DIMENSIONS 2023
Volume 58

Patricia Davis-Wiley
Gregory De La Piedra
Carolyn Gascoigne
Borbala Gaspar
Christina Huhn
Giulia Negretto
Brian Olovson

EDITOR
Paula Garrett-Rucks

DIMENSIONS 2023
Volume 58

Patricia Davis-Wiley
Gregory De La Piedra
Carolyn Gascoigne
Borbala Gaspar
Christina Huhn
Giulia Negretto
Brian Olovson

Dimensions is the annual volume of peer-reviewed articles sponsored by the 2023 Joint Conference of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), the Southeastern Association of Language Learning Technology (SEALLT), and the Alabama World Language Association (AWLA).

© 2023 Southern Conference on Language Teaching

Table of Contents

Review and Acceptance Procedures SCOLT Dimensions

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in *Dimensions* begin by the authors emailing manuscripts to the Editor at SCOLT at Dimensions@SCOLT.org or prucks@gsu.edu. The Editor then uses a double blind peer review process to review the manuscripts. That is, the names and academic affiliations of the authors and information identifying schools and colleges cited in articles are removed from the manuscripts prior to review by members of the Editorial Board, all of whom are published professionals, committed to second language education at research universities. Neither the author(s) nor the reviewers know the identity of one another during the review process. Each manuscript is reviewed by at least two members of the Editorial Board, and one of the following recommendations is made: "accept as is," "request a second draft with minor revisions," "request a second draft with major revisions," or "do not publish." The Editor then requests second drafts of manuscripts that receive favorable ratings on the initial draft. These revised manuscripts are reviewed a second time before a final decision to publish is made.

The Editor of *Dimensions* 2023 invited prospective authors at all levels of language teaching to submit original work for publication consideration without having to commit to presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching. Starting as a conference proceeding under the name *Dimension* with the organization's inception in 1967, the journal has long been the official peer-reviewed journal of SCOLT that annually publishes national and international authors. Recognizing the plurality of dimensions of teaching and learning languages represented by authors in the journal, the Board voted to change the journal's name to *Dimensions* in 2023. Contributing authors' research findings and pedagogical implications are shared at the SCOLT conference opening ceremony with attendees and beyond.

To improve visibility of the authors' work, the Board voted to publish the journal on the SCOLT website in an open access format for all publications from 2003 to present. SCOLT *Dimensions* is indexed with the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education that connects 12 million users—researchers, educators, policy makers, and students from 238 countries. ERIC metric biannual reports indicate that *Dimension* articles are being viewed or downloaded over 6,000 times a year. SCOLT *Dimensions* is dedicated to the advancement of the teaching and learning of world languages and cultures and warmly welcomes a wide readership.

2023 Editorial Board for SCOLT Dimensions

CALL FOR PAPERS

Dimensions 2024 Special Issue: Focus on Bridging Language Education Fields

Co-editors: Dr. Paula Garrett-Rucks (Georgia State University) and Dr. Jason A. Kemp (WIDA at the University of Wisconsin-Madison)

This edition will focus on bridging the Language Education fields of Bilingual, Dual Language, Heritage Language, and World Languages Education. These areas of language teaching and learning are often understood as separate disciplines with distinct pedagogies. The focus of this special issue is on the ways in which these language fields share knowledge, theories, and best practices. Arguably, at the heart of each field there is a common goal to foster learners' ability to function across languages and cultures in spoken and written communications.

Ultimately, the call for papers for this special issue aims to inspire diverse researchers to share their understanding of what we think language education should look like across the U.S. In what ways are the national standards and best teaching practices similar or different across Bilingual, Dual Language, Heritage Language and World Languages Education? How do assessment practices vary? How is language education similar or different across various regions of the U.S.? In what ways can findings on best-teaching practices in border communities (e.g., Canada and Mexico) inform bilingual and biliteracy practices in communities with less frequent cross-cultural contact? In what ways does learning a heritage or world language (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish) compare to learning English in an ESOL context? This edition aims to highlight empirical and theoretical papers, as well as new programmatic directions and professional development, that focus on our shared goal of promoting and maintaining multilingualism. In addition, we welcome papers from a variety of educational contexts, including K-12 and post-secondary; urban, suburban, and rural; as well as how language teaching and learning can promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Priority will be given to submissions received by the July 1st, 2023 deadline.

