information between participants (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). To achieve this, I will give my students an opportunity to choose the topics they want to discuss through the activities. These activities, such as role-plays, jigsaws, etc., promote their speaking and listening skills. Choosing topics that interest them will motivate them to actively speak and share ideas.

As I assisted teachers at a number of ESL classes at the English Language Center of Cache Valley ELC, I worked primarily with students on speaking tasks in game-based activities. Even simple games like ‘Go-Fish’, ‘Bingo’, memory games, and ‘When I feel..., I ...’, among others, can be implemented as task-based activities to enhance the students’ speaking, reading, listening, and thinking skills. Activities like these games engage students’ thinking skills, along with their learning skills and language proficiency. Integrating games into the language classroom increases students’ motivation and encourages them to use the TL more inclusively (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Activities teachers can use for the sake of students’ communication vary in shape and texture. Another example is the interview-type activity, in which students are given a task with an accompanying worksheet that they will need to fill in by obtaining information from a peer according to the instructions of the task. It offers students opportunities to transmit and receive messages between each other as part of a real and authentic interactive exchange. Moreover, learners can also ask for clarification and

request rephrasing of information in case there is a lack of understanding (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). These kinds of activities can enhance students' confidence levels and skill with the TL.

The primary building block of any themed lesson is vocabulary (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). However, the way in which vocabulary is introduced requires thoughtful planning. A good teacher decides beforehand which teaching aids to prepare, such as visuals (i.e., pictures, videos, or audio files), or Total Physical Response (TPR) plans, to facilitate the students' understanding of the vocabulary and enhance their use of TL. Expansion of their vocabulary is crucial because learners' proficiency levels are strongly correlated with the size of their target-language vocabulary (Ballman, et al., 2001). When I plan my lesson, I will take into account the learning capacity of the students by introducing an optimal number of new words and expressions they can accommodate, to expand on their learning capacity and working memory. Sousa states that the human brain has a limited capacity for accommodating new information, which extends only to a maximum of twenty minutes (2006). Knowing this leads language teachers to rethink their teaching techniques and activities, e.g., activities should not take more than ten-minutes, so that students' brains can accommodate what is occurring in the classroom.

I believe TPR is an essential method for effective L2 teaching. Many times I have seen TPR facilitate students' understanding in the absence of visuals or similar aids for clarifying the meaning of new words. TPR is based on linking the language with physical movement, which resembles the way children acquire their first language, by listening, watching, and imitating long before they begin to speak (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, &

Mandell, 2001). A multi-sense understanding of language takes place through simultaneous activation of the child's visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses. TPR is most effective when used alongside other teaching methods and techniques, and is especially popular with young learners and beginners, but equally useful for all age groups. It can be a primary tool in helping promote target language use inside the L2 classroom. Another model employed to make new input comprehensible and promote TL use is applying graphic organizers. Graphic organizers can be effective in organizing information for students to accommodate, and also helps students recognize language elements and connect them with the lesson content.

Language teachers are expected to use the TL for 90% of class time, when introducing the lesson, for explanation during instructions, and even while assigning homework (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & Van Patten, 2003). Avoidance of L1 usage during the L2 class encourages students to listen and focus on the L2 input, interact, and ask questions trying to find clarification where they find difficulties using the TL, rather than rely solely on interpretation in the L1.

The best way to learn a foreign language is living in a community where the majority population speaks the TL. Thus, teachers who use the TL during 90% of the class time mimic an abroad-like environment, encouraging students to strive to communicate in the TL. "Teachers should recognize that the struggles they may observe in their students as they produce output are actually a sign that learning is taking place right before their eyes" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 23). Raising students' motivation results in communicating and producing output.

Culture Teaching

Communication in the world we live in now has changed. A message no longer takes days to arrive. Travel across any significant distance no longer takes months. Through media and technology the world has become a “small village,” and people are more connected than ever before (Spitzberg, 2000). For that reason, when we encounter people from different places and backgrounds, it is important to develop a level of intercultural competence that enables us to appropriately communicate with them. I believe teachers who had an opportunity to go abroad and learn about different cultures and perspectives of the world outside their own are able to gain a level of intercultural competence. Teachers with such experience can be more proficient in teaching L2 than monolingual/cultural teachers.

My intercultural competence enables and qualifies me as a teacher who is able to interact with students of different cultural backgrounds and to provide relevant cultural knowledge in the language classroom. Though Saudi classes lack diversity, I believe my personal experience allows me to convey my intercultural competence to my students. It gives me the ability to cultivate a level of intercultural knowledge in my students that enables them to appreciate diversity they might see/encounter later in their lives. They will be able to accept differences and to appropriately deal with people from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. According to Sercu, “‘intercultural competence’ always implies ‘communicative competence’, and therefore always also has a linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse component” (2004, p. 75). This means that if we integrate the teaching of culture into the CLT, we can create intercultural competent students.

McDougald states, “[T]he pace of globalization has been rapidly increasing, strongly affecting cooperation and communication across cultures” (2015, p. iii). Saudi society is situated at the center of a circle of civilization as a result of the oil industry and globalization. These factors have led many people to travel abroad for business, tourism, and education. Therefore, learning of English has been extremely important and is more imperative these days. However, the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia is not efficient enough to enable students to successfully communicate with English native speakers. One of its serious problems is that many people understand the language but lack intercultural understanding, which leads to miscommunication and loss of motivation to continue learning.

As people travel, they are likely to meet people from different cultures and ethnicities, and thus it is paramount to have a level of intercultural competence that enables them to understand people’s speech and intonations. Teachers should know that one of the benefits of reading is that it widens one’s horizon by learning about the world around him/her. Through reading and learning about other people, students may increase their curiosity to learning and become more open to communicate with people from other sides of the world. As a result, the knowledge they will gain will expand their knowledge.

Integrating culture teaching into the teaching of language can be most effective if taught through context, which means always giving examples of the target culture, providing pictures and videos from multimedia that represent the target culture. In terms of the languages I teach, political realities make the teaching of cultural context even more paramount. I see rising conflict between the East and West, and my goal in teaching students about L2 culture thus has applications beyond language aptitude alone. Setting

politics aside, cultural conflict is serious and harmful to both sides. I want to work on narrowing the gap between the Arabic culture and others' cultures through helping students learn the pragmatics of the English language. Introducing English pragmatics and North American culture as a part of input, not by translating Arabic culture through the English language, as is done in Saudi Arabian English education, but presenting the target culture through its own language. Introducing the pragmatics of North American English is part of being a dominant culture of the whole world and for being a basic culture of the English language. First, students need to learn what pragmatics is by introducing its definition by Crystal (1985):

[t]he study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication (p. 364).

Therefore, students can infer that the misuse of language and lack of pragmatic knowledge will lead to misunderstanding when conversing with speakers of English and will realize how important it is to learn the pragmatics. When traveling to Western countries or meeting a native English speaker, misunderstanding and miscommunication might occur since there are differences between the Western and the Eastern cultures. Adding to the knowledge of pragmatics, when I work on providing my students the intercultural knowledge they will be able to progress in building successful conversations and relationships with English speakers that are based on respect and acceptance of different beliefs and backgrounds.

Language is not only a part of how we define culture; it also reflects culture. The two are inseparable elements of the human experience. I think that every word in the language has a cultural context, and that all language elements should be taught through

their cultural contexts. Along with this theory, language has been described as a vehicle for culture teaching, and should be taught as a process (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984, 1987). However, context does not mean that when we teach about culture, we only teach the folklore, songs, celebrations, and customs of the L2; because culture is in fact much broader than these simple aspects. Culture must be woven in with all linguistic concepts taught in L2 classes (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Grammar concepts, for example, are most effectively conveyed through teaching pragmatics lessons that highlight grammatical rules by representing cultural aspects. For example, I could show examples of people greeting each other in the U.S. and the Middle East, and students could compare between them after I introduce the verbs (shake hands, hug, kiss...etc.). Verbs are bolded in sentences illustrated with pictures of people from both sides of the world. Videos from YouTube could help me show different ways of greetings. I can introduce students to how to order at a restaurant, which can be implemented through a role-play activity. We can discuss a special day in the U.S. by reading stories about it, and other culture aspects can be represented.

A student cannot achieve the primary goal of learning a language—communicating with others using the target language and familiarizing oneself with a variety of cultures that use it—without grasping the pragmatics and culture of the language. We need to handle the required information of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate speech acts in different contexts (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Creating situations where students have to apologize, invite, request, offer, or advise one another in the L2, and explaining the way these functions differ in the L2 compared to the L1, can

introduce them to the L2 pragmatics. Watching videos on such situations can help increase their understanding and interest in learning.

The knowledge that enables language learners to understand the meanings implied between the lines of peoples' speech (interpretive mode), and thus improves their communicative competence with native speakers of the L2, is what makes them competent. Simple high language proficiency, in learners who are not conversant with the cultural knowledge of the language, does not prepare them to understand peoples' intentions and the real meaning of what they say or how they act. Therefore, I want to integrate the teaching of the English culture while simultaneously teaching students to be appreciative of their own culture and identity. I am eager to present examples that show the differences between both cultures and nurture more appreciation of their own culture so when they converse with English speakers they can gain their respect. Such examples can be videos and pictures that express the Arabic and Western cultures. Through that, and by introducing the beauty of the two cultures, the students will be reminded and further illuminated about their precious culture and identity and will feel privileged and obliged to maintain them. Furthermore, language teachers should explain to their students that adding a language to our first/native language is a blessing, however, subtracting our native language with another language is such a loss. Likewise, subtracting and losing our own culture by indulging in the target culture will make us people with no identity or sense of belonging.

I also find it substantial to enhance the teaching of L2 culture by the use of technology and the Internet, with the ever-increasing provisions that we can make use of. The Internet and technological tools and websites including social media can be

employed to create chances for students to read, communicate, and be exposed to other cultures and people from around the world. “The 21st century and its new job market do not necessarily require people to relocate” (Spicer-Escalante & DeJonge-Kannan, 2014). In the next sections I will broadly explain the role of reading in improving students’ literacy, and increase opportunities for them to gain a multicultural perspective toward the world through reading.

Improving Literacy Skills through Reading

Reading is important for students to nurture their skills and broaden their horizons. It expands their background knowledge and enables them to become a participant in their own civilization. According to the National Council of Teachers of English NCTE, the purpose for students to be good readers is “to pursue life’s goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society” (VanDeWeghe, 2011. P. 29). Reading in a second language would occur as it did in the L1, which means that reading in L1 as well as in L2 goes through the same complex mental components and processes. These complex components include recognizing words, processing syntax, and decoding. To help our students comprehend what they read, we need to help them combine these processes in their brains (Richardson, 2010). To accomplish this, I will teach my students to experiment with the strategies they need to help them combine these processes and become effective readers (D’Arcangelo, 2002). If students are used to reading books in their L1, this habit will transfer to the L2, and vice versa (Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990). These habits are called strategies; we can plan strategic reading instruction and teach students how to read using certain strategies.

What I experienced in my own prior education in learning and teaching reading in L2 was sadly a waste of time. What I learned and observed in the MSLT program has changed how I view L2 instruction. Teaching reading, as well as other language aspects, should be planned, strategic, and enhanced with some activities. Strategic reading can be implemented by assigning a purpose for reading, which will help in improving the students' literacy level through encouraging them to read for a purpose. My reading instruction will be based on a pre, during, and a post reading framework. This framework will help students make connections in what they read (CCSSO, 2007). The main factors that play a role in the reading process are the reader, the text, and the interaction between them (Blake, 2013). Therefore, I plan to use a 'top-down' approach that promotes students' understanding and provide chances for interaction with each other centered around the text.

To teach reading in a second language, teachers can choose among three main approaches; the bottom-up approach, the top-down approach, and the interactive approach. For the interrelationship between the reading, oral, and cognitive skills, I choose the top-down approach. In the top-down approach "learners are presented with a whole text ..., are guided through comprehending its main ideas, explore these ideas through interaction with others, and then focus on specific details and/or linguistic structures..." (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, pp 59, 60). On the other hand, in the bottom-up approach, the focus of reading is more placed on the small parts of the text, where students build meaning from the words, phrases, then sentences, until they find meaning to the whole text they read. While the interactive approach combines between the bottom-

up and top-down approaches by letting the reader use between both alternatively in order for him/her to comprehend the text.

However, to promote interaction throughout the reading process, I chose the top-down approach. A top-down approach is a process that engages the student as a reader and an active participant. It scaffolds students' learning and promotes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Blake, 2013; Droop & Verhoeven, 2003). This cognitive approach depends on activating students' background knowledge and involves them in a process of monitoring, inferring, and predicting answers to the questions they set before reading the texts (Blake, 2013; Fang, 2012). Research has demonstrated that proficient readers use their background knowledge as they read to construct meaning and predict answers (Wood, 1988). At the end of the reading process, using the top-down approach, students confirm what they predicted through reading.

The reading process will be based on a pre, during, and post-reading discussion. In the pre-reading stage students make connections between what they know, their backgrounds, life experiences, and world events, and the text. They make predictions about the text. To increase their motivation to read, I will ask them to set purposes for their reading. The during-reading stage will include asking students questions to monitor and check their understanding, and to make clarifications. It also helps them confirm their predictions with the actual meanings of the text, to draw conclusions, and to visualize the narrative elements they read about. Finally, in the post-reading stage, I am able to present their understanding and reflect on what they read by having a short discussion (CCSSO, 2007).

A new type of reading that enhances the during-reading strategy I explained above is *digital reading*. It is a new literacy practice of electronic reading using web-based applications that give opportunities for making reading ‘social’ as writing, since these applications provide students with opportunities to read, share, and comment on each other. The main goal of digital reading is to make reading social, active, and sharable. It is a mode through which students in the 21st century can become interested to read, and by which we as teachers can increase their motivation to read in the L2. Through digital reading, students are able to share each other’s thoughts on what they have read and collaborate to achieve a task the teacher assigns for reading. In addition to social media, students can be introduced to e-books. An advantage of reading e-books is that it enables readers can create marginalia—margined on the side of an eBook—and share their annotations with others instantly to exchange ideas about the text (Blyth, 2014).

In our hyper-connected age, it has become imperative to integrate technology in all aspects of teaching. Using technological tools to provide reading materials will allow for more language exposure and more reading chances outside of class. I want to choose from the computer assisted language learning (CALL) programs that I can be sure will help my students in reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge, such as visual glosses and dictionaries. The Internet is a huge resource for authentic materials and also for social reading, which enables students to share their thoughts and interpretations of reading texts. In the next section, I will further demonstrate how using technology can facilitate and assist language teaching and learning.

Use of Technology

Technology is an important source of learning in our time. Teachers are not required to provide all types of input from their side, as in the 21st century we have a generation of digital natives (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The majority of students today are well-trained with technological tools mostly through surfing the Internet, which prompts the need for teachers to be on par with their students. Technology can be an extremely effective tool for enriching students' learning. For example, a teacher could have them spend some time outside the class exposing themselves to and practicing the second language through Internet research.

However, as intriguing as the use of technology to enhance L2 teaching can be, language teachers should understand that technology is not a method in and of itself; it is a tool that can be used to improve and enhance L2 teaching and learning. It is a concept that includes an unlimited range of tools and practices; from multimedia computer to Internet, videotapes to chat rooms, and web pages to audio and videoconferences (Blake, 2013). In language teaching, these practices are called Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) tools; they can be implemented appropriately to enhance language learning. I want to incorporate specific CMC tools into my lesson plans, combined with well-prepared activities for students. However, CMC's effects on the learning outcomes depend on their specific uses. Seeing this, technological tools have to be assessed and evaluated before applied to the course curriculum.

Teachers can engage students through a CMC collaborative tool that gives them an opportunity to use the language in completing a task that the teacher assigns for the day (Blake, 2008) (i.e., a reading or writing tasks). An example of the CMC tools I want

to use in my class is wiki, which is a “freely expandable collection of interlinked web pages, a hypertext system for storing and modifying information – a database, where each page is easily edited by any user with a forms capable Web browser client ” (Leuf & Cunningham, 2001, p. 14, as cited in Kuteeva, 2011). It is a virtual space where students can collaborate to share posts they like, add comments and give feedback to each other, all in the second language. As studies have shown, by using a wiki, I can not only increase students’ motivation toward writing (Wang, 2014) but also pay attention to their grammar errors (Kuteeva, 2011) and improve my assessment abilities.

Technology can also be a means of promoting the interpersonal mode of communication for students. Homework can be assigned in a CMC style through using a wiki that is created for a collaborative interaction between students through tasks they complete and additions they make to the wiki or a worksheet (Arnold & Ducate, 2011). This collaboration can be enhanced by students’ comments on each others’ additions, feedback, or clarification given on unclear parts of the task. I can employ technological tools in my teaching because technology can effectively save a lot of time and effort, besides it increases students’ exposure to the language.

Research has shown that CMC encourages students to interact and engage beyond in-classroom face-to-face interaction (Blake, 2013). CMC lowers students’ affective filters, and reduces the anxiety that tends to emerge in face-to-face interactions because of cultural influences or lower linguistic competence (Chang, 2003). CMC tools can be exploited to encourage students’ communication, since L2 learners are often shy to have their thoughts and knowledge heard because of insufficient linguistic competence.

Purposeful use of technology in language teaching can be effective for me as it helps facilitate introducing input when I use it for showing visuals, videos, audios, graphs and charts. CMC can be used to involve students in chat rooms, social networking websites, or forums that foster interaction with native speakers from around the world and give them opportunities to practice the L2 in its different aspects (Blake, 2008). It is hard to find native speakers of the L2 to chat with, and so the best alternative is to find them online through social media or other websites and apps, and have students chat with them. As an example, I want to consider using “The Mixxer” via Skype with my students, where they can find native speakers of English and begin chatting online.

Technology can be, if properly employed, a great tool in facilitating L2 input and making it interesting and comprehensible for students. That being said, technological tools cannot substitute a teacher; teachers should use technology as a tool to enhance their teaching as a part of well-designed lesson plans with TBA (Blake, 2008). Shrum and Glisan provide a clear analysis of how technology can be contextualized and integrated in language instructions. The use of technology will attract the students’ interest, and therefore, increase their level of motivation to use the TL and foster their output production (2010). I will employ technology tools to encourage students’ interaction and communication with the world outside the classroom using the digital advancements. This approach will enhance students’ skills and their practical application of the same.

Conclusion

In my teaching philosophy I have presented effective language teaching as I envision it for my future EFL classes. I look forward to providing a learning environment based on students’ communicative interactions during task-based activities. These

activities will endeavor to improve the language skills they will need in future careers, as English is immensely important for the Saudi workforce. In my view, A long-term goal of education is that “[S]tudents may generate their own ‘inputs’ and do their own ‘explaining’” (Squires, 2004, p. 345). I strive to fulfill that by applying the modes of communication, integrating culture learning, and elevating their motivation. All of these are likely to be implemented through the use of activities and technological tools. I believe these skills will increase my students’ linguistic confidence and cross-cultural adaptation, and prepare them for real-life situations when they encounter TL speakers. I look forward to using CMC programs to enhance and increase my students’ love for reading and writing, as I believe that these two are key elements of overall proficiency.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH OBSERVATION OF OTHER TEACHERS

My key objective in carrying out several sit-in observations of second language classes was to observe the teaching strategies applied by instructors, and study the ways in which they implement appropriate and effective communication methods while teaching students in their classrooms. This report will articulate my view on communicative teaching, as well as explore the goals of my teaching philosophy and the elements and methods that could strengthen them. The report summarizes the following observations of beginner-level second language classes during my studies in the MSLT program, namely, an intermediate-level ESL class, and beginner-level classes in Arabic, German, and Chinese.

One of the classes I observed during the first year of the MSLT program was an **intermediate-level English as a Foreign Language (ESL) class**. Because I intend to pursue a career as an EFL teacher, I wanted to observe this class, as it reflects a similar level and content to my preferred future teaching position. The content the teacher focused on in this class made it my favorite class of the entire program. It centered on teaching the L2 (American English) culture and introduced the L2 learners to pragmatics. Understanding L2 culture comprises an important part of my teaching philosophy, as I believe it is important for language learners to develop cultural awareness that will enable them to appropriately communicate with people from the L2 culture. This class portrayed a beautiful picture of how teaching culture can be accomplished.

The instructor opened the class by testing the students with a short quiz. When the allotted time finished, he asked them to switch papers with their partners, and correct

each other's answers for two minutes. The professor discussed the answers with the class, then the students turned in their papers.

I had never thought about letting students correct each other's papers and give each other feedback on quizzes, but observing this class convinced me that having students give each other feedback is an effective teaching method. As teachers, we tend to consistently keep tests and quizzes as an uncrossable red line between students and teachers. Cultivating peer-to-peer feedback strengthens students' confidence and broadens their knowledge, abilities, and capacity to learn, building stronger student-teacher relationships. I believe in the importance of building strong relationships with students as it increases students' interest in class content and objectives, a point I emphasize in my teaching philosophy.

The instructor began the lesson asking students to talk about the positive and negative aspects of American culture. It was an open speaking activity—the students spoke individually and expressed their opinions in the target language. Seeing students struggle to express what they knew, I began to see the importance of giving a warm-up activity here. To prevent the learning gap I saw emerge in this situation, I would suggest that the teacher play a short video or two that shows some aspects of the target culture he/she wants the students to focus on. This would activate students' prior knowledge about the topic and help them express their thoughts and reflect on their previous experiences. Technology can be widely used to represent the L2 culture, as the Internet has thousands of sources that portray the target culture. Showing videos of people interacting in diverse situations would also show students real-life situations that naturally express aspects of culture.

The next activity centered on apologizing in English. The instructor asked students to work in groups and give examples of apologies. The students gave their suggestions, and the instructor plotted their examples of apology words in a graph on the whiteboard, situating the answers left to right from formal to informal. He showed that a strong and formal apology would generally be longer, while an informal phrase would tend to be simpler and shorter. I liked the graph the instructor drew on the board; the use of visuals, like graphs and graphic organizers, helps organize information and make it more easily acquired, without a lot of speaking and explaining from the teacher. The lesson encouraged students to compare and contrast their own culture with the target culture, and discuss different aspects they observed between the two.

I loved observing the **beginner-level Arabic class**. When teachers teach their native language as a second language, the biggest challenge is often that the teacher now no longer remembers how they learned that language. Techniques for teaching or learning English are easy for me to remember, since it is my second language and I remember how I learned it, but with Arabic, my native language, this challenge is more immediately felt. I have been through this experience firsthand when I taught Arabic to English-speaking children in USA, and observing other instructors teaching my first language has been truly beneficial.

In the Arabic class I observed, the instructor introduced new vocabulary and presented pictures of the words accompanied with numbers. He numbered the pictures to help students link the words with their pictures and numbers. In so doing, he exposed students to new and previously taught vocabulary, linking the words as well as reinforcing their memory and learning through practice, repetition, and exposure. He

asked, for example: “Where is the girl?” or “What is the picture in number 4?” The students answered describing what the girl/boy in the numbered picture was doing, or what was depicted in picture number 4, or what was the number attached with the picture of a girl reading a book, for example.

Using visuals in this way is a good method for introducing word/picture content. I will apply this method with my students, because I think it helps activate the student’s cognitive skills when they try to recognize multiple parts of the input: the words, their pictures, and the numbers. By integrating multiple teaching aids and tools to ease new vocabulary acquisition, teaching becomes more effective and students’ learning can be enhanced.

The instructor introduced a game for students to play in pairs, using the same words he introduced in that lesson. The game involved giving the students small flash cards portraying the pictures of the vocabulary they just learned. The teacher asked each pair to take turns having one student say the word and they race to pick up the correct picture of the word. I like to practice new words in games, as it raises the students’ motivation and interest in the content. Motivation is an important factor in language learning. One of my important goals to implement for my classroom is raising students’ motivation, and to accomplish this I plan to adopt game-type activities regularly to practice what students are learning.

In the subsequent portion of the lesson, the teacher focused on practicing writing words in Arabic by having students dictate the words to him while he wrote them on the board. For the word board ‘*sabbourah*’, he reviewed the use of the “*shaddah*,” which entails pronouncing the same letter twice. Then the teacher asked students to pair up to

practice pronouncing and writing the words they learned, asking each other, “How do you say [given word] in Arabic?”, or “How do you write [given word] in Arabic?”

The way the instructor illustrated Arabic writing was superb and detailed. Despite its nature as a distinct, unfamiliar system from the Latin writing system, students were able to write in Arabic in their notes and handouts. One suggestion would be to have the teacher apply the writing task more interactively by giving them a handout that has questions in the TL, asking, for example, “Which activity do you like to do most? Do you like to read, exercise, cook? How many times do you like to exercise in a week?” They can work in groups and exchange their interests in the given words and write them down in their worksheets. This would engage the students more. I saw students trying to grasp what the teacher was saying; their struggle with the material left some uninterested in the content and straying from the lesson through private conversations with each other. Learning a second language is challenging; students lose motivation and interest very easily. Thus, integrating more activities and games that would link the class content with their lives and experiences (e.g., their interests, thoughts and feelings) can maintain their motivation and focus throughout the class time.

The instructor of the **beginner-level German class** used an interview-type activity to start the lesson. The students moved around and took turns asking each other about their favorite foods (the topic of the lesson), and this lasted for three minutes. The instructor then asked the students if they found any common interests, and they answered individually. The interview is a great task-based activity, and, in this case, it would have been more beneficial if the teacher had allotted sufficient time for students to discuss those things they have in common, and those on which they differ. They could have

exchanged thoughts about the different types of foods they know in the TL. In addition, in this example, when they were asking about food, it would have opened a productive conversation between the students if they discussed their favorite foods, where they like to eat, and items pertaining to their culture and background, as food is an important aspect of all cultures.

Next, the instructor turned to teaching grammar, reviewing the rules of subject and object pronouns in German. She asked the students to come to the front, divided them into groups of boys and girls to make the activity more competitive, and asked each group to write what they knew and remembered about pronouns. It was a grammar-based activity based on previously learned content. Although, to the teacher's credit, the activity was very student-centered, it lacked meaningful application. I would have used a different activity that encouraged students to use pronouns in conversation, making sentences to describe something, discussing a topic they previously covered so they are familiar with the words, and so they can use the pronouns correctly. The activity the teacher implemented involved oral and written practice of the words, but it still was not helpful, because it was decontextualized. I believe any technique that requires them to think of the words and use them in describing a situation relative to their life would be more helpful than listing words on the board. Students were busy collecting the words in order to win the competition, not because they were concerned about improving their knowledge of grammar. Students can benefit from practicing grammar through games, but only when they are employed effectively, in a manner related to the use of language in real-life situations.

The instructor also used the book for more than half of the class time. She spent ten minutes moving around and assisting the students who needed help. The book has a variety of activities and would have been used more interactively if she prompted students to answer the exercises out loud, sharing their answers with the rest of the class. I would have used the projector to encourage students to answer the questions, correcting them when they make mistakes. Just filling in the blanks of the book exercises is not meaningful or effective for language learning. In my classroom, I want to reserve the book exercises for homework and not spend class time filling in the blanks, to take best advantage of instructor time by implementing more interactive activities with students. For instance, the time they filled in the blank would have been put to better use with a speaking activity, or a game that they play practicing the words they recently learned, especially because, at the end of the day, students seemed interested in the class content and were happy when they left class, which means they are very motivated to learn the language. I believe high motivation in students is a good feature we, as teachers, should make use of more wisely.

Another class I observed was a **beginner-level Chinese class**, where the instructor used a picture story in teaching reading comprehension. The instructor took time explaining the story in pictures only. He checked the students' understanding every once in a while by asking them questions in the L1. Then, he gave them the story in a text version and read it to them to check their listening, reading, and comprehension skills. Because they were beginners, their reading and comprehension skills were low, so the teacher supplemented his reading of the story with gestures, after he had shown them the story in pictures, to facilitate their understanding. Afterward, the teacher handed the

students a worksheet with some of the words from the story in Chinese and in English. He asked them to match the words according to their understanding of the story. I believe this TBA was very effective, as it employed their cognitive skills. The students took almost the rest of the class time with the worksheet, but without wasting time to chat or being distracted with their phones. They connected what they remembered of the Chinese characters, and their understanding and memory of the story, with the pictures. I believe they also linked the characters of the words with the meanings, as the shapes of many Chinese characters represent their meanings. Even though the teacher took a long time explaining and put forth a lot of effort to explain the story, the pictures, gestures and voice effects he employed made half of the work to help these beginner students understand Chinese without having to use the L1, which is the most important part in fostering effective language learning.

In conclusion, by watching and observing other teachers I can learn new teaching approaches and techniques. The aspect I like best is how it encourages me to reflect on their teaching practices and mine. Observing opens my eyes to new activities and techniques that I can use, and others that I can adapt with a little modifications to suit my EFL students. I realize that although there are many activities that are applicable to every teacher, thoughtful and effective implementation is the key. By overlooking small details about an activity, a teacher can fall short of large goals. From my observations, I realized the important role multimedia tools can play in facilitating language learning, finding sources that depict the target culture, and making the lesson content more attractive for students.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING VIDEO

Though I am primarily an EFL teacher, I took the opportunity to substitute as a teacher of introductory Arabic for one class period, in order to reflect on my own teaching style in a different context. I had a colleague record my teaching for later review and analysis. The classroom was equipped with a computer, a projector, and a white board. Twenty diverse students were in attendance—some heritage language learners, some had intrinsic motivation ranging from political to cultural and religious, and some were only interested in learning Arabic for its own sake.

Acknowledging that a fifty-minute class period constitutes at best a partial reflection of my teaching philosophy, and surely limits the scope for a significant analysis of how teaching should consistently be performed, nonetheless, I will use the class as an opportunity to reflect on my application of what I have learned in the MSLT program.

I started the class by introducing myself in Arabic and asking them about their names, as this was my first time meeting them. It took a couple of minutes, although, I could not remember their names later. It would have been helpful to print out a list of the students' names, then announce a traditional roll-call of their names and check off those in attendance. Had I done this, I could have used the attendance list to call on students until I become familiar with their names.

To warm up, I applied an activity aimed at activating and testing their prior learning of Arabic. For an assessment of prior knowledge activity, I asked tag-questions about authentic objects from the classroom, so that they could answer with “na’am aw la” (yes or no), revising verbs they had previously learned so I could have a starting point for the rest of the lesson, and get an idea of what they knew in the language. This oral

assessment lasted for about 3 minutes, but I would give it more time in the future, because, though they had learned the words before, they had not as of yet encountered tag-questions.

The lesson focused on introducing the verbs “*astat-tee*” (can), and “*la astat-tee*” (cannot), and exposed the students to their use. I incorporated picture files on the projector screen, of people playing five types of sports or skills—swimming, cooking, skiing, playing the piano, and riding a horse. Next, I showed them the pictures again, this time with captions. I conveyed the meanings of terms in the activities through Total Physical Response (TPR), along with the pictures as aids to help them understand the word “*astat-tee*”. The students’ reactions demonstrated that they did not understand the meaning of the word *astat-tee*’ easily, therefore, I should have used an illustrative slide or two that explained the term’s use at the beginning. This would have helped them understand the Arabic word for “can” better. Then, I started pointing out the different verb conjugations, masculine and feminine. I demonstrated that the verb “can” in Arabic comes with a preposition, which is ‘*an* (to). I wrote the words on the board and went back and forth between verb forms to help them learn and remember the words. In the future, when I teach the word “can,” I will start by displaying pictures of people who can do things/perform sports or tasks, with contrasting examples of others who cannot perform them well, to clarify the meaning of “can” in Arabic. I should also explain that the verb “*astat-tee*” has the same grammatical structure of the verbs followed by an infinitive “to” (e.g., have, like, plan, prefer, decide ... etc.). In a follow up activity, I would introduce a game—dividing the class into two groups (right side and left side), I would provide the students with cards displaying the pictures in the activity presented above,

then show the words alone in the projector screen, having them race to raise the right picture of the word.

We spent most of the class time working through the pictures in the slides, which I think made most of the lesson too teacher-centered. I talked more than they did, explaining everything orally. Although we had a long conversation between myself and the students to negotiate the meaning of the words and to emphasize the different masculine/feminine verb forms, it would have been better if I had incorporated some type of speaking activity. For example, a good activity would be giving students a worksheet with the words “*astat-tee*” and “*la astat-tee,*” displayed in a column divided by two rows, with pictures of the activities in another column, and involve them in a matching activity, asking them to talk about themselves by trying to express things they can do and things they cannot do in Arabic, so they practice speaking some of the language they know. Another activity idea that emphasizes the use of the verb “can” could be a worksheet with pictures of people doing things; the students would be asked to fill in the gender-conjugated verb and explain whether the person can or cannot do the thing, writing either *yastatee’ an*, *la yastatee’ an*, *tastatee’ an*, or *la tastatee’ an* (can do and cannot do, conjugated for gender).

Afterward, I introduced the word “help,” and though for some reason I anticipated they would be familiar with it, they were not, and I had to take time to explain it. It would have been better to show a picture of a person unable to do things and have someone help him, for example, a picture of a person learning to swim with the help of a teacher, or a person moving out of his house with somebody helping him carry the boxes.

At times during the class, I felt as if I were teaching children. Here is a critical factor about teaching adult beginners: a teacher has to choose appropriate teaching activities that are easy enough to suit the level of language proficiency, while at the same time are meaningful and not silly. I used the L1 (English) for about 10% of the class time, especially when giving instructions because they were beginner-level and I wanted to clarify what I needed them to do with the activities and homework. My goal is to use the L1 for no more than 5-7% of the class time in my future teaching, which can be reduced through a more effective use of visual aids and activities. An important corresponding point in my teaching philosophy is to use the target language (TL) for more than 90% of class time. Accordingly, the students are expected to use the TL in class, and I, in turn, will compensate that time percentage with many TBAs and aids to help accommodate them.

This class was far from my best teaching experience. Building on what I learned from it, however, I want to center my lessons around a lot of interactive TBAs and games, so as to spend most of the in-class time engaging my students in fun, focused, and productive activities. I enjoy teaching beginners, and though I do not believe it to be difficult, it requires prior, proper planning. I had the students work on a speaking activity in small groups, telling each other things they can and cannot do. It would have been better if it was an interview-based activity, so each student would move from the desks to ask the others about what they can and cannot do, so they would have the chance to use the different masculine and feminine verb conjugations in questioning female and male peers.

Following this activity, I then moved on to another part of the lesson—introducing an Arabic proverb. It seemed like I randomly jumped into the new concept, and the class would have benefited from a better transition in between activities. The axiom is common among many languages: “Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.” I showed them a picture of a woman at the doctor’s office, complaining about her broken nail and asking for a sick note on account of it, and another picture describing the exact meaning of the idiom in English. The idiom in Arabic corresponds exactly to the English form, using the words “dome” in place of mountain and the word “grain” instead of molehill. I noticed that I conveyed the meaning of the idiom, but it would be better to show a picture of a dome next to a picture of a grain to help them remember the idiom in the future when using the language.

Next, I placed the students in pairs and assigned them to complete a cryptogram. The worksheet showed a two-column chart with alphabetically sorted letters and ordered numbers, with chunks of blocks in numbered rows alongside a blank row. The object was to fill it in according to the numbers corresponding to the letters in the column. The sheets had two copies with rows of different words. I designed the activity for pairs to allow the students to speak their sentences to their partners. This activity works based on their understanding of sentence formation, saying “I can do...” and “I cannot do...” or “he/she can/cannot do...” The strategy also helps them practice spelling. They worked on the activity for five minutes, during which I checked on them and assisted with their questions. When they finished, I asked them to read their sentences. I saw that the only difficulty they had was in differentiating between verb conjugations corresponding to the

speaker and addressee while switching between the masculine and feminine verb forms. However, they should be able to surpass this issue quickly in subsequent classes.

I realized it wasn't easy for me, as a teacher, to work with students I had only just met, as I was unfamiliar with their capabilities and language proficiency. I believe this issue caused unnecessary repetition of lesson content and required a lot of teacher talk. A large part of the class was teacher-centered, since there was no previously established relationship, and therefore no prior communication between the students and myself. At the end of this class, I returned to the verb form "can" in Arabic and explained how it is formed of two words: the verb and the preposition. I wrote a sentence on the board with the words "play the piano." I asked the students to come and write the verbs "swim" and "ski," and I found a student who could come and write it, and another who could dictate its spelling to me. It was effective in gauging the students' writing abilities, however, I would do such a writing activity differently in the future. I would write, as I did, one sentence and then ask students to write another example, using a different verb in their worksheets or notes. Then I could ask the whole class, in order to discover how many could write a word on their own and say it to the class. Lastly, I gave another writing activity, asking the students to write two sentences in class so that I could observe them, to be sure whether they could write by themselves, and I gave them two more sentences for homework, so they could practice their abilities using and writing the words further.

LITERACY ARTIFACT

The role of dialogue journals in improving literacy skills

INTRODUCTION

Improving the literacy skills of second language (L2) learners is one of the goals I set in my teaching philosophy. After writing about reading skills and how important it is to increase our students' motivation to read, I thought about writing a paper about the writing skills, especially because writing has been difficult for me as a language learner. I was eager to look for strategies to change the students' perspective toward writing. The story of choosing the topic of Dialogue Journals is when I was teacher-conferencing with my daughter's teacher in second grade of elementary, she told me how she uses DJs as a tool to encourage students to write. She asks students to open up to write about their hobbies and interests. I was impressed with the amount of writing my daughter had in her journal at the end of the semester according to her age-range. This technique encourages students to write freely and use it as a tool that helps them express their feelings and speak their thoughts out. This way in turn improves their literacy abilities.

I plan to use this technique with my future EFL students and in the near future, with my young Arabic students at the Islamic Center of Logan, as they grow in the language skills. These students have many of them come from non-Arabic speaking communities, where they have no language exposure outside of class. I noticed how writing in Arabic was hard for them and at the same time how hard they try to copy what I write and show me their capabilities. In a way to improve their ability to read, and practice the language at home, and make use of their enthusiasm to learning, I plan to create a weekly dialogue journal where they start writing and drawing their thoughts out just to practice using the Arabic language system.

ABSTRACT

The significance of dialogue journals (DJs) lies in their evidence to advance informal, lively, and authentic conversations between teachers and students. Students express their feelings, thoughts, views, and concerns and teachers respond with comments or recommendations. DJs promote students' interpersonal mode of communication and build strong student-teacher relationships through informal communication channels without the fear of being corrected as teachers limit their feedback to comments without correcting students' mistakes. A new type of DJ is the electronic journal; a modified type of DJs from the traditional paper-based journal aimed to meet the needs of individuals in the new millennium. The main challenges are that DJs are time consuming for teachers to review and respond to and that students sometimes write about sensitive topics concerning their personal lives. Teachers should be careful not to play the central role but only address students' concerns and queries. DJs provide opportunities for participation in the negotiation of meaning. They invite reflection on personal challenges, which activates their critical thinking and broadens their cognitive abilities. Students disclose new meanings of life they have discovered through the journals. Moreover, DJs are supported by sociocultural theory and especially Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in that students develop their language skills through collaboration. Students develop their personal observation and metalinguistic skills while building good relationships with each other. The goal of DJs is to improve students' literacy skills through promoting free writing.

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

Writing is one of the hardest tasks of language learning, especially in languages where the writing system is distinct from the learner's native language, as is the case with Arabic and English. In addition, to that writing was long considered as "not interactive" (Darhower, 2004), primarily because when we write, we do not have partners, but instead usually do it by ourselves, for school assignments or tasks. When we speak, we don't overthink what we say; words come out easily and spontaneously. Yet when we write, we put thoughts into our words as well as we can, because we know someone will read our words and evaluate them more intensely than speech. In this regard, dialogue journals are a communicative way of implementing writing into language teaching.

My goal in writing this paper is to outline the benefits of DJs and encourage language teachers to consider adopting the technique with their students. I will review the literature that I believe best illuminates the technique, especially that which explores me especially to how to use journals for second language learning, as dialogue journals were established first for mainstream classrooms. I intent to present the significant benefits of using DJs and to illustrate the appropriate framework in which language teachers can implement this technique with the students.

Defining Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journals are defined as informal written conversations between teachers and students carried out regularly on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, as assigned by the teacher (Peyton, 1993). They differ from academic writing, which is based on responding to prompts, in that they arise spontaneously. DJs involve authentic communication between students and their teachers, but can also be implemented between students

(Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). In these more natural communication encounters, they express what they think of and care about. A key factor that makes dialogue journals so special is that teachers do not offer any correction of the student's language, but rather place emphasis is placed on meaning making (Stillman et al., 2014).

DJs are intended to stimulate learners to participate more in language activities. By dialoging with teachers or peers, they are putting into practice their knowledge of the L2. Students can start using dialogue journals from early proficiency levels, no matter their literacy level (Peyton, 1993). Their writing production can consist of even a few sentences, as their language proficiency allows. Young learners can draw pictures with captions underneath (Salem, 2007). DJs carry out two main purposes: providing opportunities for communication between the students and their teacher, and helping students become competent writers (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). Through them students are given an opportunity to communicate with everyone in the class, discussing not only topics that relate to class content, but also informal topics about things that interest them (Gloria Martinez, 2009; Salem, 2007; Stillman Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). Teachers are involved in responding to students' questions and asking them some questions in return (Stillman et al., 2014).

The Role of DJs in Regard to Literacy

Developing a learner's second language is the meaning of being *literate* in this language (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). As language learners improve their reading and writing skills, they improve their literacy level in the language, and as they improve in literacy they increase their language abilities and involve themselves more in communication. Met (2008) describes the influence of writing abilities by stating

“[G]ood writers recognize the gaps between what they want to say and what they are able to say, seek the language required to fill the gaps, and therefore grow in language as they engage in literacy tasks” (p. 50).