Submissions guidelines can be found at:
http://www.scolt.org/index.php/publications/dimension

For additional information on manuscript submission or the publication process, please contact prucks@gsu.edu or jason.kemp@wisc.edu or Dimensions@SCOLT.org

Introduction

Mobilize for Language Learning

The Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) held its annual conference March 31-April 2, 2022, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriot in collaboration with the Southeastern Association of Language Learning Technology (SEALLT), and the Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA). Starting as a conference proceeding publication with the organization's inception in 1967 under the title "the SCOLT *Dimension*," this journal has long been the organization's official peer-reviewed journal. For more than a decade the journal has published national and international authors once a year, sharing their research findings and pedagogical implications with conference attendees and beyond. The journal is indexed with the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education that connects 12 million users—researchers, educators, policy makers, and students from 238 countries. Bi-annual ERIC metrics reports revealed over 5,600 views and downloads of *Dimension* publications during 2022. Recognizing the multiplicity of dimensions concerning the teaching and learning languages represented by authors in the journal, the SCOLT Board voted to change the journal's name to SCOLT *Dimensions* in 2023. SCOLT *Dimensions* remains dedicated to the advancement of the teaching and learning of world languages and cultures, specifically languages other than English.

In this year's volume, there are five articles that provide readers insight to a wide range of research on the dimensions of teaching and learning of languages and cultures across grade levels, university settings, and geographic regions of the U.S. Contributing chapters address aspects of language learning including (1) L2 peer collaborative writing development; (2) transformative identity experiences in beginning Italian classrooms with social justice materials; (3) the use of word analysis to identify target culture perspectives toward word use practices; (4) an analysis of language practices in online textbooks and their companion workbooks; and (5) teacher perspectives about the multi-level world language classroom.

This year's volume begins with a chapter in which author Brian Olovson (*Kennesaw State University*) reports on his investigation of collaboration and writing development in L2 Spanish classrooms with a microanalytic perspective. Specifically, the author presents a case study that focused on how two learners positioned themselves as partners in a collaborative writing activity in a Spanish Writing course utilizing a micro-discourse analytic approach (Eskildsen & Markee, 2018; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018) to highlight the situated nature of collaboration and the dynamicity of the collaborative writing process as it unfolds turn-by-turn during their interactions. In so doing, the researcher explores how learners orient to their partners and to the language they are producing, and what learners do with their talk (Markee, 2000), so that researchers can observe learners' competence-in-action (Pekarek Doehler,

2013). The discursive practices of the pair suggested that they viewed collaboration as a way to trade off the role of being expert based on whether their attention was focused on content or language.

In Chapter 2, Giulia Negretto (*University of Arizona*) and Borbala Gaspar (*University of Arizona*) offer insights into the transformative experiences of beginning Italian language learners in a social-justice oriented curriculum. Focusing on two beginning Italian courses, this study demonstrated participants' perceptions about and engagement with social justice topics and materials in a semester-long project. Using a quantitative and qualitative analysis of surveys, triangulated with interviews and artifacts, such as comments by students during lessons and in their video responses, the authors provide an understanding of students' initial expectations, perceptions and experiences with learning Italian; their background knowledge on social justice; and their reactions to the activities implemented throughout the course. The authors' findings indicate that learners value the types of activities and learning tools in the classroom that allow them to share, collaborate and reflect together while engaging with multiliteracies approaches and social justice material. The researchers found that most learners changed their perceptions of Italy and Italian identities by altering their frames of reference and changing their mind-sets and habits. Implications include discussions on offering learners space for critical reflection on social scenarios that can lead to increased engagement, sense of belonging, and unique transformative experiences.

Next, in Chapter 3, author Gregory De La Piedra (*St. Petersburg College*) describes a Word Analysis approach for the instruction of cultural perspectives, exemplified with an analysis of the use of the word *la madre* [mother] in Mexican Spanish. The author describes Word Analysis as an approach to teach second language (L2) students about cultural perspectives, understood collectively as the ideas, values, beliefs, and experiences many native speakers have regarding cultural domains within their own cultures. Word Analysis is anchored on the relationships between language and communication, and language and culture. The author researches the history behind the dual value of the term *la madre* [mother] in Mexican Spanish to deliver a practical method that language instructors easily could incorporate within their materials to teach L2 culture, or that publishers could integrate within their textbooks. The author claims that the primary purpose and goal of Word Analysis is to improve learners' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and overall competence.

In Chapter 4, Carolyn Gascoigne (*University of Houston*) provides a review of language practice exercises within commercially available eBooks and their electronic companion practice workbooks and online learning platform practices. The author first provides a brief historical review of the second language teaching profession's relationship with first- and second-year textbooks, then examines the treatment of language practice activities as found in beginning post-secondary French eBooks, as well as their accompanying electronic workbooks and online learning platform practice. Using Aski's 2003 typology, five post-secondary eBooks and accompanying electronic practice are reviewed in order to examine their use of mechanical drills,

meaningful drills, communicative drills, and communicative practice. Two structures were targeted for review across all formats. Electronic workbook and learning platform practices were found to be both more mechanical in nature and more drill-focused than what has been recommended in the literature.

In the final chapter, authors Christina Huhn (*Indiana University of Pennsylvania*) and the late Patricia Davis-Wiley (*University of Tennessee*) share findings from their exploratory study using a national survey of U.S. K-16 world languages teachers who currently teach or have taught multiple levels or multiple languages in the same class period (n=124). The authors define multi-level classes as classrooms that incorporate multiple levels of learners simultaneously. The authors purport that this common practice has received little scholarly attention with respect to world language programs. The authors' findings confirm the long-standing existence of multi-level classes in the U.S. educational landscape and echo suggestions to support teachers confronted with this challenge.

As Editor, I worked collaboratively with the *Dimensions* Editorial Review Board in a double blind, peer-review process and I would like to extend my gratitude to members of the board for having shared their knowledge and expertise reviewing the articles for *Dimensions 2023*. These individuals are leaders in the field and I greatly appreciate their time and energy. On behalf of the editorial team, I believe that readers will find the articles in this edition informative and inspiring. I would like to extend my gratitude to (1) the authors for contributing their work to *Dimensions*, (2) members of the Editorial Review Board for assisting their colleagues in the preparation of the articles, and (3) the SCOLT Sponsors and Patrons for their ongoing financial support that makes *Dimensions* possible.

The Editor,

Paula Garrett-Rucks

Georgia State University

1

Collaboration and Writing Development in L2 Spanish: A Microanalytic Perspective

Brian Olovson
Kennesaw State University

Abstract

This case study focuses on how two learners position themselves as partners in a collaborative writing activity in a Spanish Writing course. I utilize a micro-discourse analytic approach (Eskildsen & Markee, 2018; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018) to highlight the situated nature of collaboration and the dynamicity of the collaborative writing process as it unfolds turn-by-turn during their interactions. This type of analysis permits researchers to explore how learners orient to their partners and to the language they are producing, and what learners do with their talk (Markee, 2000), so that researchers can observe their competence-in-action (Pekarek Doehler, 2013). The discursive practices of the pair suggested that they viewed collaboration as a way to trade off the role of being expert based on whether their attention was focused on content or language.