Students can gain this writing competency with a lot of practice, which is applied through DJs, as they promote regular writing by providing a context through which students language learning and literacy is being developed (Martines, 2009). Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (2005) reveal that journal writing develops students’ intellectual and expressive abilities. Language educators’ seek to improve the students’ literacy skills by creating opportunities that facilitate and develop students’ language abilities such as applying dialogue journal writing in the language classroom.

A main goal for language learning is using it communicatively, with native or nonnative speakers of the language, for which L2 learners need strong literacy skills in order to achieve proficiency. Communicative competence comprises reading, writing (including syntactic skills), and intercultural awareness, all of which can be enhanced through DJs. The communication DJs enable between students and their native or native-like L2 teacher provides a venue for learning about the target culture, thereby increasing students’ intercultural awareness. Through meaningful communication, reading and writing is practiced in a way that improves students’ literacy skills. Their thinking grows and they learn to reflect on a partner’s ideas (Staton, 1984), which in turn broadens their understanding of the world around them as they are exposed to others’ experiences and backgrounds

When students write about their own interests and issues that concern them; they are using the L2 purposefully. Dialogue journals provide a way for students to interact

with a fluent speaker (the teacher) in written interaction, which opens up opportunities to practice reading and writing with a purpose (Peyton, 1993). Writing with a purpose makes DJs an effective tool for improving literacy.

As previously mentioned, writing has customarily not been viewed as “interactive” (Darhower, 2004), however, dialogue journals clearly advance informal, lively, authentic interaction between teachers and students (Kreeft, 1984). Peyton demonstrates “dialogue journals not only open a new channel of communication, but they also provide another context for language and literacy development” (1993, p. 2). Research findings have confirmed their role as an effective approach for promoting language learning (Peyton & Staton, 1986).

The Teacher’s Role in Dialogue Journals

The teachers’ role with the journals does not extend to evaluating or correcting students’ writing, which is a key factor that helps in accomplishing these journals’ goals. The teacher simply gives responses, agreeing, disagreeing, or suggesting things concerning what the students wrote (Salem, 2007). The teacher’s role as a simple co-conversant makes his/her students comfortable and not anxious about grades or errors they might have.

In order to fit the L2 context, it seems counterintuitive that teachers would not correct their students’ mistakes and teach them the correct form of a word, but teachers could follow the recasting method to address this, by rephrasing the correct form of the word in their responses (Salem, 2007). Their responses to students’ entries serve as the input through which students learn the correct forms of words or other new information (Peyton & Staton, 1986). They can even speak a corrected word when they discuss the

journal content in class (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers. 2014). Although some argue the teacher's role in the DJs is not to correct, evaluate, or even give praise (Salem, 2007), other researchers declare that teachers can use praise effectively to benefit students, by writing some encouraging words to scaffold their learning and development (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008).

Significance and Benefits of DJs

The expressive type of writing the journals provide encourages unskilled writers to write and to believe that what they write is important, because they write without fear of being corrected, a factor that has been found to give DJs an instrumental benefit for language development (Salem, 2007). Through writing in the journals, learners are afforded a chance to learn, share and borrow from other sources (Vygotsky, 1987).

Dialogue journals are found to accelerate students' independent learning, as they can improve their writing skills independently, without the need for face-to-face interaction. Studies show that dialogue journals are instrumental in modeling reflective teaching and learning in any given environment (Peyton & Staton, 1986, 1993; Stillman et al., 2014; Salem, 2007;). DJs have been tested with elementary school (Cummings & Nassaji, 2000), sixth grade (Peyton & Reed, 1990), high school (Ghahremani-Ghajar & Mirhosseini, 2005), and college EFL students (González-Bueno, 1998; Salem, 2007), and in each case have proven effective in improving students' literacy.

Teachers can use the journals to help their students express what they have learned and what they are struggling with (Salem, 2007). The journals can work as a platform for teachers to give them feedback on how effective their teaching is, as well as a way of interaction with their students (Martines, 2009). Through "extending contact

time with students and getting to know them in a way that may not be possible otherwise" (Peyton, 1993, p. 4), DJs give teachers a chance to get to know their students more than they would be able to if limited to in-class time, as Salem explains (2007).

DJs prepare learners in areas where they face challenges, and promote autonomous participation in learning activities. They also help the learner in creating course content that supplements teaching, and generates more interaction outside the classroom setting. DJs provide a real platform for students to practice what they know and learn about a language, and when used effectively, motivate learners to become good writers. They provide a base knowledge of writing elements, such as "sentence structure, idiomatic expressions, and cultural elements" (Martinez, 2009). They also enable students to practice writing descriptions, narratives, arguments, and complaints (Salem, 2007), as well as improving critical thinking, spoken language, and building confidence in their communication skills (Martinez, 2009).

Traditionally, learners develop writing skills through composing academic essays, but this traditional writing approach does not capitalize on student capabilities. With the use of DJs, the teacher can adequately draw out the functional elements of language the learners are exposed to in order to develop more vigorous writing skills (Ellis, 2003). In order to develop strong language skills, students are required to be involved in various writing activities. Writing trains students to reflect, thereby strengthening their critical thinking (Priscilla & Reinertsen, 1993).

Dialogue journals are established on diverse structures, which are valuable to both the teacher and the student. Teachers can assign them to be written in class or at home, as a part of their participation points, they also can schedule them on a weekly, monthly, or

daily basis. They involve (1) the reflection, (2) the process and (3) the student. As I mentioned above, DJs activate students' thinking and broaden their cognitive abilities by allowing the teacher and the student to make elaborate connections on diverse issues, discover varied meanings, and create new ideas for the class (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). Through dialogue journals, learners tend to construct innovative knowledge from the exchange of dialogue they conduct back and forth with the audience (Elbow, 2000; Stillman et al., 2014).

The organic nature of the process makes the reflection genuine. Dialogue journals offer a concrete written record of discussions, which helps the student remain focused while the teacher is attached to the student's reflections (Ellis, 2003). They represent student-centered writing activities, scaffolding individual writing. The goal in implementing DJs is to provide individualized instruction and promote independent thinking (Stillman et al. 2014). As a tool, DJs are not limited to a specific classroom setting. They allow the teacher to examine each student's attributes and interpersonal ties deeply. The journals provide a venue by which the learner links with other students without definite bounds established by the teacher or the subject examined (Peyton, 1993).

The use of this tool has assisted in establishing strong learning ties between the teacher and students (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). For example, teachers can discuss with students their native culture and students can complain about their problems with culture shock (Peyton, 1993) and their struggles in the foreign country, as many language learners move to foreign countries to study the language. Because of this reinforcement in the teacher-student relationship, DJs allow the teacher a strong

understanding of the class, while students are provided with a seamless opportunity to engage with their teachers. In addition, interpersonal ties can be built between class members through student-student journaling (Stillman et al, 2014). Thus, journals foster one-on-one bonds, either between the teacher and student, or between students.

DJs have diverse benefits for teachers and their students. Applying DJs is highlighted as a central element in sustaining a positive classroom atmosphere. They also help teachers in fostering a strong academic foundation by giving learners a new way by which to tackle what they perhaps failed to grasp in class. To aid students' accommodation toward constructing journal writing and learning its procedures, teachers can ask them to add entries during class time (Ellis, 2003), especially at the beginning of implementing journal writing, until they grow used to it as a regular task. Journals act as windows into the students' mind (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014).

Students can write about subjects that are important to them (Peyton, 1993; Salem, 2007), and this is an essential characteristic of DJs, as it enables the exchange of ideas communicatively with others. They can express their feelings, worries, and complaints about specific issues they've experienced. They can also ask about things unclear to them, and the feedback they receive from their peers and teachers tends to motivate them to keep writing (Peyton, 1993).

Implications

The journals' occurrence outside the scope of classroom tasks (Salem, 2007) enables students to find a recipient to open up to and speak about different issues concerning not only school but personal life as well. Moreover, because journal writing is done regularly, it makes writing a habit; "it serves as a permanent record of thoughts and

experiences” (Salem, 2007, p. 33) and promotes writing fluency (Peyton, 1993; Salem, 2007) as well as oral fluency because of its nature as a conversational format (González-Bueno, 1998).

Thus, DJs have the potential to promote students’ writing and speaking skills in the L2 (González-Bueno, 1998; Hynes & Murriss, 2001). Some language scholars claim that writing and speaking improve and affect each other reciprocally for several reasons (El-Koumy, 1998). First, writing and speaking may reflect one’s communicative competence. Second, writing and speaking are both productive modes of the language that may show the learner’s level of proficiency. Third and most importantly, writing involves speaking to oneself, which is an important feature for successful writers (El-Koumy, 1998). Moreover, dialogue journal is a form of informal conversations that involve no correction of errors, which help the students feel like speaking to a peer. Language learners need constant opportunities to practice the language, and DJs provide this in a platform without any censorship, which encourages them to keep writing. Students can write as much as they desire (Salem, 2007). Moreover, the use of dialogue journals has incorporated numerous advantages and implications for students in developing instrumental language skills, including writing and critical thinking. Some of them are further discussed below:

DJs Ignite Insight

As observed in various studies, the use of DJs in a classroom setting opens a window by which students express personal thoughts and experiences regarding diverse issues, seek clarification to unclear issues, and request opinions on any of their life concerns (Peyton, 1993; Salem, 2007; Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). At the

same time, students disclose new meanings they have learned through the journals. They provide the teacher with an opportunity to understand the innate needs and character of each learner (Stillman et al., 2014).

Furthermore, teachers usually cannot interact verbally with each individual student in a large classroom, but dialogue journals have solved this issue by allowing students to have a one-on-one interaction with the teacher (Ewald, 2006). Also, having the time to interact with a topic given in class individually through DJs allows the students a chance to navigate through the subject and gather the necessary information to grasp it. Ultimately, DJs disregard the conventional elements of learning and help in setting robust and individualized interpersonal learning objectives (Ewald, 2006); they promote the interpersonal mode of communication for students. On the other hand, the journal is also employed to evaluate, highlight, and seek solutions for unclear issues. With proper use of DJs, learners feel that they have communicated with their teacher and their concerns have been heard.

DJs Boost Confidence

Journal writing is instrumental in shaping student focus; it helps encourage discipline and confidence. Due to the closeness the journal brings between teacher and student, trust and confidentiality are cultivated. DJs are utilized to help learners improve and empower the teacher to know students through their writing. Similarly, students have an opportunity to establish and nurture trust as a result of their ties with the teacher (Mukaida, 2003).

Electronic Dialogue Journals (Email)

Online journaling is simply the online implementation of DJs with the use of the computer via Email or classroom management systems such as canvas. It is a modified form of traditional paper-based journals aimed at accommodating learners in the new millennium, when almost all professional writing is now done through the computer (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000). To increase students' literacy levels, language educators can shift from only using paper-based DJs, wherein students write and decode words and put together sentences and phrases, to using email to foster online-based language learning. The use of electronic DJs can serve not only as an interactive tool, but also as an extra source of language exposure students and teachers can take advantage of for teaching and learning development. It serves the meaning of using "language both within and beyond the school setting" as "one of the five goals established by the recently developed Standards for Foreign Language Learning -- the 'communities' goal" (González-Bueno, 1998, p. 55).

Studies have shown the effects and impacts of using electronic journals, such as raising students' motivation and interest, and increasing their writing and language production (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000). Studies of two ESL groups, using electronic and traditional paper-and-pencil DJs respectively, found that the group that used email for their journals wrote more in their entries than the traditional DJ group. They discussed more language functions, and their language tone seemed to more closely approach a normal oral conversation (González-Bueno, 1998). These outcomes can be anticipated to be a result of departing from the traditional practices of writing (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000).

The Affective Filter

Students who are in the process of acquiring another language are often vulnerable to developing an invisible filter that has a possibility of igniting anxiety, fear, lack of self-esteem and worry (Dornyei, 2007). This invisible filter is defined as the affective filter, a crucial aspect language teachers must help their students circumvent (Krashen, 1985). However, studies of DJs have shown that the most reluctant and low-proficiency students were more motivated to engage and write in the journals (Staton, 1988). Their tendency to write more was a result of a diminished affective filter in the scope of dialogue journals. As a result, their writing increased in length and improved in content, and also showed more focus and elaboration on the topic they were addressing (Staton, 1988).

Students with high affective filters are given a chance to express their anxiety or inability to complete language-learning tasks (Mukaida, 2003). Thus, their affective filter is automatically reduced through DJs and also enables teachers to understand the student's needs more accurately. This encourages all educators to make the best application of dialogue journals to help reduce the level of affective filters among learners and build stronger relationships with them, something I believe to be crucial for language learning.

Assessment Metalinguistic

Self-Assessment

The process by which DJs are implemented is essential in developing strong language dynamics. When properly deployed, DJs encourage students to reflect upon their language practices and assess themselves. The implication of self-assessment has a

significant impact on the learning process of L2 learners. According to Vygotsky, self-assessment has a role of self-regulated instead of other-regulated performance (1978). When students use dialogue journals as a scaffolding tool, it elevates their evaluation of their own performance. Students can assess and observe their improvement from where they started writing their journals to the end of the semester (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014).

Dialogue journals were conducted with fourth and fifth grade students in their native (Spanish) and second (English) languages in an elementary school in California. After some time using the journals, students disclosed their concerns about language acquisition and declared when they decided to write more in English as they felt their English proficiency had improved (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). Students were found to be excited to climb to higher language challenges. Using DJs enhances the metalinguistic skills of the learners; it makes them aware of their own learning and all the grammar details, improves their thinking, helps them construct their writing and develop their academic personalities (Martinez, 2009).

Peer Feedback

Through using DJs, students are able to address their writing to different addressees, which incorporates opportunities to provide and receive peer feedback. Students also have a chance to develop academic identities in school and bolster each other's learning (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). Their writing style grows and evolves throughout their interactions with their peer partners. Thus, to achieve the best outcomes in writing DJs, teachers can pair language learners of disparate proficiencies. When students of different language abilities are paired for DJs, they are likely to benefit

each other according to their language proficiency, interests, strengths and challenges in the language tasks, as well as their personal identities (Stillman et al., 2014). For instance, strong students paired with weak students were prone to model the ‘teaching role’ for their weaker counterparts and cover their needs (Stillman, et al., 2014).

Teachers can also pre-arrange student pairs in writing DJs to build good relationships between classroom members. This can achieve the side benefit of a solution for students who feel unattached because of struggles making friends in the classroom. The exchange of shared interests and experiences will motivate students to write more in the journals. Writing to different audiences and in different contexts will build their knowledge and strengthen their skills (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014).

Zone of Proximal Development

In relation to shoring up learning through peer feedback, according to Sociocultural Theory, learning and teaching are done through social interaction (Poehner, 2012). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), proposed by Vygotsky, is defined as “[T]he distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or with collaboration with more capable peers” (1978, p. 38).

In addition, teachers’ interaction with and responses to students’ writing within the journals bolster the learning process for students. “[J]ournal writing facilitates their language learning where the instructor’s comments serve as an input that is slightly beyond students’ current proficiency level” (Salem, 2007, 32). A study was conducted on students using DJs, observing learners’ problem solving. The study found that an

individual acquires the language more in a social context and within an interaction with at least one other individual (Cumming & Nassaji, 2000). Teachers' questions in DJs were found to induce students to communicate in order to find answers and solutions. These questions also led students to use new words and improve their thinking (Cummin & Nassaji, 2000).

The ZPD, as one of the various theories pertaining to the dynamics of the second language learning process, is employed as an interpretation of the mediation learners go through when producing the L2 (Nichols, 2009). Similarly, language here is the tool that "mediates between the students' thought and their ability to construct meaning" (Nichols, 2009, p.31). The ZPD also activates the ways in which learners relate with diverse social and cultural dynamics. Thus, "In some cases, we may struggle thinking out the meaning we want to share with our audience" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 162); however, when interacting through DJs with teachers or peers, native speakers, or language learners of higher proficiency level, learners have an opportunity to find answers, develop skills, and expand their current knowledge. In all instances, DJs touch on the diverse performance parameters; they are anchored within scaffolding as the ZPD (Nassaji & Swain, 2000).

Challenges of Dialogue Journals

The issue teachers usually complain about when implementing dialogue journals is that they require substantial amount of time (Peyton, 1993; Reinertsen & Wells, 1993). However, the benefits students attain from DJs and the gains teachers receive from knowing the students' inner problems and needs, are worth working for if teachers are able to manage their time to allot time for the journals (Peyton, 1993). Also Reinersten

and Wells suggest teachers apply team journaling, which lessens the burden on teachers and frees them to be able to focus on other teaching tasks (1993).

Another crucial challenge is that some topics students discuss in their journals can become too sensitive. In this case, it can be difficult for teachers to maintain commitment to confidentiality (Stillman, Anderson, & Struthers, 2014). However, in some situations, where students reveal some family issues or other issues that may put them at risk, teachers might feel obliged to tell someone, but they also do not want to sacrifice their students' trust and make them feel betrayed if they shared their information (Stillman et al., 2014). Therefore, when teachers introduce the activity of writing dialogue journals at the beginning of the semester, they should instruct students on how to use DJs and clarify the potential consequences of disclosing sensitive information in the journals (Stillman et al., 2014).

Teachers could be snared in a trap concerning journal writing when they put themselves at the center of this whole process. In addition, “[t]eacher entries that simply echo what the student wrote or that ask a lot of questions can stifle rather than promote interaction” (Peyton, 1993, p. 6). Therefore, teachers must be careful of their role within the journals to encourage students' writing, praise them, and answer their questions or concerns since its goal is to give them the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts, rather than to feel committed to answer teachers' inquiries (Stillman et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Dialogue journals are essential to developing written communication effectively, in a way that improves students' literacy skills through the communicative practices of

comfortable and interactive reading and writing. Teachers must not forget the essential value of self-reflection and critical thinking students can achieve through DJs. The outcome of DJs in several studies explains its significance in adding value to language learning, when compared to various social and linguistic contexts.

Using the various elements of DJs, learners are exposed to supportive features that encourage academic and social excellence. Equally, the dimensions of dialogue journals are inclusive and have been shown to fuel learner autonomy. It is evident that DJs can improve the scope of learners' writing as well as their conversation skills. The reflective nature of the journal acts as a tool employed to polish the way students and teachers relate and communicate, and this occurs whether discussing academic aspects or issues not concerning class (Ewald, 2006).

In teaching my EFL students of various cultural backgrounds, I look forward to using DJs for several purposes. Deploying the technique will improve my students' literacy skills by implementing a new platform of *free writing*, as well as the various above-mentioned features DJs promote, I hope to use DJs as a venue through which students can broaden their cultural and pragmatic knowledge of the language by discussing varied topics.

CULTURE ARTIFACT

Teaching refusal strategies to EFL learners: Review of the literature

INTRODUCTION

This paper was written for a course in Culture Teaching and Learning. The course covered the teaching of second-language pragmatics, and it has opened my eyes to the sociolinguistic variables affecting cross-cultural communication between people. I realized the need to teach my students the procedures which when followed can help them effectively produce and comprehend speech acts. My research for this paper also illuminated aspects of the pragmatics of my own language and culture I was not aware of.

I aim to investigate the diverse ways English speakers perform refusals to different situations, such as invitations, requests, suggestions, or offers. In order to examine the use of refusal strategies among Arab learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) researchers have compared their refusals with those of American English native speakers (AENSs). In an attempt to learn the influence of cultural norms on language proficiency, I read research conducted on refusal strategies among both groups and found particular differences between AENSs and Arab EFL learners according to the context and cultural variables in which the refusal is performed.

Introduction and Reflection

My desire in investigating the differences is to help raise my students' pragmatic awareness by teaching them the appropriate ways in which native speakers perform refusal speech acts. Although there are significant differences in manners of speech between native Arabic speakers and North American native English speakers, similarities in performing refusals arise. These variances, however, could lead to serious situations, as refusals are by nature risky speech acts that can threaten the face of both speaker and hearer (Abed, 2011; Al-Issa, 2003; Tatsuki & Houck, 2010).

I decided to dig deeper in investigating what type of differences could cause failure in communication between people from these two cultures. I will review and analyze what the researchers have found on this issue by comparing groups of Arab EFL learners and ANESs in order to learn from the results how to build a framework for teaching my EFL students the pragmatics of the second language (L2).

First language transfer is a main reason for pragmatic failure (Nelson et al., 2002). It may cause differences in meaning to arise between Arab EFL learners' and ANESs' refusals. These aspects, along with the relationship between L2 proficiency and pragmatic transfer, will be discussed in this paper. A literature review is collected to discuss areas of pragmatic failure in performing refusals in which Arab EFL learners lag behind their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The purpose of this paper is to highlight for L2 teachers the benefit of integrating pragmatics into L2 instruction.

Background

Foreign language teaching, as it is practiced with English in Saudi Arabia, leads students to acquire only basics grammatical competence. Learning focused on vocabulary

and grammar rules in this classroom-limited approach does not give learners the necessary proficiency to communicate with others. Providing pragmatic instruction will enable students to gain cross-cultural awareness and pragmatic competence, which are key in achieving communicative competence in the second language. This competence prepares them to successfully carry out conversations with native speakers of English and avoid misunderstandings that can lead to communication breakdown and, as a side detriment, the loss of motivation to keep learning the language.

Living in a second language context, students have uncountable chances to encounter the L2 in their lives outside the classroom. They have plenty of exposure to real-life situations that involve them in language practices that help in gaining a level of pragmatic competence. On the other hand, students in an EFL context are likely to be cut off from hearing and speaking the L2 once they leave the classroom. They have no exposure to it, no chance to use it, and thus they do not gain the pragmatic knowledge they need (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006). In this context, as is the case in Saudi Arabia, FL teaching should embrace instruction in the target language culture and pragmatics. Students need to acquire pragmatic competence to be able to deal with people from the target culture (TC) when they travel or meet an expatriate.

Most of the research conducted on interlanguage pragmatics, which had been defined by Kasper, Gabriele, Blum-Kulka, Shoshana as “the study of nonnative speakers’ use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language” (p. 3), focused on speech acts (Al-Eryani, 2007), since the way to perform different speech acts vary across cultures (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Norms, with regard to refusals, depend upon cultural implications and influences. Al-Issa states, “Speech behaviors are governed by culturally

specific social constraints, which inform speakers as to what to say, to whom, and under what conditions” (2003, p.1). Specific refusal strategies common in the Arab world might sound vague in North American society, and could lead to disconnection between speakers.

The research results show that both groups employ similar strategies in performing refusals, albeit with differences in order, length, and content of semantic formulas, due to their different cultural backgrounds (Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Issa, 2003; Abed, 2013). Differences also arise according to the social status—higher, lower, or equal—of the person to whom a refusal is addressed (Abed, 2011).

In an attempt to categorize refusals in the context of Arab and American English communities, I will explain the similarities and differences I found in the literature between both groups, with special consideration paid to rank (the higher, lower, or equal status of the interlocutors), as Arabs live in a social hierarchical structure in their society. North Americans, on the other hand, do not pay much attention to rank, which causes misunderstandings between speakers from both communities.

Pragmatic Competence is Integral to Communicative Competence

Researchers have characterized communicative competence as consisting of four main competencies—grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse (Canale & Swain, 1980). This depiction has received criticism, as it ignores pragmatic competence (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006). Pragmatic competence is a part of the communicative competence an L2 learner has to acquire if he/she is to successfully communicate with native speakers of the language. As I mentioned above, developing a high level of language proficiency does not ensure successful communication with native speakers.

Pragmatic competence—“the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (Thomas, 1983, p. 93, as cited in Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002)—is inevitably important for a language learner to succeed in building conversations with NSs.

Pragmatic competence can be divided into two parts that define language use: pragmalinguistic, and sociopragmatic (LoCastro, 2012). A learner’s use of the appropriate words and syntax in a specific speech act, such as introducing oneself as “I’m Ahmed” instead of “This is Ahmed,” is a pragmalinguistic move. However, when a visitor asks the household about the cost of their house, this is considered an inappropriate use of the language to the social context of North American society (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). It was illustrated by several studies that the sociopragmatic errors EFL learners commit are more serious and carry more risk than their linguistic errors, based on semantic and lexical speech acts (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010; Abed, 2011) as the linguistic errors indicate low language proficiency of the speaker but the sociopragmatic errors stigmatize the person himself. Native speakers may ignore the linguistic errors but are less likely to forgive pragmatic errors. Surprisingly, they may even perceive them as arrogance or rudeness (Nelson et al., 2002).

On the other hand, language connotations present major challenges for second-language (L2) learners. Interpretations of utterances and speech norms differ from language to language as a result of the influence of their diverse cultures on speakers’ perspectives. In teaching EFL to Arab learners, it is important to provide them with a solid foundation of knowledge regarding the target culture (TC) and its pragmatics. Learning pragmatics improves the learner’s awareness of proficient ways to form

particular speech acts, which in turn increases the learner's success in conversing with native speakers. Overall proficiency blossoms as a result.

Pragmatic knowledge cannot solely be taught in classes; it is a "Competence" that is acquired, possessed, and developed by learners through time and real exposure to pragmatic input (Kasper, 1997). Teachers must provide opportunities through which students can develop this competence. Therefore, time should be devoted in the language classroom to the acquisition of the cultural awareness of the target language (TL) and its pragmatic knowledge, through which the most serious consequences of pragmatic failure will be decreased. A demonstration of pragmatics instruction is offered later in this paper.

Refusals as Face-Threatening Acts

A refusal is always a challenge and a tricky speech act for language learners, especially considering the terms of its linguistic and psychological norms, as the refusal's nature lies in saying "No," which risks offending the interlocutor (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). A refusal is a speech act by which the speaker fails "to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor" (Chen, Ye, & Zhang, 1995, p. 121). Compounding the natural challenges presented in saying "no", the direct and indirect ways to express refusals, as well as the degree of politeness expressed in speaking a refusal, differ between the direct and indirect methods (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010).

To minimize the face-threatening perception of refusals, strategies can be used to alleviate the situation. These strategies vary across cultures because of the diverse perceptions of appropriateness and politeness from culture to culture and country to country (Al-Eryani, 2007), resulting in the wide variety of refusal performances which will be discussed below. Strategies include addition of words such as 'softeners and

downgraders,' which will also be illustrated in order to inform language teachers of the ways in which to teach refusal speech acts (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010).

Refusing may be perceived as a face-threatening act to the person who offers, requests, invites, etc., because it will likely contradict his or her expectations. In addition, because refusals are often performed through indirect strategies (Abed, 2011), they are harder to express and interpret than other speech acts. Therefore, a speaker (the refusal performer) will have to be aware of possible pragmatic errors in performing refusals (Abed, 2011), since the refusal already constitutes a threat by its very nature. People normally care to protect their own and the interlocutor's face when conversing. Refusals are a face-threatening speech act for most people, and for Arabs the situation is particularly difficult, as it is culturally discouraged for them to reject and say 'no.' It is even harder for them to refuse a situation when addressing a person of higher social status.

Pragmatic Transfer

When speakers borrow the speech norms of their First Language (L1) and use them to perform speech acts in their L2, this is called pragmatic transfer (Abed, 2011), which is a main contributor to pragmalinguistic failures like those described above (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). Pragmatic transfer often results in communication breakdown between interlocutors. Second-language learners may unconsciously transfer politeness strategies common to their L1 into the target language. This transfer normally originates from different social rules between the two languages. Further, Abed relates this to the learners' misunderstanding of the linguistic differences between the two languages:

They may accurately or inaccurately perceive linguistic differences between their native language and the target language. Even if they accurately perceive differences, however, they may have difficulty producing the differences accurately, or may exaggerate them (2011, p. 168).

To illustrate, speakers of a language may use a refusal strategy uncommon to their culture and background, which could lead to an uncomfortable feeling between interlocutors (Abed, 2011). For example, a Chinese EFL learner may use a regret expression, which is common in American community but not in the Chinese, when refusing an invitation, which may lead to a situation of discomfort because he/she could not master the regret expression of refusal. Similarly, an Arab EFL learner may use a direct refusal in an English-speaking context with a friend (person of equal status), while it is not common among Arabs to use absolute/direct refusals.

Pragmatic transfer (L1 transfer) and lack of sociolinguistic proficiency in an Arab EFL learner who visits or lives in an English-speaking country and engages in conversations with native speakers, compounded with a lack of L2 linguistic reservoir, may result in difficulties and thus lead to intercultural miscommunication (Abed, 2011). L1 transfer may even lead to negative judgments on the part of people themselves when they make a pragmatic error in expressing an L2 speech act. Transferring the way a speech act is performed in the L1 may be perceived as rude or aloof, whereas making a grammatical error will only reveal a speaker's low proficiency in L2 language-use, regardless of his/her attitude (LoCastro, 2012).

If sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences of the languages are not addressed in L2 instruction, it will lead L2 learners to face conflict in interaction (Al-Kahtani, 2005). A main factor behind pragmatic transfer also originates in the influence of the native language's cultural context on the L2 learner, or what is called sociocultural

transfer, which will be further explained below.

Sociocultural Transfer and Arab EFL Refusals

Sociocultural transfer from the L1 is defined as the use of one's own cultural norms in speaking and interacting in the TL (Al-Issa, 2003). Kasper (1992) characterizes transfer as “the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information” (p. 207). Hence, sociocultural transfer comes from the learner’s lower pragmatic competence in the TL, resulting in “pragmatic failure” (Abed, 2011).

Existing research on Arab EFL and ESL learners’ refusals is very limited, however, most of the studies on Arabs’ pragmatic failure in making refusals trace the issue back to sociocultural transfer (Abed, 2011). Al-Issa (2003) found sociocultural transfer evident in three areas the order, length, and content of semantic formulas. The studies discussed categorize refusal strategies used by Arab EFL learners according to them. In addition, Arabs’ refusal strategies are likely to change according to the respective social status of the interlocutor. Examples of all of these variables are offered below.

Order of Semantic Formula

Al-Eryani (2007) studied a group of Yemeni EFL learners, comparing them with American English NSs and Yemeni Arabic NSs. He found general similarities in the refusal strategies of the three groups. Some differences emerged in the choice of semantic formulas among each group, according to the situation in which the refusal was uttered (invitation, offer, suggestion, and request). For instance, YEFLs and AENSs were similar in choosing ‘regret’ at the first place, followed by ‘excuse’ in the second position, and

sometimes extended the use of excuse to the third position (YEFLs) or alternative (AENSs).

Likewise, Abed (2011) observed no significant differences between the Iraqi Arabic NSs, Iraqi EFLs, and AENSs in their refusal strategies to different situations. Similarities lie in the extensive use and order of "Excuse-reason-explanation" by all three groups. The reason behind this similarity in choices lies in all three groups' agreement that this strategy reduces the strong, potentially offensive effect of refusals. Such similarities in their refusal strategies showed a positive pragmatic transfer of the EFL and NAS groups (Abed, 2011).

Length of Semantic Formula

The Arab EFL group's responses were considerably longer than what tends to be typical in American refusals. In addition, Al-Issa's (2003) study revealed sociocultural transfer in the content of the semantic formulas Arab EFL learners chose, which contributed to making them longer than the Americans'. EFL learners tended to use regret, explanation, and negative consequences in performing refusals in L2. An example of a situation in which I compare Iraqi EFL and AENS respondents had to refuse lending class-notes to a classmate is illustrated below.

Table 1. Length of Semantic Formulas in Iraqi EFL Group Refusals

Example	Semantic Formula
(1) I'm sorry; I need to catch the bus.	[regret]
(2) My notes are bad.	[explanation]
(3) I think they will give you headache.	[statement of negative consequence]

Table 2. Length of Semantic Formulas in American NES Group Refusals

Example	Semantic Formula
(1) Sorry,	[regret]
(2) I did not go to class either.	[explanation]

Al-Eryani indicates that Egyptian Arabic NSs used more upgraders and downgraders in their refusal utterances, i.e., “I think,” or “probably,” etc. They sometimes used religious expressions to upgrade a refusal situation (2007) (e.g., inshallah). These modifiers to downgrade a refusal lengthened formulas. Further examples of overly long responses given by EFL learners are found in a study by Al-Kahtani (2005), who studied Japanese and Arab EFL learners, comparing them to Americans NESs. He used three groups of different cultural backgrounds to test their refusal responses to different situations. The results show that Japanese and Arabs tended to be more vague and unspecific in their responses, while Americans were more specific and clear.

To illustrate, a Japanese student responded to a salesman’s invitation to a restaurant, “made as a bribe,” by saying, “Well, I have something important to think about right now. So, could you give me another time to discuss it?” while an Arab respondent said, “I am busy and I [sic] engaged with other appointments.” In contrast, most of the American group’s responses were “airtight;” one subject responded to the restaurant invitation by saying, “I’d love to. Thank you for the invitation. I have decided to sign with the other company” (Al-Kahtani, 2005, p. 23).

Content of Semantic Formula

Al-Issa (2003) studied Jordanian EFL learners’ refusals and shows that they fell back on the norms of their native language (Arabic). Arabs’ love of the native language,

negative perception of the L2, and religion all factor in affecting and increasing sociocultural transfer in their refusals, which led them to specific choices in semantic formulas. Likewise, Abed (2011) presents Arab EFL learners' responses, referring to them as deviated from the American-English language norms. He describes such deviation as reflecting the Arabs' cultural norms, signifying native language influence. Examples of responses in Abed's study that deviated from North American norms vary and are listed below.

Several factors influence sociocultural transfer, such as Arab EFL learners' love of their native language, which among Muslims relates to their religion—Arabic is the language of the Qur'an (Al-Issa, 2003). Such pride in L1 norms may predict a lack of pragmatic competence in the L2 (Al-Issa, 2003) resulting from a monocultural worldview prominent among some Arabs, which hinders their ability to think in a different language. This lack of pragmatic competence could cause miscommunication with native English speakers since people from different cultures may not understand the case of their religious influences, and thus will not be able to understand their utterances.

This relation gives religion the superiority to dominate Arab EFL learners' manners of speech and transfer the L1 rules to English. An example of that is the use of the name of God (Allah) in their speech very frequently, as in "*wallah*" (meaning I swear to God), and "*insha'allah*" (meaning 'God-willing'). It is very common for Arabs to use these phrases when they mean to assert opinions and be believed by their interlocutors, give future promises, and express something they hope to accomplish. For instance, a promise for future acceptance of invitation when they refuse one, would be "I swear to God" to assert their interlocutor will believe they will comply later (Al-Issa).

Another example of Arabs' L1 transfer in their semantic formulas in making refusals is the act of 'returning a favor,' as in the way an Arab speaker would respond to a typical offer from a friend or even an acquaintance to pay for him/her. It is common in the Arab world to offer to pay for a friend when riding a bus, going to the movies, or even out to a restaurant, as Arabs have little exposure to ideas like "going Dutch," and may even consider it an offense to them (Al-Issa, 2003). Thus, such a speaker would tend to refuse to accept the offer and offer him/herself to pay instead "I'll pay for you and me" (Al-Issa, 2003). Another semantic formula this group of Jordanian Arab EFLs chose is removal of negativity: "You are a nice person but..." or, "You know we've been good friends but..." when a friend offered financial help. Al-Issa explains the reason behind this dialogue choice is that Arabs pay particular attention to social obligations and friendship is a part of this (Al-Issa, 2003). They are expected to comply with a friend's request or offer, and to refuse; they chose this formula so as to not let the interlocutor feel unloved or offended.

On the other hand, Stevens (1993) indicates the importance of learning polite and appropriate ways to perform refusals in the second language. Stevens' study of Arab EFL learners' refusals shows that many who used pragmatically inappropriate refusal strategies were not simply transferring from their native language. Moreover, the refusal strategies available in the Arabic language could be pragmatically appropriate if used in English; however, the lack of experience with accurate usage of specific formulas in English is the factor behind failure in many cases.

One example of the lack of experience is the lack of explanation given in a refusal strategy to a friend's request by Arab EFL learners in Egypt. The refusals were "Sorry, I

won't be able to help you. Use your phone," and, "Why don't you call the police?" (Stevens, 1993). Interestingly, these do not resemble Arab norms, as Arabs generally do not directly refuse without any explanation or excuse. Also, Stevens, when he compared Egyptian-Arab EFLs' with American NESs' refusals, found similarities in that they both used the same strategies. Their refusal strategies included explanations, not committing to refuse, partial acceptance, and white lies. However, Stevens did not indicate the respective status of the interlocutors.

Status/Rank

An important factor affecting Arab EFL learners' refusals is the 'hierarchical context' common in Arab societies. It appears in their speech in exaggeration (Al-Issa, 2003) when compared to speech patterns common to Western culture, as Europeans and Americans are generally not as rank-conscious as Arabs. Arabs emphasize status levels as a way to show respect, which differs from the American society and could lead to inconvenience between interlocutors from both societies (Al-Issa, 2003). For instance, when Arab speakers refuse a request or a suggestion of a higher status interlocutor they are likely to use a "defining a relationship" formula before their refusals, for example, "OK my dear professor but ..." (Al-Issa, 2003).

Likewise, Al-Eryani found a sociocultural transfer among Yemeni EFLs in their use of the word 'Sir' with their superior/higher interlocutor. Nevertheless, their refusal strategies showed a high level of pragmatic competence, largely mirroring the American NESs refusal strategies in general. To illustrate, their sensitivity to status indicates that Arab EFL inevitably fall back their L1 cultural norms (Al-Eryani, 2007). The author describes the use of a semantic formula that reflects a relationship as an Arab's cultural

norm (e.g., showing interest in the speech of those of a higher status). When responding to a suggestion by a higher status interlocutor, Arabs feel obliged to express interest in what has been suggested even if they do not intend to accept. They do so not only to protect the hearer's face, but also to avoid confrontations (Al-Issa, 2003).

On the other hand, Abed explains that while American NESs were status-conscious to the higher status interlocutors only, Iraqi EFLs and NASs showed sensitivity also to their interlocutors of lower and equal status. Likewise, in a study comparing refusal strategies of Egyptian NASs with American NESs, Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary (2002) explain that Egyptians used direct refusals to people of equal status, and indirect refusals to people of higher and lower status. However, the US group used direct refusals to equal and lower status, while using indirect refusals with people of higher status (2002). The two studies above demonstrate that there exists no specific rule for each group of people and nation; different ways of speaking and communicating vary within as well as between cultures.

High Proficiency and Sociocultural Knowledge

Differences between EFLs and NESs appear mostly to relate to the interlocutors' social status. Al-Eryani (2007) states that all three of his groups—American NESs, Yemeni EFL learners, and Yemeni ANSs—were averse to using direct refusals, except with their peers. They avoided using direct refusals with acquaintances or strangers, mainly because of the perception of adopting politeness strategies. Al-Eryani found that YANSs tended to use an “excuse” semantic formula when declining invitations, followed by “can't” with lower status, versus the “positive opinion” formula with higher status interlocutors. However, YEFLs paralleled the AENSs in using “regret” followed by

“positive opinion” with lower status, and “positive opinion+offer of an alternative” with higher status, which indicates the influence of L2 pragmatic competence on Yemeni EFL learners.

Studies on EFL learners of different cultural backgrounds—not only Arabs but also East Asians—indicate that EFL learners of higher language proficiency levels show more pragmatic competence than lower proficiency language learners (Al-Eryani, 2007). Al-Eryani gives an example of Japanese ESL learners’ refusals at two levels of proficiency: results show that only high proficiency learners used appropriate refusal strategies, signifying more pragmatic competence than displayed by weaker learners (2007). This should encourage language teachers to consider teaching more pragmatics as students progress to higher levels of proficiency. Al-Eryani reveals that as L2 proficiency increases, learners become more competent with in appropriate and polite norms of both languages (2007).

Groups of Saudi EFL learners and American NESs were tested and found to be similar in their refusal strategies. Mainly, Saudis did not use direct refusals, unlike North Americans. They tended to use “avoidance” semantic formulas in their refusals (e.g., postponement and hedge), which indicates their tendency to be indirect and avoid being too forward in their refusals (Al-Shawali, 1997). Al-Eryani (2007) also presents a study examining a group of advanced Arab EFL learners, in which he found that the advanced level EFL learners shared some phrases of the two languages, expressing both their L1 and L2 perceptions of politeness and appropriateness. This research demonstrates especially the occurrence of pragmatic transfer, due to cultural norms speakers were raised with in their native language, norms that affected their performance of refusals.

The forms they chose for refusals were based on the social status matching the American English pragmatics, revealing the development of pragmatic competence due to their high level of proficiency in the TL.

For students to gain sociocultural knowledge, Abed (2011) summarizes some factors they need to take into account to avoid negative L1 transfer. First, when interlocutors perform a refusal, they need to consider personal and social values, as well as linguistic competence and knowledge of the “face-function”. Second, they need to improve socio-cultural knowledge, which Cohen describes as:

[s]peakers ability to determine whether it is acceptable to perform the speech act at all in the given situation and, so far, to select one or more semantic formulas that would be appropriate in the realization of the given speech act (1996, p. 254).

Tatsuki and Houck describe a culturally accepted refusal strategy in the North American social context (2010). Refusals can be formed as direct refusals like “I can’t”, and indirect refusals, often including phrases of regret like “I’m sorry,” reasons or explanations such as “I have to work,” “my children will be home,” or alternatives like “maybe next time.” Moreover, additional softeners can be used, such as positive statements, expressions of gratitude, or statements of empathy (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010).