Keywords: collaborative writing, L2 Spanish, micro-discourse analysis, peer interaction

Introduction

Most collaborative writing research to date (Li & Zhu, 2013; Storch, 2005, 2009, 2013) applies Storch's (2002) patterns of interaction framework to examine the relationships peers form when working together and their influence on the quantity and quality of learners' attention on language form. In this seminal study, Storch (2002) found four types of relationships that pairs form in terms of equality (i.e., learners' level of contribution and task control) and mutuality (i.e., learners' level of engagement with others' contributions) when working in dyads: collaborative (high mutuality and high equality); expert/novice (high mutuality, but low equality); dominant/dominant (high equality, but low mutuality); and dominant/passive (low equality and low mutuality). However, some researchers (e.g., Philp et al., 2014) argue that there are limitations to Storch's approach: (1) the predetermined typology; (2) the assumption of the importance of individual differences; and (3) the assumption that the patterns of interaction are generally stable throughout the interaction.

Similarly, other researchers, such as van Compernolle (2015), have found that the approach of imposing an interpretative framework based on pre-theorized categories represents "an overtly 'psychologizing' analytic mentality (i.e., making assumptions about the state of mind, desires, and/or feelings of a participant to explain his or her actions)" (p. 22). Instead, he advocates for an microanalytic

discourse analysis approach that "does not pre-theorize the relevance and significance of language-in-use…but instead attempts to uncover participants' own displays of the relevance and significance of communicative interaction" (p. 22).

In this study, I used an emic, micro-discourse analytic approach to examine the situated nature of collaboration as it becomes observable in the moment-by-moment unfolding of talk-in-interaction between a dyad engaged in a collaborative writing task in second language (L2) Spanish (Kunitz, 2018; Lazaraton & Davis, 2008; van Compernolle, 2015). This type of analysis of the moment-by-moment unfolding of the talk participants produce while engaged in a collaborative activity allows researchers to explore how and what learners do through their talk when they take turns at talking (Markee, 2000).

Literature Review

Learner-Initiated Language Awareness in Peer Interaction and L2 Learning

Collaborative writing provides opportunities for students to engage in verbalization to mediate solutions to complex problems and tasks. Informed by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which argues that through one's mediated interactions with a more knowledgeable other, cognition moves from being co-constructed to being internalized individually, Swain (2006) popularized the term languaging to reflect the "process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (p. 89). Languaging is most often operationalized by L2 researchers as language-related episodes (LREs), which are the instances in which learners discuss, question, and/or reflect on the language issues that arise while writing together (Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2005). Per sociocultural theory, LREs are both engines and instances of learning (Swain, 2006. By identifying LREs, researchers are better able to understand the characteristics of peer interactions, as LREs provide researchers with insight into how learners use language to attend to linguistic features and solve the language-related problems that arise during collaboration. Furthermore, LREs offer clues about L2 development (Swain, 2006, van Compernolle, 2015, 2018).

Previous collaborative writing research has shown that collaborative writing provides abundant opportunities for learners to produce LREs of various types: form based (discussion of grammatical forms); lexicon based (discussion of word/phrase meaning or word choice); mechanics based (discussion of punctuation/spelling); coherence based (discussion of how ideas flow together); and discourse based (discussion on the overarching structure) (Philp et al., 2014; Storch, 2013). Some typologies create an additional stratum of LREs by subcategories (e.g., form-based noun–adjective agreement; form-based subject–verb agreement) (Olovson, 2018; Philp et al., 2014; Storch, 2005, 2013). According to Storch (2013), the functions of the aforementioned LREs are to: (1) provide negative feedback (e.g., recasts, corrective feedback); (2) provide positive feedback (e.g., confirmation, praise); (3) seek confirmation; and (4) explain grammatical choices and words meanings. It is also important to note that when working together, learners do not necessarily resolve all of their LREs correctly. Therefore, researchers often classify the aforementioned types of LREs as correctly resolved or incorrectly resolved. However, Storch (2013) argued that there is sufficient empirical evidence across languages and task types

to establish that most LREs learners generate while working together are not only resolved, but resolved correctly (p. 35).