Even beyond the language forms speakers should use to appropriately perform refusals in different situations, nonverbal features should be allotted their necessary role in language teaching (Tatsuki and Houck, 2010). Nonverbal features include the physical aspects of communication, such as “facial expressions and intonations,” “the speaker’s tone of voice (e.g., questioning or hesitant), gestures (e.g., a shrug, nod, or head tilt), and facial expressions (e.g., a slight frown or scrunched eyebrows)” (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010, p. 183).

Important Factors

In writing this paper, several discrepancies arose among the findings of the studies examined. These variances are influenced by the differing circumstances, social factors and cultures from one place and society to another throughout the Arab world. In addition, the different methodologies used in conducting each study also impacted divergences amidst the findings (Al-Issa, 2003). For instance, in comparison to those of North Americans, Egyptian Arabs' refusal strategies contradict those of Jordanians. Al-Issa attributes this to the different linguistic behavior among Egyptian Arabs that distinguish them from Jordanians (2003).

In fact, more research is needed in the area of Arabs' speech acts in English. Arabs vary in their perceptions, the norms governing their speech acts, and use of the L2, according to which part of the Middle East they come from. For instance, Jordanians who were judged upon their negative perception of the foreign language norms of speech were from a rural side of the country. This factor should be taken into account to not generate the perception of using English pragmatics among other Arabs, or even Jordanians from the urban part of the country. Levels of the factors that cause sociocultural transfer vary from country to country. Importantly, most, if not all, of these studies were conducted hypothetically, and thus, participants were anticipating what their responses would be in a specific situation. The researchers fail to account for the fact that what speakers might actually say if such a situation arose in their real life could be totally different (Nelson Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). For example, people sometimes exaggerate when they imagine what they would respond in a specific situation, which makes the response long or vague. While in real life the response might be more realistic.

Understanding these factors increases the educators' focus on the sociocultural dimension of language learning, and leads them to rethink the importance of providing students a clear picture of the L2's pragmatics. If sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences between languages are not addressed in L2 instruction, EFL learners will definitely face conflict in interaction with NESs (Al-Kahtani, 2005). Therefore, teaching students the appropriate ways of performing speech acts in the TL comprises a crucial part of second language teachers' responsibilities.

Researchers who studied the pragmatics of refusals have often used a discourse completion test (DCT) to collect data from the subjects. A DCT is "a highly constrained instrument that elicits pragmalinguistic production data" (Al-Batal, Carson, El-Bakary, & Nelson, 2002, p. 165). I will include a sample DCT with a lesson plan I will provide in the Appendix list, to describe how pragmatic instruction of refusal strategies can be implemented.

Providing Effective Pragmatic Instruction

To provide successful pragmatic instruction, besides teaching typical appropriate speech acts, instructors must introduce students to different performances of the specific speech acts (Al-Kahtani, 2005). For instance, Al-Kahtani suggests that L2 teachers introduce the typical use of speech acts to students, teach them how to use them in different ways, and then ask them to choose the way they prefer when they need to refuse a situation (2005). As conversations in English are not frequently available in the EFL context, structured scenarios can help expose students to situations that mimic real life. Several scenarios will be provided in the DCT in the appendix.

According to LoCastro (2012), the model for teaching pragmatics should include three key pedagogy practices: engaging students in activities that raise their target culture awareness, using authentic language input to facilitate students' interpretation and reflection (e.g., videos from the Internet), and applying task-based activities that enable students to encounter situations from whence pragmatic knowledge arises (e.g., role-plays). This pedagogical framework will also work toward developing students' critical thinking skill (LoCastro, 2012).

In order to raise my students' pragmatic knowledge, I've created a lesson plan combining the structures of both of the above-mentioned approaches from Al-Kahtani (2005) and LoCastro (2012). My lesson plan will begin with a warm-up activity. Using a projector, I will display an invitation to a special, additional study session to be held on a Saturday at 7 a.m. I will take each student's response to this situation. I will inform them that the attendance in the session will not be worth any points, thus providing a more convincing opportunity for them to decline the invitation. I will record their responses on the board. Then, we will discuss and assess their refusals and start to measure their directness and pragmatic knowledge.

For the next step, I will present and teach several appropriate options and ways to effectively perform refusals in different situations as native English speakers do. This follows the demonstration by Tatsuki and Houck (2010). I begin with an introduction of the importance of using specific words, gestures, voice note, and body language that imply politeness of a refusal. Then to illustrate the presentation, I will play a video that further explains the function of these strategies found on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2byjie-_E20 (1:23 minutes). The video briefly

explains ways to refuse the teacher's invitation for students to attend the study session while still protecting the conversation. It stresses that a direct refusal, like saying "No", will possibly hurt or offend the teacher's feelings, or he/she might not accept the refusal, which will break down the conversation. It presents several refusal strategies through the demonstration of a visual-kinesthetic method using a 'Magnetix' Lego-type toy that can be reassembled. The object is dropped from a height of two-feet and breaks upon impact on a sheet of paper labeled "direct refusal", which represents a face-status after direct refusals.

After watching the video, I will expound on that activity incorporating my students' responses to further explain refusal strategies. I will introduce the strategies students may use to soften their refusals and explain that different contexts may correspond to different refusal strategies, according to the relative levels of power of the interlocutors. For example, a refusal to your bosses/employer's/advisor's invitation to attend a conference would be different than your refusal to your brother to go to the movie theatre. To differentiate and clarify the concepts found in different situations, I will move the Magnetix higher or lower from the paper labeled "Direct Refusal". I will remind them of the egalitarian society the North Americans live in that does not give much attention to perceived high or low rank individuals.

I then compare students' refusals to strategies that should be used, such as: *gratitude*: "I appreciate your invitation"; *offering an alternative*: "Could we meet later?"; *positive statement*: "I really wish I could come."; *apology*: "I'm sorry I can't make it."; *giving a reason*: "I have a class late on Friday". I will use colored sheets of felt and label each sheet with a different type of refusal and stack them on top of the paper labeled

“Direct Refusal”. I will tell the students that these felt sheets are used as cushions to soften the refusals. After identifying all mentioned refusal strategies, I will drop the object again, however, this time it will not break but will remain intact. After that I will move the direct refusal paper with the refusal strategies felt sheets and stick them on the class bulletin board so students can see them while completing the following activities.

The next activity will be a refusal sequence activity. I will write a request from a friend. Students pair up to work on writing refusal phrases on perforated papers that I supply to be cut out into strips and scrambled. I will provide colored pencils as well so that students can match the corresponding felt sheet colors that are hanging on the bulletin board. I will remind them about the use of pause-fillers (e.g., “umm”, or “well”) to help make smooth refusals that do not surprise the inviter. Then, I will ask them to cut the phrases into strips and exchange them with other pairs and start reordering the phrases. They can go to the front and hang each refusal phrase under its corresponding strategy in the felt sheets. We discuss the different strategies and I remind them that variable responses are expected and that there are some preferred types of refusals in the North American context but there is no specific right answer.

I provide the students with scenarios in which each group of three will work on creating a refusal on them. In the next step, the students will act out the scenarios in a role-play, task-based activity. The scenarios provided are a compilation of invitations, offers, suggestions, and requests; from higher, lower, and equal status. Each group will have assignments such as a: student inviter or requester, a student who makes the refusal, and a student who records the refusal strategy performed. Then I will have them take turns to provide each student with opposing roles.

For the final portion of my lesson, our class will be discussing what they have learned about refusal strategies within the North American context, what differences they recognized between this context and their native language, and which refusal strategy each student prefers. For their homework, I will ask students to research online videos that show refusal strategies and reflect on what they learned and found interesting about them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, researchers have discovered diverse methods and strategies for performing refusals speech acts, which differ in form greatly across cultures. These varied strategies of performing refusals between EFL learners of different nations and North Americans may lead to communication breakdowns, and cultural stereotypes may arise as a result. It is important for people to take into account pragmatic learning. Indeed, learning pragmatics is crucial to learning a second language. Therefore, it is important for the language classroom to include as a part of its curriculum instruction in pragmatics.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

Error Correction and Second-Language Acquisition

INTRODUCTION

Developing proficiency in a second language (L2) requires that attention be paid to errors in both oral and written communication. Yet, regarding the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classroom, there is a controversy with respect to the potential outcomes of correcting students' errors. The debate centers specifically on the question as to whether correcting students' errors in fact helps in developing their L2 acquisition, and does not, instead, counteract their communication, fostering which is the main goal of language teaching (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). In contrast, the old methods of teaching L2 were based on a specific type of discourse the teacher produces, and which students repeat without meaningful language use—focus is given more to the form of the language produced, at the expense of meaning (Coskun, 2011; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Schulz, 2001). For instance, in the Audiolingual teaching method, teachers strive to minimize students' errors, as errors are unacceptable (Han, 2002).

Powell-Davies and Gunashekar (2013) view language development as resulting from various practices, one of which is termed teacher-learner interaction. This teacher-learner interaction involves repetition of interactions, wherein the student normally commits errors and teacher corrects these errors (Han, 2002). In the context of second language acquisition (SLA), teachers are responsible for expanding opportunities for students to participate and use the L2 by involving them in classroom activities, while at the same time minimizing the errors evident in their oral and written communication practices (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

ABSTRACT

Second-language-teaching scholars have debated a wide range of issues regarding error correction in the second-language (L2) classroom. The development of second-language teaching throughout its history has involved a change in perceptions regarding corrective feedback. In recent decades, instruction in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has turned its focus toward learner-learner interaction. Focus on form is not an effective way to facilitate Second-Language Acquisition (SLA) (Ellis, 2002). According to CLT, error correction (EC) is not given value during classroom activities, because in order for communicative teaching to occur effectively, the L2 classroom should be an error-friendly environment. That being said, corrective feedback based on good techniques facilitates language learning and has always enhanced language use. In an attempt to bridge the gap between teachers and theoreticians regarding correcting students' syntactic and lexical errors, I will provide a review of literature in order to expound upon effective and non-effective use of EC, the most useful approaches for encouraging intake and repair of corrective feedback (CF), whether or not, and how, we should even correct grammar, and finally, to investigate what might prevent teachers from implementing such approaches.

Key words: error correction, corrective feedback, intake and repair, communicative language teaching, recasts, selective EC, self-correction, language proficiency, language development

Introduction

Developing proficiency in a second language (L2) requires that attention be paid to errors in both oral and written communication. Yet, regarding the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classroom, there is a controversy with respect to the potential outcomes of correcting students' errors. The debate centers specifically on the question as to whether correcting students' errors in fact helps in developing their L2 acquisition, and does not, instead, counteract their communication, fostering which is the main goal of language teaching (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). In contrast, the old methods of teaching L2 were based on a specific type of discourse the teacher produces, and which students repeat without meaningful language use—focus is given more to the form of the language produced, at the expense of meaning (Coskun, 2011; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Schulz, 2001). For instance, in the Audiolingual teaching method, teachers strive to minimize students' errors, as errors are unacceptable (Han, 2002).

Powell-Davies and Gunashekar (2013) view language development as resulting from various practices, one of which is termed teacher-learner. This teacher-learner interaction involves repetition of interactions, wherein the student normally commits errors and teacher corrects these errors (Han, 2002). In the context of second language acquisition (SLA), teachers are responsible for expanding opportunities for students to participate and use the L2 by involving them in classroom activities, while at the same time minimizing the errors evident in their oral and written communication practices (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

The importance of error correction and analysis in L2 teaching should not be downplayed. Error correction and analysis in second-language teaching is feedback

provided to the concerned learners by their teachers (Amara, 2015). The previous literature concerning EC in L2 learning and teaching reveals a broad discussion about the most effective and non-effective types of error correction applied to students' oral attempts and writing practices (Bell, 1992; Dekeyser, 1993; Uskokovic, 2013).

From a different perspective, it seems an unrealistic expectation in a language-learning context that learners would not make any mistakes within their language practices. Indeed, committing these errors can help them learn and succeed (Krashen, 2009). In an attempt to identify the barriers that would obstruct SLA, I review the literature that addresses the effects and outcomes of error correction and corrective feedback on L2 learners' oral and written performance. Specifically, I intend to establish the extent of error correction's effectiveness for language learning in terms of oral and writing development. In addition, I seek to answer questions regarding the best approaches to adopt for error correction, whether we should correct students' oral grammar or morphological errors, and finally what prevents teachers from implementing these approaches.

The topic of error correction has gained more attention in the past few years (Amara, 2015). However, the discrepancy in outcomes of EC use has created a divide in the discourse, leading some scholars and educators to insist upon the use of EC, while others oppose correcting students' errors altogether. In the midst of this divisive rhetoric, I want to investigate the topic more deeply, taking into account what the literature has found, and taking a step forward to try the best methods that are proven to bring positive outcomes for L2 development in terms of oral and written performance in my EFL classroom.

Literature Review

Critical view of EC in the L2 Classroom

From a psycholinguistic point of view, I present EC and its effects in respect to SLA in comparison to the experience of children acquiring their L1, as an introductory vehicle through which to discuss the topic, which is a serious issue in need of investigation, for the readers to understand the second language learners' needs in terms of error correction, and also the harm it might bring to their language-learning process (Bruton, 2007). In regard to error correction of oral language practices, DeKeyser (1993) tested French L2 high school students to find the effects of EC on their L2 oral proficiency. He aimed to determine EC's relation to the students' level of aptitude, motivation, anxiety, and attitude toward their previous achievements.

DeKeyser first explains that adults' process of SLA differs from children's L1 acquisition. Children process their L1 through their language acquisition device (LAD), a hypothetical module proposed by Chomsky, which is hardwired in the children's brains to help them learn language very quickly (Chomsky, 1965; DeKeyser, 1993). Children receive a large amount of input, much vaster than that of adult L2 learners, who receive a limited amount of input in the L2 classroom or elsewhere. In addition, when children acquire their L1, they do so with "positive evidence" in the language input, which means they are not given a lot of corrective feedback, and that which they do receive is accessed through their LAD. In contrast, adults receive error correction that is termed by the author as "negative evidence" and it is negative feedback when the teacher marks their errors.

Therefore, DeKeyser demonstrates that children do not receive any correction on their grammar errors as "negative evidence" when they learn their L1, because their

problem solving ability is low and LAD is high so that they learn the language and access the errors promptly. However, when adults learn an L2, and receive error correction as negative evidence, they access it with their problem-solving ability. Thus, some researchers argue that adults who do not have their errors corrected end up with these errors fossilized in their brains because they lose, to some point, the ability to process a language with their LAD (DeKeyser, 1993). Moreover, adults who are not able to rectify their errors are likely to face difficulties with respect to development of proper understanding of L2 (Fang & Xue-mei, 2007).

According to Bell (1992), error correction is considered the most controversial issue in the classroom. In this context, researchers have investigated the effect of EC on several aspects of language learning, such as students' level of language proficiency. They found that EC affects both high and low proficiency level L2 learners by broadening the gap between them (DeKeyser, 1993). Based on his results, DeKeyser's proposes the hypotheses that negative feedback can affect higher-level learners positively, since they are to some extent able to override the negativity and benefit from the information provided in the correction. On the other hand, lower level students can be adversely affected by negative feedback, and are often not able to understand the information provided. The author characterizes the corrective feedback as negative feedback because when teachers praise their students they provide them with positive feedback but when they correct their errors they give them negative feedback.

Ripp (2001) proposes the perception of error correction as "treatment" instead of correction. He explains that it is better for EFL teachers to consider some parameters to deal with students' oral errors during class. Ripp recommends L2 teachers think about

students' errors emotionally, and approach corrections with more empathy. From a more logical perspective, Krashen (2009) states that the errors students make, rather than signifying an imperfect form of the language they adjust in their brain, instead constitute an evidence that they are, in fact, testing hypotheses about the linguistic system they are adopting. Additionally, Lennon (2008) reflects Krashen's view, explaining that the errors occur as an evidence of the students' interlanguage practices between target and native languages. On the other hand, Fujioka-Ito (2012) believes learners' errors should not be ignored, and that teachers' corrective feedback can help learners move through this interlanguage continuum and provide them an approximate linguistic system close to the target language.

In terms of the CLT classroom context, Mantello (2000) reveals that it is essential for teachers to identify the true objective in teaching students a second language. If the motivation is to address the students' errors while assuring that they learn to improve the overall quality of their understanding, they are enabled to participate and try to produce the language. The author mentions that a CLT classroom needs to have an error-friendly environment to increase the students' confidence in speaking, participating, and interacting with each other and with the teacher. This necessity forces teachers to consider carefully how to find the right ways to deal with the students' errors.

Mantello (2000) suggests teachers correct students' errors selectively, not comprehensively, as selective error correction helps a teacher focus on one area of language, and thereby ease students' retention of the new knowledge. In addition, she highlights ways in which addressing one structure of the language at a time when correcting writing errors is more helpful for students' SLA. For example, the teacher can

assign students particular compositions for correcting grammar errors, and other compositions for lexical errors, thus allowing students to give more attention to their potential errors.

In contrast to Mantello's suggested practices, Bruton (2007) states that feedback provided the students on the basis of grammar has resulted in little benefit with respect to ensuring the language accuracy in students' subsequent drafts. The disparity is due to several factors, one of which is the students' interlanguage influence, which indicates that interlanguage development takes time to affect students' language production and must come gradually.

Approaches to Error Correction in L2

As previously mentioned, Ripp (2001) characterizes error correction as “treatment,” rather than of correction. The shift in terms reflects a shift in perspective, in that teachers would better empower their students' SLA by taking a more compassionate approach towards teaching, instead of strictly addressing and making the mistakes prominent. To demonstrate, the “treatment” metaphor implies care and therapy, whereas “correction” carries with it the flavor of “cure;” in other words, teachers who correct their students' errors are trying to eliminate these errors on a permanent basis, whereas teachers with a mind toward “treatment” seek to minimize errors' impact on language production. Ripp's perspective emphasizes that inexperienced teachers need to realize that it is impossible to eliminate learners' errors, as errors are evidence of their hypotheses, which are associated with the process of acquiring a new language system (Ripp, 2001; Krashen, 2009).

In terms of oral EC, according to Loewen (2007), error correction is related to different forms of L2 instruction, classified into two main categories: “meaning-focused” and “form-focused” instruction. The communicative form of language teaching focuses on meaning-focused instruction rather than a particular form of the language. Form-focused instruction, on the other hand, puts more importance on the grammatical rules and structures, casting language as an end in itself, rather than a means of communication (Loewen, 2007). This informs CLT teachers to adopt meaning-focused EC in order to give focus to the students’ overall understanding of the language and not to emphasize their grammar errors and kill their motivation to participate.

In the oral form also, Ellis (2009) presented two primary and distinct approaches regarding corrective feedback (CF): implicit vs explicit CF, and input-providing (i.e., giving the correct word form) vs output-prompting (i.e., stimulating the student to produce the correct form in another attempt of output practice). An example of implicit CF practice is the use of recasts and elicitation. These were shown effective in producing positive outcomes, as students later attempts at language practices had been modified (Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013). Further, these forms of EC can be based on one strategy, or can form a complex, three-step process: 1) indicating that the student’s utterance has an error, 2) providing a correct word form, and 3) including metalinguistic information about the error norm. It might contain one, or two, or all three of these strategies. An example is provided below:

“S1: What do you spend with your wife?

T: What?

S1: What do you spend your extra time with your wife?

T: Ah, how do you spend?

S2: How do you spend” (Ellis, 2009, p. 4)

In terms of written EC, returning to the concept of feedback as treatment of students' errors, taking into account their motivation level, Truscott (2001) argues that red marks in a student's assignment often create a negative impact and act as a discouraging factor, potentially de-motivating students and negatively affecting their learning abilities. However, this problem points to the advantages of correcting errors selectively as an appropriate method. It is the responsibility of teachers to select the correction method according to the needs of the particular student, and identify the errors that requires correction to overcome the difficulties L2 learners face (Truscott, 2001).

Ellis (2009) suggests CF approaches that best benefit the learners as direct, indirect, or metalinguistic forms of correction. On the other hand, Truscott (2001) describes the use of the selective approach in correcting errors as more effective, in comparison to random correction during class time. Truscott attributes the increasing popularity of selective EC to its significance in identifying the underlying problem causing the errors. In a different vein, Bruton (2007) mentions the students' error self-correction method, encouraging teachers to use it based on its demonstrated positive outcomes. He provides an example in which the method was used with intermediate Japanese FL students. The students were asked to write a composition in class, which teacher returned to them after two weeks with their errors marked only with symbols. The teacher then asked them to correct their own errors and return it in in few weeks. The results showed a diminished amount of errors in all language aspects, especially the most frequent errors.

Factors Affecting Teachers' Implementation

For a long time now, a lingering question has plagued the discipline of language learning and teaching, that is, whether or not it is a part of the teacher's responsibilities to correct students' errors. Indeed, teachers have long reported the frustrating fact of correcting students' errors only to see them recur in their writing frequently (Mantello, 2000). It also consumes teachers' time to correct students' errors repeatedly. Therefore, the issue presents a major gap in the discipline that begs further research, and catches the interest of language educators and researchers throughout to discover what can be done to encourage teachers to follow the given effective methods. Also, researchers are continually searching for other strategies teachers can execute toward minimizing students' errors without wasting their time uselessly.

Mantello (2000), however, indicates that a number of studies show that teachers are already using diverse methods, but the types of corrections prominently used do not lead to any benefit to the students. Generally speaking, teachers give corrections randomly and arbitrarily, instead of making corrections based on specific strategies. Additionally, a general lack of knowledge regarding EC strategies and approaches also makes it difficult for the teachers to execute appropriate measures in providing corrections (Mantello, 2000), instead, correcting all students' errors comprehensively and randomly (Mantello, 2000, p.1).

Junqueira and Kim (2013) underscore the relationship and differences between two types of teachers—the novice and the experienced teacher—and the impact of their teaching experiences on the corrective feedback they provide in the L2 classroom. The authors mention that teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding oral corrective feedback

(CF) affect their actual feedback and play a crucial role in the classroom. Corrective feedback plays a main role for the L2 teachers in their instruction, affecting the development of students' language. It has been found that CF helps promote students' modified output, which leads to language development (Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013; Junqueira and Kim, 2013). Particularly, one type of oral CF that has been used in language classrooms—recasts and elicitation—have been shown specifically likely to have a big impact on students' uptake and repair of the CF (Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013). However, other educators cite the controversy surrounding the pedagogical value of CF. They argue that while CF leads to learners' uptake or repair, the learners' modified output after receiving the reports of CF is unclear (Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013; Junqueira and Kim, 2013).

Schulz (2001) discussed the role of grammar instruction and error correction on language learning in further detail. His main objective in testing grammar instructions was to explore teachers' and students' perceptions towards error correction in adult students' language learning. It is essential to provide grammar instruction and error correction when teaching adults in any FL context (Schulz, 2001). However, this may contradict with the communicative language teaching approach, where it is believed that CF may negatively affect learners, according to different factors such as age, aptitude, motivation and learning style. Language educators have noted the importance of learners' beliefs as well, and these factors should be taken into account when the teacher provides EC, as they play an important role in their motivation towards the whole learning process (Mukalel, 2005).

Ibrahim (2002), in his study, assumes that grammatical and rhetorical feedback teachers give provide their students are created through a complex process that cannot be measured solely in the modifications students make in subsequent drafts. Additionally, there are factors teachers need to take into account before commenting on students' papers, considering students' motivation, attitudes, writing styles, and the teachers' ways of providing and employing feedback (Ibrahim, 2001).

Effectiveness of EC on Different Language Aspects

The main focus of error correction in any second language context is developing learners' speaking and writing skills. In terms of writing, language educators often deal with the error pattern in their students' writing. In this context, it becomes essential for L2 teachers to teach the students certain correct methods of rhetorical patterns in academic English writing, along with the focus on grammatical errors. Ibrahim (2001) characterizes giving proper feedback on students' writing as a complex process realized through several aspects that are identified to have effectively minimized both oral as well as written errors. These aspects include objectives of the writing course, the students' levels, and the teachers' writing theories.

Bruton (2007) argues for several tools that have the potential to help students in writing, one of them dictionary translation from L1-L2. Bruton explores whether it would in fact help intermediate EFL students in a secondary school in Spain perform well in a writing task they complete using their own abilities. He explores whether the dictionaries are suitable and appropriate in helping students find the accurate vocabulary and use it in their writing tasks. He mentions that despite the use of dictionaries among students, the errors still emerged in their writing patterns. This signifies the need for teachers to

provide the students with appropriate instructions on how they should use the dictionaries. Additionally, the teachers' feedback on errors helped students repair the errors in the next versions of their assignments (Bruton, 2007).

On another aspect of writing affected by EC, Bruton (2007) further demonstrates the effect of providing feedback on the grammatical errors of L2 learners' compositions written using dictionaries. Bruton (2007) states that students' lexical and morphological errors might have different underlying characteristics that cause EC to affect them more positively than other aspects of the language, such as syntax. "Thus, although lexical and morphological knowledge might in theory be more amenable to correction than syntactic knowledge, this amenability does not seem to make any practical difference" (Truscott, 1996, p. 343) (as cited in Bruton).

On the contrary, the diverse approaches do not seem to make any practical difference with respect to the error correction processes that are being undertaken. Language teachers often tend to correct language errors instead of focusing on the content that is clear through the writing patterns of the students. Furthermore, language teachers, when they usually rectify the written tasks, consider themselves as language teachers not writing instructors, and tend to respond to lexical errors (Bruton, 2007). There are other views that contradict correcting lexical errors, but even though it is not a part of the teachers' tasks to spend time correcting student's word choice errors, it is logical to have the students self-correct their lexical errors and the errors that might be ignored (Han, 2002).

Future Plan

After reviewing some of the research available thus far, I believe that as a second language teacher, I can make effective use of students' errors in assessing their language development steps. Students at the first stages of their language learning struggle to learn, and it is not reasonable to exhaust them with correcting every error they make. However, these errors must be addressed accurately and strategically. Language teachers should keep the focus on the students' learning process, not on correcting their errors, as the main purpose of correcting the errors is practical language learning.

During my observation through volunteering at an English language institute in Logan Utah, I observed the teachers' EC and the students' reaction. This experience inspired me to investigate this topic. In some cases, I realized that the students were discouraged to participate more, however, this reaction differs between students of high and lower proficiency. It shows more willingness among high proficient students to incorporate the level of correction than the lower level ones. This corresponds to what DeKeyser (1993) found as a result of testing his hypotheses: that negative feedback can affect higher-level learners positively since they are somewhat able to override the negativity and benefit from the information provided in the correction.

In the EFL context, teaching adult students in Saudi Arabia, there is a need for more investigation on this topic, as the research on the Saudi context is limited. I hope to plan a classroom research, where I collaborate with other EFL teachers or instructors (in the university context) to plan an empirical approach to test students' intake and repair of strategic CF in both the oral and the written practices. I look forward to trying the methods I found effective in the research (e.g., recasts, self-correction, and selective EC).

The reason for using these methods is to focus on meaning of the context, and to help prevent student-student and student-teacher communication gaps that are likely to affect the learning process. Also, I will follow the guidelines presented by Ellis (2009) that teachers should follow when they assign their CF policy. He states that teachers should remember that CF works, and can give positive results, if designed and determined following the recommended guidelines, to assess the students attitudes and inform them with the value of CF. Focused CF is better than unfocused CF, and selective is better than random, to give attention to the timing of CF (immediate or delayed), and repetition in providing CF (e.g., in different occasions).

On the other hand, lower level students can be affected negatively by providing them with negative feedback, and sometimes are not even able to understand the information provided. From the above discussion and results of the literature reviewed, individual differences play an important role in the outcomes of error correction. Also, from a CLT perspective, it is important to maintain the classroom as an error-friendly environment (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). This hampers, of course, the search for the right ways to deal with the students' errors. In planning to keep the communication in my classroom, I find it more useful to provide opportunities for the students to correct their own errors and learn the skill of self-correction and giving their classmates peer-feedback. It seems more effective for a learning environment to involve students in exploring and working toward language acquisition, rather than relying on the teachers to do the work for them. The case is applicable to the issue of EC, where it is more beneficial for students to explore and think about their in the context of a strategic direction from the teacher.

Conclusion

This critical review of error correction in second language acquisition is only limited. In the context of CLT, learning can only come about through students' practice. In addition, form-focused instruction is deemed detrimental as discussed and demonstrated above by various researchers. Besides, corrective feedback is given low status in classroom practices unless it follows specific guidelines and was built upon specific strategies. In this paper, I have presented an empirical approach that aims to investigate the effects of meaning-focused CF following specific guidelines. The development of language through learners' practices will become evident through the use of the EC approaches discussed. The students' cognitive skill will exert a certain impact on providing appropriate corrective feedback in acquiring the concerned language skills that are effective within the learning process (Han, 2002).

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

In this part I present a detailed description of important sources; books, book chapters, and articles that shaped my understanding of the general themes I have explored in my portfolio. These themes are: the communicative language teaching, improving students' literacy through reading, the use of technology; I specifically addressed the effects of computer-mediated communication on SLA, and teaching the target (English) culture in Saudi Arabia. In summarizing each article, I provide a brief description of its content and then demonstrate how it affects my understanding of teaching a second language.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

My overall understanding of language teaching has changed by reading these books and book chapters. Not to forget to mention that these are not the only ones, but I chose them as they most shaped my understanding. I learned about the communicative language teaching (CLT) at the first class I took at the MSLT program. The CLT approach has a different view of language learning and teaching than the old methods of teaching. It gives a new perspective on how one can learn a language away from conventionality. Its main focus is to increase the opportunities for communication. I will expand on the sources below.

When I read “*The Communicative Classroom*”, by **Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001)**, my perspective and understanding of the way language teaching should be realized totally changed. The authors explain the communicative language teaching method and how to implement communication in the classroom, focusing on changing the reader’s understanding of L2 proficiency and communication by emphasizing the need for students to interact by means of authentic tasks and materials. Through reading this book, I was able to clarify for myself the role of the student in the L2 classroom and what he/she would need to most effectively absorb the language.

The book explains that communication can occur through three different modes, illustrated with examples, namely, interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. The authors emphasize the importance of introducing communication through *negotiation of meaning*, wherein the students are engaged during interaction with one another and with the teacher. I learned about negotiation of meaning of L2-utterances from this book. I understood the importance of allotting some in-class time for students to exchange

information and clarify meanings of utterances they hear, and to seek understanding for aspects they do not understand.

The key concept outlined in *The Communicative Classroom* is oral proficiency. It lays out for teachers the procedures for designing activities. These activities can encourage students to develop their communication skills in the interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes. Through the activities suggested in the book, the authors focus on cultivating speaking and listening skills. Storytelling offers a powerful example of such activities—students practice narrative discourse to develop their oral proficiency (e.g., by learning how to give suspense to a story, justify events, intensify the listeners' emotions). Storytelling is a good application of the interpretive mode of communication. These activities derive their effectiveness from an engagement of students' communication skills in real-life language use.

The authors also give a demonstration of useful types of activities for the language classroom—task-based, interview, and information-gap activities—and offer tips on how such activities should be designed. Their illustration of task-based activities helped me learn how to work with students' language skills, as well as how to create my future lesson plans. If I find myself at a loss in creating good activities through which students can engage in meaningful communication situations throughout the class time, *The Communicative Classroom* will be a good reference.

On the role of grammar, Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell explain that it should have only a limited role in teaching the L2. They claim that grammar, if taught for its own sake, does not have a positive effect on language acquisition. This chapter taught me that grammar can be presented in a way that supports and employs communication

and interaction between students, and that we as teachers should understand the role of grammar rules in helping students carry out activities successfully and accurately. The goal in teaching grammar is to embed it in communicative activities, and the teacher should take advantage of opportunities for relevant grammar instruction within a communicative context.

Finally, the authors discuss evaluation and assessment. Sample evaluation activities shown to be useful tools for motivating students are demonstrated, such as the IRE model of activities (interaction, response, and evaluation) that involve a teacher's question, a students' response, and a teacher's evaluation.

In a broader demonstration of the CLT approach, **Lee and VanPatten (2003)** provide language teachers with a quite descriptive book called "*Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*". They begin by analyzing the differences between the role of the teacher in the CLT classroom as opposed to his/her role in the old methods (ALM & Atlas-Complex). They illustrate what each type of teacher can do and accomplish according to the way they teach, including the advantages and disadvantages of each method. This book has opened my eyes to some of the methods and exercises my own teachers employed while I was learning English in Saudi Arabia. I don't believe these methods had any notable or positive effect on my SLA, and thus, I will not adopt them in my teaching. The authors discuss some givens of SLA borrowing from a book by VanPatten (2003): SLA involves an implicit linguistic system, and is dynamic, complex, and slow. The writers here explain how language teachers can deal with these givens.

Lee and VanPatten explain clearly the role of input for SLA. They also provide examples of the characteristics of simplified input. They go into detail regarding

vocabulary as a big part of the input, to support language learning. They show examples of teaching vocabulary emphasizing target-language use through the help of illustrative visuals, to enable the students to understand the words easily. I always appreciate the use of visuals, and the way this idea is demonstrated in this book solidified its importance for me.

The authors then define communication as something that should occur in some sort of context. They provide illustrative examples of how to design student-centered activities in which I provide students with opportunities to engage in self-expression. The activities involve more information/interest/idea exchange between students by designing an appropriate purpose, in the form of a task students' must complete. Examples of such tasks include filling a chart, writing a paragraph, or creating a survey, where the topic they discuss is pertaining to them, as they have the best background about themselves. I think of using such activities with my students to attract them to interact more in classroom discussions. An important purpose of my language teaching is to cultivate students' oral proficiency in a way that will result in actual use of the language. The book is a great reference for language teachers who want to gain a basic understanding of how to teach communicatively.

In contrast to Lee and VanPatten's succinct approach of how to teach communicatively, I read the *Teacher's Handbook*, by **Shrum and Glisan (2010)**, which provides a more exhaustive, detailed outline of several important issues concerning language learning. The authors summarize previous research and theories, and offer opportunities to test them with activities at the end of each chapter, enriching the chapters with citations and sources for further research. In *Handbook*, the authors lay out

examples of the different theories at play in SLA—the old methods, Krashen’s input hypothesis, the Vygotskian theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and the role of motivation in the SLA process.

The *Handbook* provides a broad knowledge of the standards for foreign language learning (SFLL), the five Cs of foreign language education, and the modes of communication. This knowledge base helps me connect to the teaching process and plan the types of activities and teaching strategies I want to adopt in my future teaching. The first two chapters are the most extensive, illuminating, and inclusive for me, as they demonstrate lesson planning, assessment and evaluation, as well as theories of SLA such as Krashen’s input hypothesis, Swain’s comprehensible output hypothesis, Long’s interaction hypothesis, and sociocultural theories such as Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development.

Shrum and Glisan introduced the process of language learning among young learners, and its relevance for an elementary school curriculum, an analysis founded on an understanding of social and psychological variables. The book has helped me more clearly understand my students’ psychological situations, and how they can affect the learning process, such as the “affective filter” (i.e., anxiety) as well as other factors that impact their interaction with each other and with the texts. The authors explain the role of the "interactive approach" in developing students’ comprehension in tasks involving listening and reading. I find their discussion on how to develop unique instruction strategies tailored to diverse learners very useful.

In the following chapters, Shrum and Glisan discuss the teaching of grammar, offering an interesting approach to achieving better learning outcomes. In their approach,

grammar is taught through cultural stories. They claim that teaching certain grammatical structures is beneficial, but only when the teacher diverges from traditional methods of grammar instruction. The chapter challenges teachers, presenting the teaching of grammar as a controversial issue in the linguistics field, and demonstrating how stories and cultural content can be used as context for more effective grammar instruction.

Before reading this chapter, I was unaware that the teaching of culture could be integrated with grammar instruction. This chapter provides a more effective framework in the dialogic approach. Students perform better in grammar during communicative activities, because they are able to recognize structures and grammar organically through meaning making.

The *Teacher's Handbook* can help teachers in many ways. It gives a good demonstration of innovative strategies for teaching grammar in a social dimension or cultural context, such as the use of stories. Also, it helps teachers learn about the important theories of SLA upon which they can build their teaching strategies and evaluate the efficacy of their existing methods.

Providing even more extensive examples of how to implement task-based language teaching, the book "*Communicative Language Teaching Today*", by **Richards (2006)**, is a very useful source I would recommend for any language teacher. Here, we can find different kinds of activities and ways to increase students' productivity in language use. Teachers can recall the methods and approaches to L2 teaching, and, in turn, apply certain ones with their students, considering individual differences among them. The book gives a demonstration of the different approaches, providing examples for each.

Richards appropriately introduces his theoretical and practical consideration of communicative language teaching, clearly defining its features—what makes it communicative, and what differentiates it from other approaches. He describes the student's need to gain a communicative language competence, that is, the set of knowledge and skills in a language that enables him/her to apply these effectively in real-life communication situations. This book confirms the idea that grammatical competence is a part of communicative competence. However, Richards believes that real-life language application in teaching grammar may significantly result in better outcomes in students' grammatical competence than grammar taught through the drilling exercises common to many language-learning contexts.

The overall efficiency and benefit of *Communicative Language Teaching Today* makes it a crucial part of my teaching library, especially in terms of its applicable in-classroom performance. It collects and introduces different instructional methods for performing CLT. It has given me a number of examples for activities in each method that could implement communicative learning in the classroom. Among the methods of instruction outlined in the book are content-based, task-based, text-based, and competency-based instruction, and Richards provides examples of activities for each of these CLT methods. I can use this book as a primary source for finding suitable activity for each specific situation to improve all learning skills of the students. The work not only collects the different CLT approaches, but also indicates their strengths and weaknesses.

Delving further into an exploration of how we can balance our focus between input- and output-oriented language teaching, **Renandya (2012)** has addressed this issue

in a book titled, “*The role of input- and output-based practice in ELT*”. He calls on teachers to remember the old maxim “practice makes perfect,” explaining that practice is the key to succeeding in language development. The author also focuses on the importance of quality input in the development of language skills. An input-based practice is what language learners need first in order to succeed in progressing in accurate production of the language. Renandya indicates that in many language contexts, although practice is regular and sufficient, learners do not achieve any progress in improving their language proficiency, and he claims the fault lies in faulty teaching. As teachers, Renandya explains, we must focus on two main aspects of students’ language learning. The first is developing their linguistic system—their lexical, syntactic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic backgrounds—by applying sufficient input-based activities, enabling students to form accurate and meaningful utterances. The second focus is helping students use these skills in communication.

To develop these aspects of learning, students need to be sufficiently exposed to language input. Renandya claims an effective linguistic system is not built by an output-based practice, primarily using strategies such as speaking and oral drills, as happens in many language classrooms, wherein teachers emphasize prompting students to more language production, ignoring more input-based activities. In this situation, where students are engaged in many oral activities, such as role-plays and games, they are likely to advance their language practice based on mistakes and grammatical errors.

To avoid this deficiency, students need first to receive sufficient input, described by Renandya as abundant, reliable, frequent, meaningful, interesting, and slightly above their level of proficiency. He refers to Krashen's theory that the more comprehensible

input learners are exposed to the better. For instance, Renandya emphasizes on the benefit of exposing students to extensive reading. He advocates Krashen's view of the positive impact of pleasurable reading on students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge, which, in turn, can help improve all their language skills. He then points out the significant influence of exposing students to audio input, having them listen to comprehensible language materials. Frequent listening works toward improving all language skills through gaining a "cognitive map," which is a network for all language items one would need for language use.

The author explains that language learners usually seek to reach "automaticity," which he describes as practicing the language fluently, accurately, and effortlessly. He informs teachers of the advantage of adopting input-based practice in helping students master high levels of language comprehension and output-based practice in developing their language production. Students need opportunities that enable these types of practice. The author explains that practice is necessary because when students learn a rule of grammar, it does not mean that they are able to use it communicatively and appropriately. Practice will do the job of successfully reaching a procedural knowledge of how to appropriately use these language aspects in actual communication.

The author hopes to encourage language teachers to make a balance between input and output-based practice, so that students do not become "fool-fluents," having the fluency to produce language at the expense of grammatical and linguistic accuracy. Renandya's work was illuminating to me on how to provide a balanced input- and output-oriented teaching. It also guided me in grammar teaching, clearing things up for me regarding what I read from scholars advocating and others opposing the communicative

approach and teaching of grammar, because it instructs me in the importance of teaching grammar through input-based activities. The work is very clear, concise and illustrative.

IMPROVING STUDENTS' LITERACY THROUGH READING

In a language classroom, there are a lot of responsibilities and challenges for the teacher to fulfill. By focusing on the importance of raising the students' literacy skills in my teaching philosophy, I here discuss the topic of reading addressing language teachers of all levels to build and instill the love of reading in their students. The teacher can help his/her students with the most important part of acquiring a language, which is improving literacy. The aspects of literacy in the L1 transfer to the L2, and when people build a love of reading in the L1 this love correspond to their L2. Some learners do not realize how gaining a high level of language literacy would open doors for increasing their knowledge and proficiency. Robertson, Dougherty, Ford-Connors, and Paratore (2014) state: "Simply put, what we read influences the breadth and depth of what we learn" (p. 548). The more the students read the better the class time could be exploited and the more the teacher can find ways to discuss topics, and learn about students' interests. Developing their reading skills will provide students with a tremendous asset. The question arises is how to make this happen since language learners rarely read L2 texts as a classroom task for a grade but reading in the L2 for fun might be unbearable for them. Following some strategies and recommendations from articles I found applicable I believe it may help in increasing students' love for reading and thus increase their L2 literacy.

Krashen's book "*The Power of Reading*" has shaped the way I think of improving language competence. Based on some important principles set by Krashen, I see the importance of the reading tasks for literacy development. In general, direct instruction of reading is not as important as free reading. He believes that direct

instruction of reading tasks has a little or even no impact on the students' literacy level, whereas free reading does. There are many advantages for reading teachers can take advantage of to open doors for the students' other skills; such as writing, vocabulary retention, spelling and learning of grammar.

An important point related to that is access to books. Books should be available to students in school libraries and classrooms, from kindergarten on. Krashen explains how enriching the print environment in the classrooms plays an important role in increasing students' reading and developing literacy. He mentions a small corner for books was designed in a kindergarten class and resulted in more reading done by students. They spent their free time reading and doing literature activities.

Free reading is something precious we could provide to children to increase their reading aptitude. Public libraries are a good source for free reading. The physical characteristics of the reading environment are important. For example, children in preschool can be provided with pillows and carpets by the reading corner in their classes. Fifth graders who were allowed by their parents to read in bed scored higher reading percentages than children who were not. Small things some teachers do not give attention to but they can affect the students' motivation to read.

In addition, children's ability and aptitude for reading are created from early stages. Studies show that children who had had their caregivers read to them and discuss stories with them at home read more on their own and this had a direct impact on their level of literacy. Parents are encouraged to read to their children before they are even born. We could stimulate children to do more reading by providing age-appropriate magazines, as well as colorful books with, fiction, non-fiction, poetry and other genres.

Parents and teachers need to be better role models for these young learners and read for pleasure while the children are reading.

While reading **Gareis, Allard, and Saindon's** article "*The Novel as Textbook*", I remembered reading novels in the English literature courses in college that enlarged my love of reading in a second language. Novels' authenticity can raise the readers' interest. Teaching students reading through novels allows for extensive reading and increases their general proficiency, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and motivation (Gareis et al., 2009). However, these novels should be chosen according to students' level of proficiency, age, interests, and its suitable content. Few sessions of novel reading were allowed for students of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to test its impact on their reading motivation. They found it enjoyable and noticed that extensive reading helped them enhance their reading habits. After reading this article I hope to integrate reading novels into my class reading tasks by encouraging my students to choose a novel that is interesting to them and that I agree on. We can read a novel every week and have sessions of discussions on it. In a short time the students motivation and eagerness to read will increase.

The authors also mention the potential to incorporate the other skills of learning with the reading instruction. To increase the students' literacy levels, their four skills of learning must be involved to complete the learning process. To improve the reading ability, listening to books on tapes and speaking as role-plays and discussions can help the learner a lot. Further, the students' writing skill can be improved from novel reading through practicing sentence mechanics, (e.g., finding verb conjugations). Novels can also support the teaching of grammar, incorporate listening and speaking through negotiating

specific notions and content details. It can also be integrated as a part of the curriculum for teachers who think it is too radical to utilize a novel as a whole semester course-book. In my future teaching I would like to integrate novels into the course curriculum to enrich the content details.

Furthermore, the researchers investigated additional ways to increase students' intrinsic motivation to reading. They addressed some situational interests to develop a long-term interest in reading, such as hands-on science experiments. The authors used these stimulating tasks to encourage their students to read books on topics they based their tasks on. The students' motivation was aroused and resulted in more reading and surprisingly, increased comprehension. However, when students were tested in standardized tests, the results showed the opposite, it did not show any effect on the reading comprehension, because students' level of anxiety while taking the test was higher than their motivation. To increase students' motivation in long-term reading aptitude, language teachers can use this approach by allowing students to do experiments on their interesting topics to increase their motivation to read about them. Further research is needed on this topic to find out the reciprocal relationship between stimulating tasks, reading comprehension, and motivation.

In a way to prove evidence of first and second language correlation in literacy skills, I read an article by Carson, Carrel, Silberstein, Kroll, and Kuehn (1990) called "Reading-Writing relationships in first and second language". The authors aim to investigate whether the level of literacy in L1 transfer to the literacy levels in L2, examining adult ESL students' first language abilities of reading and writing affecting L2 literacy development. The researchers indicate that adult L2 learners depend on two

sources for their language learning. These are the L1 knowledge, and L2 input, calling that interlingual transfer and interlingual input. The study was conducted on two groups of Japanese and Chinese ESL students and showed significant influence of first language level of reading on the L2 level of reading. There was interlingual transfer for reading but not for writing. This difference may result from the L2 proficiency, which indicates that reading can be more easily developed and transferred. The authors inform language teachers to take caution not to rely on this easily transferred abilities but to better exploit this into a better L2 pedagogy.

Krashen and Lao, (2000) confirm the claims about free reading's positive impact on language competence. They tested EFL students in Hong Kong to see how free reading affects their language proficiency. This study corresponds to several previous ones confirming that adults who spend time reading books of their interest make substantial gains in their second language acquisition (SLA). Thus, this high motivation in reading affects language literacy as a whole, since students are tested through reading discussions and writing assignments about the readings.

This study tests the impact of literature study on EFL reading competence and attitudes. They tested 91 students, half of whom were assigned to read self-selected novels with responsibility for discussions and writing assignments, while the other half were assigned to watch movies and TV in English. It was found that the second group spent more time in academic study of English. However, results show that the first group made significant gains in their reading rate and vocabulary retention. Their tests showed higher scores than the second group.

Looking at the results, while the first group only read extra free reading for pleasure outside class, the second group spent more time exposed to English. However, this did not show any impact on their language competence. Thus, the results prove that free reading is a key component for increasing language proficiency. These results made me assert that integrating free reading of novels or other genres of literature with the curriculum is essential. I feel encouraged to do that with my students to improve their language competence in general and their writing abilities specifically. We can build up reading discussions on the texts they read, and I can assign questions to answer and ask them to think of questions to discuss in class about the texts they read. Writing can also be developed if teachers exploit the interesting reading students do. I believe that writing is a skill that builds much upon the reading ability and the amount of vocabulary knowledge one has.

Different aspects of language learning can interrelate with reading. Thus, I include **Ricketts, Nation, and Bishop's** article "*Vocabulary is important for some, but not all reading skills*" (2007) as it addresses an important issue relating to reading, which is vocabulary recognition and how it affects reading comprehension. The authors investigate the relationship between the development of oral vocabulary and reading comprehension. They wanted to test whether individual differences have a role in increasing and decreasing the reading skills such as the reading comprehension, accuracy, recognizing words, and deciphering non-words. The researchers found no clear connection between oral vocabulary skills and the development of word recognition and reading accuracy. However, I found it interesting to learn about the findings of this study

to enable me to deal with the students' different levels of reading skills and to work on their oral vocabulary skill to improve their reading.

The researchers aimed to investigate which reading skills are affected by oral vocabulary and to explore the link between oral vocabulary and exception word reading in students who have poor reading comprehension. They measured the students' phonological abilities and awareness because they believed this is an important factor that affects their word recognition skills. I believe this is important to know about students because they will not recognize words that they are not phonologically aware of, such as word parts, syllables, onsets, and rhymes. This leads me to give an emphasis on the pronunciation of the words and assert that students can pronounce the words that are new to them. It also makes me care about giving students reading texts that are suitable to their proficiency level in reading and comprehension. The researchers compared the poor readers' outcomes with skilled comprehenders and found that oral vocabulary skills predicted concurrent reading comprehension and exceptional word reading, but not text reading accuracy, non-word reading, or regular word reading. They showed that oral vocabulary predicts some word recognition skills but not other skills.

The findings of the study show a good relation between vocabulary and reading comprehension and that vocabulary plays an important role in word recognition, especially when the words are not corresponding in the spelling-sound. From this I learn that language teachers need to apply more activities with the students to practice learning the new words so they will be able to read them more easily.

From another extreme pertaining to L2 reading, I include a book chapter by **Chun (2011)** that discusses the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

programs to teach L2 reading. In order to facilitate teaching reading in a second language, teachers can be use *technology*, as an important tool that aids students' language learning. The author investigates the goals of teaching reading in the L2 and what the research has shown on how it is learned. I was interested to read this chapter in a way that it concerns reading, and in another to learn more of CALL technologies to integrate technology into my teaching of the reading texts.

The author's purpose of the chapter is to examine how CALL programs can be employed for improving L2 reading. The selected CALL studies were classified into different categories such as: ensuring fluency in word recognition, emphasizing the learning of vocabulary, activating background knowledge, etc. These are important aspects for strategic reading that I want to focus on in teaching reading.

The author mentioned the use of CALL programs for automaticity training to increase students' fluency in the L2 reading. Because vocabulary is important for the reading process, automatic recognition of high frequency words is important for successful reading. Findings show that the CALL programs accelerate lexical access but do not affect reading speed or comprehension. Other studies tested the highly frequent words' recognition by using CALL programs. They found an increase in the students' vocabulary knowledge and a positive effect on their reading comprehension but they did not reach automaticity. Thus, the author concludes that learners need exposure to the L2 vocabulary to reach automaticity. The author emphasizes learning of vocabulary since research has proved that "the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension has been powerfully demonstrated in both L1 and L2" (Gabre, 2004, p.49).

I think that multiple exposures to the words are the best way for word retention. We should not expect the students to learn a word from the first exposure but by applying various activities that engage them in situations in which they use the new words for different purposes. Fast reading is not as important as comprehension, for comprehension to occur vocabulary recognition is needed, since we understand when we know most of the words in the text.

Addressing technology to aid vocabulary learning, Chun discussed the use of dictionaries, text-based glosses, and multimedia glosses. The outcomes of using multimedia glosses or annotations show that they appear to be effective for vocabulary learning, but not for reading comprehension. In giving students reading assignments, I can use these tools. A large number of studies agree that there is a positive impact of the image-based annotations specifically when it combines with the text-based annotations. Thus, I want to create a wiki that allows for collaboration among students to add and comment on posts I add and supply with glosses and annotations. A wiki is a free space that can be used by teachers to post on different topics, including culture, sports, people, history, or other topics of students' interests. Students are already attracted to reading online so it will be clever to dig into these technologies to accommodate and get the attention of the digital-native students.

Finally another source that discusses vocabulary is a dissertation by **Pittman** (2008). The author indicates the importance for language teachers to find new strategies and provide the maximum efforts to teach vocabulary. Vocabulary is the main factor that enables us to understand what we read; thus, students need a large vocabulary repertoire to reach reading comprehension.

The study conducted by Pittman compares two ways of vocabulary instruction, explicit and implicit instruction, on English Language learners (ELL) to see its effects on their vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Students were tested in state-mandated tests. The results show an increase in the students' scores for vocabulary acquisition when they were taught through explicit instruction. However, no significant increase was found in the students' scores for reading comprehension.

The study indicates a need to look for good strategies for vocabulary instruction to provide to language teachers. The goal is to help students increase their vocabulary acquisition, and therefore, more vocabulary production will occur and lead to more reading comprehension. Thus, students who are able to produce more vocabulary are capable to understand more of what they read by using context clues to help them comprehend. A good point I like about explicit instruction in this paper is that it does not mean extra time on instruction in the classroom, but rather intensifying of the strategies of explicit vocabulary teaching to L2 learners.

From these results, it is clear that language teachers need more developmental training on the good strategies and techniques that can help develop L2 learners reading abilities. The above discussed articles also emphasize the importance for language teachers to exploit students interest in free reading to increase their reading motivation.

EFFECTS OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION ON SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

As a language teacher I have come to appreciate the imperative role of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in second-language acquisition (SLA). While creating sufficient interaction opportunities and setting aside enough practice time are always a challenge, CMC offers an opportunity that enhances collaboration between L2 learners and their instructors. In this bibliography, I will analyze seven articles that both differentiate the two modes of CMC (synchronous and asynchronous) and test the effectiveness of various communication types on particular tasks.

Before beginning a discussion of CMC, it is important to lay out an understanding of one of the technological platforms used to create an avenue for learners to develop their language capabilities. Known as online language learning (OLL), this platform forms the basis for the entire CMC implementation. **Blake (2011)** demonstrates the important nature of OLL formats, such as web-facilitated or hybrid, in his article “*Current trends in online language learning*,” and recommends that instructors consider integrating them into the curriculum in order to provide an enabling environment for successful second-language development. Unfortunately, assessment studies on OLL are limited. However, studies conducted in this area indicate that some educators and parents are unsupportive to the increasing trend toward online learning. Many would rather opt for more traditional face-to-face instruction, and believe that an online platform degrades the quality of education.

These educators and parents fail to comprehend that traditional classroom practices cannot automatically suit all class sizes, techniques, teacher talents, and students

with different attention spans, and neither can online courses. Another study cited by Blake (2011) found that students who incorporated either full or partial online classes into their courses achieved better performance than those in exclusively traditional face-to-face learning environments. Moreover, use of the online medium in second-language instruction provides the more obvious benefit of stimulating students to invest more time in second language (L2) materials, a scenario that will increase their exposure to the L2 and translate into greater learning.

To deepen our knowledge of OLL and its invaluable role in second-language teaching, I will outline the two modes of CMC and their effectiveness on second-language acquisition. A good paper examines CMC is an article called "*Effects of synchronous and asynchronous computer mediated communication (CMC) oral conversations on English language learners*" by **AbuSeileek and Qatawneh (2013)**.

The authors explore the effects of CMC modes of oral discussion (synchronous and asynchronous) on communication strategies and the types of questions L2 learners asked. The findings indicate that students who use the asynchronous CMC mode produce more discourse functions related to strategies and question types than the other group. In this regard, the asynchronous modes encourage learners to ask many questions that require long detailed answers. On the other hand, answers to the questions supported by the synchronous mode tend to be concise, clear, and unambiguous.

From these findings, I derive that asynchronous CMC yields better results than the synchronous mode; learners who use the asynchronous mode perform better as they generate longer segments of discourse. However, the authors mentioned that their findings could also be influenced by factors such as students' varying levels of

competence and their anxiety while interacting with computers. For this reason, further research on this issue should be examined. That being said, this article is of interest to me because it illuminates the potential results that applying the asynchronous mode of communication can bring to students' learning development.

In many OLL platforms, the instructor assesses the students' performance and development by examining the feedback they give and receive in online chats. By engaging students in collaborative synchronous CMC (SCMC) work (commonly known as chat), instructors provide opportunities for students to give both implicit and explicit feedback. Through providing feedback, students are essentially able to construct knowledge. Previous research shows that SCMC gives learners opportunities to achieve successful performance and to modify their language output toward model-like forms (e.g., Lee, 2002).

In a study to test students' collaboration through SCMC, **Oskoz (2009)** compares the respective levels of assistance students in SCMC and face-to-face interactions offer each other. The researcher also strives to measure the micro-genetic growth resulting from learner-learner interactions. Oskoz indicates that previous research aligned SCMC with the sociocultural theory as an application for the Zone of Proximal Development in that learning is a social activity and learners help each other develop their language performance (Vygotsky, 1981). This explanation reveals how a language teacher can exploit the SCMC mode in a way that facilitates and develops students' language learning. Research regarding SCMC also highlights the opportunities it provides for native speakers and non-native speakers to interact (Oskoz, 2009). This feature should not be overlooked—providing students chances for interaction through text-based chats

with native speakers can have the added benefit of raising their cultural awareness as well. In this regard, Oskoz explores the potential benefits of pairing students in such collaborative interaction according to the novice/expert dyad as a mirror of the SCT pattern of the child/parent dyad.

In applying SCMC interaction and feedback, teachers must remember that knowledge could be constructed incorrectly through interaction between students at different levels of proficiency. Thus, classroom follow-up discussions would be helpful to clarify and review those misunderstandings that occur. Oskoz concludes that despite the students providing each other with contingent and gradual feedback, and occasionally showing micro-genetic growth, the most transparent positive results of interaction was the one found in face-to-face interactions.

Collaborative interaction is essential for second language learning. SCMCs capacity for facilitating text-based communication and instant interaction has perpetuated its growth and popularity as a pedagogical tool. It is believed to promote authenticity because younger students, “digital natives,” use text-based communication tools constantly in their daily lives and are likely to encounter various language sources in the real world. **Kim (2014)** believes such text-based interactions can help increase learners’ language background. However, teachers sometimes fail to understand that learning processes fall constantly under the influence of social factors.

In this regard, the attention of learners depends upon the manner in which their social context mediates how output, input, and feedback contribute to SLA. Thus, the question remains as to the circumstances under which we should prefer SCMC to face-to-face (F2F) interactions, and vice-versa. Kim tests students’ collaborative learning through

SCMC compared to F2F interaction. In her article “*Learning opportunities in synchronous computer-mediated communication and face-to-face interaction,*” the author informs us that the pedagogical purpose should determine our choice. For instance, F2F interactions are most appropriate when practicing different communicative strategies, such as negotiation of meaning. On the other hand, SCMC best suits learners whose intention is practice producing complete forms of the language.

Study findings show that SCMC learners were more likely to avoid using new words they were not sure about, and used avoidance strategies in communicating with their peers during the SCMC more than in the F2F interaction. Learners state it is hard to negotiate the meaning of utterances in SCMC, unlike in F2F interactions, wherein people are able to try out words because they expect to receive recasts and corrections from the interlocutors. F2F allows for more opportunities for collaborative sentence construction than SCMC; indeed, some learners could not even complete a sentence during SCMC interaction. Teachers have the responsibility to teach their students effective strategies to use in SCMC, for example, negotiation strategies. CMC has its drawbacks, and thus teachers should keep themselves updated with study findings regarding the new tools and methodologies they plan to use with students before applying them. The results from both Oskoz (2009) and Kim (2014) show that F2F interactions surpass SCMC interaction in terms of the negotiation of meaning, and of overall meaningful interaction among learners.

In the research for her dissertation “*Negotiation of meaning in synchronous computer-mediated communication in relation to task types,*” **Cho (2011)** conducted a study on 32 ESL college students. The study also examined how the negotiation of

meaning occurred in SCMC. In particular, the researcher looked at how factors such as proficiency level and task-types influence the negotiation of meaning. Study results found that proficiency level did not significantly influence negotiation of meaning, whereas task-type, on the other hand, influenced it greatly. Jigsaw tasks allowed for more negotiation of meaning among beginner students, while more advanced learners performed better with information-gap tasks.

This article illuminates the necessity for remembering that the use of technology itself is not the goal, but rather only a tool. When teachers find well-prepared task-based activities to apply for students, whether in a synchronous, asynchronous, or fully online class, negotiation of meaning is more likely to occur.

Fernandez-Garcia and Martinez-Arbelaiz (2002) further examine the issue of negotiation of meaning through SCMC between students in their article “*Negotiation of meaning in nonnative speaker-nonnative speaker synchronous discussions.*” The authors expand on the previous research regarding oral interactions, and illuminate the issue of feedback exchange among learners in the course of language learning. Their findings indicate multiple occurrences of negotiation instances in the electronic medium between learners matching one another’s pace. However, when learners articulated their non-understandings of specific parts of class formulas, miscommunication occurred as a result. Moreover, they resorted to their native language in instances of non-understanding.

In language development, such situations of misunderstanding between learners often trigger the use of the native language in interactive sessions. I found this article informative as it introduces the concept of meaning and the nonunderstanding of parts of

input that require negotiation to be explained. I believe it is greatly essential to provide students opportunities to do this work. In my point of view, in an attempt to solve the problem of native-language use in instances of misunderstanding, I would suggest pairing students or dividing them into small groups, as negotiation is more likely to occur in small group interaction. This article is especially of my interest as it addresses nonnative-nonnative speaker interaction context, which is the case in the EFL classes in Saudi Arabia.

Most of the studies I found focused on synchronous and asynchronous online discussion. However, **Wang's** study (2010), outlined in "*Online collaboration and offline interaction between students using asynchronous tools in blended learning*," the integration of online discussions and CMC into face-to-face class conversations. This is the type of classroom atmosphere I envision for my students. Wang introduces the theory of innovative blended learning strategies in a study aiming to analyze the online utterances of learners and their offline interactions in order to establish the extent of collaborative learning among students from different colleges.

The findings indicate that the application of information and communication technologies—ICT tools—in blended learning did not guarantee better social interaction and engagement. However, participants used a lot of graphic images to express their moods. In ASCMC, it is helpful for students to use such emoticons to compensate for the absence of nonverbal social and physical cues, such as body language. Among the drawbacks of using ASCMC for class tasks and activities is the problem that students might spend most of their time finishing tasks rather and devote less time to reflection on their learning. Other limitations, as found in Wang's study, include students' struggling

with platform operation, handling technical problems, passive attitudes toward the procedure, tense atmosphere in class, and lack of engagement in tasks.

To conclude, as a teacher, I ought to consider the learning and technical capabilities of my students. It is important to provide a training session for students at the beginning of the semester, before we start to use the technological tools. Teachers must help our students master the techniques for active and collaborative online learning.

While teachers can make effective use of media to promote output in communicative learning using SCMC, the type of SCMC being applied heavily influences students' performance. **Yamada (2009)** tested this hypothesis using SCMC tools such as video conferencing, audio conferencing, plain text chat, and text chat with the image. The author identified video conferencing as the most useful tool since it creates a comfortable atmosphere for natural communication. Additionally, the text-oriented media enhances confidence in grammatical accuracy. For an effective learning experience, I would choose a combination of video, audio, and texts; as such a combination can boost learners' confidence in grammar as well as oral expression.

After a thorough analysis of these articles, I have derived that computer-mediated-communication is a paramount instrument in the success of second language acquisition for the day and age. CMC is also useful in shifting a teacher-focused learning approach to one focusing on students. The two CMC modes play a significant role in enhancing the imperative learners' collaboration. However, as a teacher, I must understand the best mode to suit my students' situation. In choosing which media to use, the teacher must bear in mind the disparities in our class sizes and the students' attention spans, among other factors.

TEACHING THE TARGET CULTURE IN SAUDI ARABIA: PERSPECTIVES, ATTITUDES, AND IDENTITIES

Teaching English as a second language is of people's aspiration in the Middle East. However, when it comes to the culture that relates to English, it arises here different perspectives. Some people in parts of the Arab World think learning the target culture will lead to cultural detachment of their own. In this regard, I searched for sources that portray a reflection of how the culture of English is taught and reflected in the Arab countries curriculum, and especially Saudi Arabia.

A few articles from the literature explored how an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia can improve communicative and cultural competence of students while maintaining their cultural identities. For example, the **Al Abiky (2010)** dissertation on the topic of "*Foreign cultures' representation in Saudi Arabian higher education: Attitudes, identity and pedagogy*". Al-Abiky's study sought to explore the English culture's representation in Saudi Arabian language learning and translation department in a university in the city of Riyadh. The author examined attitudes, and the influence of this attitude on the identity of the students. It sheds light on the culture representation of English in Saudi by examining three factors: the students' level of education, travel habits, and the sources of knowledge as having profound influence on their attitudes towards foreign cultures. The study examines the appropriate culture practices that educators and instructors should teach, emphasizing that students' understanding, even adapting some cultural norms from the *others* (westerners), does not mean that they are losing their own, but vice versa.

The dissertation stresses the importance of cultural classes in higher learning institutions as they introduce students to the unfamiliar. In particular, the dissertation

identifies a gap in foreign language teaching in higher education. Thus; an EFL teacher like me, can begin teaching English by first dealing with the poor representation and inadequate emphasis on cultural importance. The author objects on the age in which English is integrated into the curriculum in Saudi Arabia, which is not until the sixth grade. He claims that it would be better if they start learning English by the age six years old, as children can develop prejudice towards racial groups. The author interprets this as implying negative attitudes towards different cultures.

This dissertation is illuminating as it reveals the Saudi students' positive attitudes towards learning English generally as a minimum of 3.5 and maximum of 3.9 out of 5 for positive attitude, where few outliers show negative attitude and few others show strong positive attitude toward the '*others*'. In terms of level of education, results showed to be unsatisfactory. The level of education has found to have no influence on the students' attitudes and perceptions towards foreign cultures. The researcher found no difference between the freshmen and sophomores as a group, and the juniors and seniors as another group, in their attitude toward foreign languages.

Unlike travel abroad, by which students showed positive attitudes toward foreign languages and cultures. In terms of the last factor, which is sources of knowledge in helping students creating attitudes toward foreign languages and cultures. The researcher focused on the textbooks, instructors, family and friends, and TV/media. The results show that TV/media was the main source of knowledge by far of 70% of students based their knowledge of foreign cultures on TV channels. However, it did not affect students' attitudes; but textbooks did. This was revealed by students' opinions on reading textbooks as it can directly impact people's attitude and that when we are interested in

something we read about it. This has led me to encourage my students to read more of authentic materials that depict the culture of English.

In terms of Al-Abiky's study question about students' identity, the results view a significant correlation between the students' attitudes and identities. This means that as students developed positive attitudes toward foreign cultures, their identities were more broadly possessed. To conclude, the author asserts the instructors role of conveying the target culture, describing them as "the ambassador of culture". He explains that as students showed positive attitudes toward the "others" instructors need to think outside the books in teaching their students more about the culture as well as the pragmatics of the foreign language.

By the same token, as there is a common implication of fear grappling among the Saudi Arabian communities that English language learning is associated with westernization and as such, entails detachment to Saudi nationalism besides corrupting the students' national commitment. I found that **Al-Abd Al-Haq and Smadi (1996)** tried to challenge this notion through a qualitative study where the researchers used questionnaires to prove otherwise that learning English barely leads to the negative attributes that are associated with detachment from nationalism, lesser commitment to the Saudi culture and strong preference for westernization. I found this particular source useful as a reference for me since through questionnaire surveys targeting 2000 university students in Saudi Arabia, randomly chosen, the findings showed that most of the interviewed students linked English to their unique social prestige.

The source enriches my knowledge and understanding on the use of English in Saudi Arabia because as a second language, the study confirms that English is used by the

Saudi Arabian students for developing as well as enriching their personality besides playing a crucial role in improving their cultural experiences. For instance, 52.6% of the students believed that English is necessary for spreading Islam to non-Muslims while only 7.6% voted for Learning English's role in spoiling their religious commitment. Therefore, the source challenges the usual negative perception towards learning English in Saudi Arabia that it impacts negatively on the student's religious commitment. Furthermore, the source informs me that the positive attitude towards the learning of English stems from the impact it has on Saudi young people economic advancement because findings of the study indicate that the Saudi university students believe that by learning EFL, they have better opportunities for employment advancement.

An EFL teacher can also approach the teaching of English using post-structural theories of identity to explore more about identity and language learning. I found it interesting reading **Norton and Toohey's (2011)** definition of the contemporary identity theories and use them as an approach to language learning whereby students engage in social life, and attach desirable identities in relation to the community of the target language. I also find this particular source useful in enriching my ideas of second language culture teaching explaining that approached language knowledge from a usage-based view perspective implying that people learn second language effectively through joint engagement by using cultural tools.

On the other hand, the source asserts that language usage depends on the understanding of contexts through which the language is used; thus, informing that second language learners will have more competent and proficient language use as they engage or participate in activities within the contexts of the second language.

In a more detailed argument, this article introduces me to the notion of imagined communities where the authors argue that people always have an imagination of how their members of community look like even when they have never met them and that they will gauge learning of the second language based on what they imagine the society will look like when they have the knowledge of the second language. The above statement substantiate the need for teaching Western culture as part of the EFL lessons because as the source identified earlier, social interactions and engagement is key to the success of second language learning. In this regard, where the situation in Saudi Arabia provides no much of opportunities for conversations with native speakers of English or showing any authentic cultural context of English, I would more depend on the use of technology to expose my students to the target culture and authentic sources.

The integration of culture into the language instruction is important in improving the sociocultural competencies of students is an important aspect of **Al-Qahtani (2003)** dissertation exploring the need for cultural teaching. The particular source reviews some of the existing literature and refers to recommendations of studies like Seelye (1994) who advised against learning words in isolation since the approach does not meet the communicative goals of second language teaching. This study corresponds to my notion about teaching through context as words become more comprehensible when used in larger context. It is also outstanding that the literature reveals that without knowledge on cultural background, non-native speakers find it difficult to make meanings out of some words that are only used with the particular cultural context. The study also shows the inseparability between language and culture and this informs me that without teaching my students the target culture, it will be impossible to achieve the goal of improving their

fluency in the language. In fact, I see the point in this source as it suggests that learners attach wrong meanings to words as they associate their own cultural meaning to foreign language or words. Nonetheless, Al-Qahtani (2003) concludes the relationship between language and culture by referring to the literature that reveals that curricula and policy statements in most countries show that teaching foreign language always aim at teaching young learners the importance of becoming global citizens and being able to fit in different cultures.

As an EFL teacher aspiring to teach English in Saudi Arabia by linking it to its culture to help make my students competent language learners, I lastly include a source that addresses the bilingual education in the United States, to infer how teaching young children two languages from early stages of life can work toward their ... I find it useful to identify the perceptions that children have towards their bilingualism and bilitracy because as **Díaz Soto (2002)** suggest, children are the ones who feel the oppression and that their voices are barely considered when designing education reforms.

The article is useful as it represents a study based on a conversation with children since the author implies that the findings can inform educators, policymakers and parents on how bilingualism can influence the notion of equity and justice in the society. The study first offers an account of the abolition of the bilingual program in Steelstown, Pennsylvania in 1996 that brought about outrage among the children and refers to an interview with one of the students, who confessed that the school had taken away her language, and that she did not like the school and showing much sadness that the program had been scrapped. In this example, the source refers to the fact that bilingualism is important for children since it defines their social identity that if taken away, can be

perceived as socially unjust for the children. The altruistic behavior among children that I discover in this article can inform my approach to teaching EFL as will administer the learning of the second language as a means of improving sound behaviors in the society like positive identities. Therefore, this article has positive implications for the teaching of second language as Díaz Soto suggests that educators must consider the question of not falling victims to standard developmental models and recommends that teaching of second language should rather focus on understanding the cultural dimensions that influence the lives of students as young learners.

MAPPING MY POSITIONALITY

I wrote this paper as part of Dr. Saavedra's Teacher Education and Leadership class (Diversity in Education), to determine and define my personal goals in teaching. The paper gave me a vehicle through which to think of goals and plans I want to pursue in my future teaching. Herein, I explore the theory and background that explain my concepts and ideas as a second language (L2) teacher. I try to develop new ways of teaching so that students can introspect and observe the things they learn in my class, and develop a better understanding of their own social and cultural backgrounds, and those of others. Current common wisdom holds that every individual has equal rights, although this claim remains debatable, considering the different opinions of people regarding societal values (Cannella & Viruru, 2004), especially in the case of Saudi Arabia, where freedom has limited paths.

Being a Saudi woman, I strive to develop my individual identity in a man's world. I believe in the concept of feminism, which is defined as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks, 2000, p.1). To be a successful feminist, however, I have had to cultivate a positive approach that can sustain me as a driving force to convert conceived ideas into reality. Positive thinking can help people to overcome the pains in life and will provide courage to fight any adverse circumstances. Moreover, an attitude of positivity is contagious, and can make others view and relate to me as a confident and reliable person.

Among the factors affecting an individual's thinking patterns, the family exerts the most significant and long-term effect on individuality. Each member of the family can have a different impact on one's individuality, depending on the role the relative plays in

one's life. The degree of influence each member has on individuality development depends upon their competence in establishing inter-personal relationships. However, the role of parents in identity development merits special mention, since parents' responsibilities are more direct and intimate. A person develops according to the manners with which he/she has been groomed by parents. The environment at home shapes his/her psychology and behavioral patterns. Because the separate identities and behaviors of both parents can differ from one another, the common aim should be to use their direct, intimate influence to inculcate good values in the child. Thereafter, when the child encounters the school community, he/she deals with others smoothly, with the good manners established throughout childhood.

In order to cultivate equal rights in any society, rights that apply to all, irrespective of race, gender, class or socioeconomic status, the first step is for individuals to endeavor to develop an outlook of tolerance, and then to participate in eliminating racism and oppression. In today's multicultural Saudi society, which includes people from all over the Middle East and elsewhere, individuals who hold the power of influence also have the responsibility to inculcate feelings of equity in order to bring social justice. In my opinion, a teacher plays an important role in suppressing racism and discrimination. When there are students of diverse cultures and background in the classroom, as is often the case now in Saudi Arabia, the teacher can, for example create new values that are shared and appreciated by the whole class. Methods of producing love and equity between the students begin with the teacher treating them equally. We must begin with ourselves and be good role models for our students. When we change ourselves, we can make changes in this world as we desire.

According to Keating, “self-reflection plays a vital role in transformational multiculturalism, and requires intense exploration of both the external world and the inner self” (2007, p.14). In the classroom, students can be engaged in real-life situations through activities the teacher facilitates that take them to a different place. For example, extensive reading can open up opportunities for students to encounter new cultures, experiences, and values, which encourage to think and reflect. Through reading different genres and authentic texts in the target language, students are able to use their critical thinking and reflection skills to expand their horizons beyond the L1 context.

As a teacher, I strive to narrow the gap between the students’ background knowledge and the lessons they need to learn. To accomplish this, I need to accept and acknowledge the cultural differences of my students, and based on these, I must build my classes in a way that suits the varying perspectives and norms of students’ cultural upbringings. While our biology reveals our homogenous nature, our sameness as human beings, culture is what makes humans distinct, and thus, it is important to understand and appreciate differences that result from cultural variation. Being an EFL teacher, I have realized the importance of students learning to appreciate and acknowledge the cultural and historical differences between their native language (Arabic) and the target language (English). For that the general trend in many countries of the East is that the ruling power (the West/the Other) imposes their own beliefs and perspectives on the people so much that the East nation’s cultural manifestations are being hindered (Quijano, 2010). It is important for educators to take a stance and fight for their native culture and values. Education can be a means for changes in the new generation. We can help our students find ways to maintain their identities and advocate their beliefs. One may refer to the

plight of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King in defending their views. I also always remember the struggles Nelson Mandela went through to bring an end to the apartheid of South Africa, and the difficulties he overcame to become the first African president of his country.

I have in mind using an approach that rejects the colonist perspective of a dominant power. And I am not going for politics, but in our Eastern World, people normally tend to impose their rules and views of their world, when they are given power. From a teacher's perspective, I feel disinclined to impose my perspectives on my students. Rather, I want to encourage them to share their individual feelings and ideas on any given subject, so that they can connect the materials learned in the classroom with their real-life experiences. I do not want to give them the information I need them to learn, but rather direct them to where they can search for topics and dig into the information they want to learn about, so that we can have broad discussions in the classroom on things they have learned by themselves. In this way, they will feel excited to share what they discovered with their classmates and me. It is also important for me to teach the students that it is totally fine to hold different opinions and perspectives, as people have distinct cultural backgrounds. I will not discourage them in countering their cultural beliefs, and will try to encourage them to develop individual perspectives, as an intrinsic part of their learning process. My ultimate goal is to establish the cultural differences among students as advantages, rather than handicaps. I want to encourage them to view the world from different perspectives, especially because they live and study in a conformist society where appreciation of heterogeneity has not yet developed. Encouraging students to change from the inside, and to reach farther to change the world

around them, will lead a society to development and civilization, as without respecting diversity we cannot succeed.

It is important for individuals to have their own freedom of opinion and beliefs, but this freedom does not give the right to draw conclusions from perceived ethnic identities (Stonebanks, 2010). I want my students to learn about the beliefs of others and realize that, in some cases, others can also be right. Every person is unique in his/her own way, and as a teacher, I have a responsibility to teach my students to appreciate their own uniqueness and respect others' as well. Students not only need to learn from the world around them, but also create new knowledge about the world they live in (Kincheloe, 2008). I dream of seeing an enthusiastic generation in my country, who creates its own views and opinions. To help realize this, I want to focus on building students' skills and developing their talents through incorporating different teaching materials and bringing up ideas and topics tailored to their individual differences and give them the sources they need to create their views. With these methods and vision, I will not only encourage my students to practice their second language, but empower them to engage with others in an English-dominant world.

Conclusion

The idea is to enable students from diverse cultural backgrounds to embrace their distinct identities *and* discover new ideas, without pride or shame in their individual roots. As an L2 teacher, I will not follow the traditional way of providing information to students without giving them the scope to form personal opinions. L2 learners can gain proficiency in the language by learning its grammar and vocabulary, and for this they need to have background knowledge, which can be inspired by encouraging them to ask

questions. As a teacher I feel that every individual should respect his/her own distinct social and cultural background, as well as that of others. My students should not attempt to change themselves to gain appreciation from others, as I intend to teach them that people should accept them with their distinct identities.

Looking forward

My previous career as a language teacher helped me realize and reflect on the process of language learning and teaching. However, my actual career in the language teaching profession will start after finishing the MSLT program. During my stay in the United States, I look forward to accomplishing several things. The first goal is to continue teaching Arabic to young Arab and Muslim children at Logan Islamic Center. I am planning on taking a step forward in improving the curriculum and increase the variety and frequency of classes adding more classes during holidays.

The second goal is to accomplish a dream of conducting research. I wish to write a paper on a topic pertaining to Arabic and English language attitudes of Arabs. I also hope to collect data for a study for one of the papers I wrote for my MSLT classes (e.g., dialogue journals). I am planning on frequently volunteering in the ESL class in Bridger Elementary School in Logan, where it might be a good idea to suggest to the ESL teachers a method to implement the dialogue journal activity in order for ESL learners to raise their motivation and sense of belonging in the ESL class.

Upon my return to Saudi Arabia, I plan to teach EFL to university level students. I will apply for a position at King Faisal University on teaching EFL, literature, or applied linguistics. I aim to apply what I have learned about the communicative language teaching approach during the MSLT program toward improving language learning among university students. In addition, I will incorporate the technology use in language teaching.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sample discourse completion test (DCT) (some are adapted from Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, and El-Bakary, (2002) (#1, 2, 3, 4,7) and some are my own (5,6))

1. You're at your desk trying to find a report that your boss just asked for. While you're searching through the mess on your desk, your boss walks over and says. "You know, maybe you should try and organize yourself better. I always write myself little notes and to remind me of things. Perhaps you should give it a try". (Suggestion from a higher status)

You:

2. You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you and says: "Oh God, I'm so sorry! I had an awful accident. While I was cleaning I bumped into the tables and your China vase fell and broke. I just feel terrible about it. I insist on paying for it." (Offer from a lower status).

You:

3. You are at a friend's house watching TV. The friend offers you a snack. You turn it down saying that you've gained some weight and don't feel comfortable in your new clothes. Your friend says, 'Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?' (Suggestion from equal status).

You:

4. Your friend/classmate calls to ask you to pick her up on Monday morning before class. Her house is far away and you really hate waking up a lot earlier on Mondays. Your friend: Hey, can you pick me up for school on Monday at 7:30 a.m.? (Request from equal status).

You:

5. You have a test tomorrow at school. You are joining your friends to go have lunch and spend the day at the mall. A friend asks you: Aren't you planning to stay to study for your test? (Suggestion from equal status).

You:

6. You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave work. But your boss says, "If you don't mind, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two tonight so that we can finish this." (Request from a higher status)

You:

Appendix B

Example lesson plan for teaching students how to refuse a request, offer, suggestion, and invitation.

Teaching American English refusal strategies

Can Do Statement:

Students will be able to properly refuse an offer, suggestion, request, or decline an invitation. They will be able to identify the use of direct and indirect ways of refusals.

Purpose of the Activity: To raise the students' pragmatic awareness to how to use different speech acts that suit the language culture.

Duration of the Lesson: 50 minutes

Activity 1: Introduction (Warm-Up): (5 min)

Projector display: An invitation to an extra study session on Saturday at 7 a.m. Teacher records students' responses (refusals) on the board.

Discussing and assessing their responses and their pragmatic knowledge.

Activity 2: Instruction (Teacher's Input+ video clip) (10 min)

Teacher's presentation of appropriate use of refusals in English to students.

Emphasizing the importance of using modifiers and softeners to imply politeness and to save face. (Tatsuki and Houck, 2010)

Teacher plays a short video clip of refusing an invitation. Students watch the impact of direct and indirect refusals on the inviter's face (an indirect refusal can still save the inviter's face and protect the conversation).

Activity 3: (Teacher's demonstration) (5 min)

Teacher uses a kinesthetic strategy to demonstrate how different refusal strategies work and leave impact on the interlocutor (felt sheets will be used to demonstrate the process).

Teacher gives examples of softeners, and explains the different refusal strategies one needs to use according to the interlocutor's level of power.

Activity 4: (Refusal sequence) (Pair work, 10 min)

Teacher will provide a request from a friend (equal status) and students will be asked to write a refusal using colored pencils matching strategies written on the colored felt sheets hanged on the board. They will use pause fillers, softeners, and the refusal phrase then, will cut out the whole phrase into strips

They exchange papers with other pairs so reorder the new strips of phrases and go to the board to hang them under its corresponding refusal strategy.

Teacher reminds the students that different ways and strategies of refusals are expected and accepted.

(Materials provided: perforated papers, colored pencils).

Activity 5: (TBA) (pair and group work, 10 min)

Creating refusals to given scenarios: (pair work, 5 min)

Students will be given scenarios to pair up to create refusals to.

Role-play: (group work, 5 min)

Students will work in groups of 3 to act out the different scenarios. One acts as the inviter, the other as the refuser, and the third as the observer who records the refusal strategy used. Students will exchange roles, the teacher will make sure everyone takes a turn in each role.

Follow-Up: (Whole-class discussion+ homework) (10 min)**(Discussion, 5 min)**

What did you learn? Do you see differences between you own refusal strategies and the American English norm of refusals?

Which refusal strategy will you use? Which do you prefer?

(Homework, 5 min)

Teacher asks students to search for videos that present refusal strategies in English and asks them to reflect on them and explain what strategies were used in each.