Micro-Discourse Analysis as a Tool to Understand Interaction and L2 Development

More recently, researchers working within a sociocultural theory-derived framework have begun to examine learner interactions using micro-discourse analytic tools to focus on L2 developmental processes that occur during interactions that may not be visible to researchers (van Comperonolle, 2015). Researchers examining how learners engage in meditation sequences through interaction in this way have tended to use two different micro-discourse analytic approaches to highlight the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use, and demonstrate that language learning is a situated, social practice (Pekarek Doehler, 2013). The first approach researchers have used to document various and dynamic ways in which participants position themselves and shift between participant roles is through examining learners' interactive footing (Goodwin, 2007; van Compernolle, 2014, 2015). Interactive footing involves the speaker/recipient participant roles that learners adopt and manage during conversation. Van Compernolle (2014), for example, found that participants were able to shift from a role of communicative partners to roles of teacher/student as language-related issues arose while completing a concept-based pragmatics lesson in French. He also found that recipients were not passive listeners, but instead were doing listening by attending to their interlocuters talk, gaze, and gestures.

The second micro-discouse analytic approach used by researchers to examine learner interactions borrows from conversation analysis (CA), which is concerned with the interactional configuration of behavioral and linguistic patterns of learning (Pekarek Doehler, 2013). This approach is particularly relevant for collaborative writing research because it examines "how patterns of language use are jointly elaborated and restructured within courses of practical activities" (Pekarek Doehler, 2013, p. 4). Through an analysis of the moment-by-moment unfolding of the talk participants produce while doing collaborative activities, CA allows researchers to explore how and what learners do when they take turns at talking (Markee, 2000), in order observe their competence-in-action (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, 2013). Such an approach can be used to characterize: (1) how students orient to what they accomplish together (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005), (2) how their actions are formed and delivered (Pomerantz & Fehr, 2011); and (3) how they enact the collaborative accomplishment of pedagogic interaction (Markee, 2000). More specifically, research done within this framework has documented how learners do collaborative attention related to planning and task performance (Markee & Kunitz, 2013), how learners construct test-taker identities in paired oral assessments (Lazaraton & Davis, 2008), and how learners orient to lexical learning opportunities (Mori, 2004) and grammatical learning opportunities (Markee & Kunitz, 2013).

Kunitz (2018) is one of the few studies to date to use CA methods to examine the discourse produced by students during a collaborative writing activity. In this study, the researcher uncovers how L2 Italian students identify and solve issues related to grammatical accuracy through observable actions as they work to collaboratively compose a presentation script. Specifically, Kunitz (2018) documents the sequential

trajectory of participants' gender-focusing sequences (i.e., the instances where students work to identify and solve language issues related to grammatical gender). Kunitz (2018) argues that these episodes represent learning-in-action, because "in such sequences the participants' attention to and awareness of linguistic forms are done as publicly displayed behaviors and socially distributed cognition becomes observable as participants do learning" (p. 77). The researcher also hypothesizes that the students' engagement with the collaborative writing activity itself, combined with the students' desire to write accurately, triggered students' focus on grammatical form in the first place. In other words, Kunitz (2018) suggests that the reason the gender-focusing sequences took the form they did, was because students were focused not only on writing, but writing accurately—with their grade in mind.

The Current Study

In this article, I provide a micro-discourse analysis of the collaborative composition process by using learners' own discourse to demonstrate the means they deploy to position themselves as partners during their interaction together. In addition to the transcripts of learners' collaborative dialogues, I use their individual reflection essays to analyze and interpret how they attend to language while writing and what the learners do through their talk during the interaction.

In order to analyze the collaborative composition process from such a perspective, I focus on participants' interactive footing (Goodwin, 2007; van Compernolle, 2014, 2015), which are "the methods by which interactants organize themselves to jointly accomplish various production and recipient roles through language…[and] is the basic interactional mechanism through which mediation is collaboratively achieved in situ and internalization processes are set in motion (van Compernolle, 2015, p. 119). More specifically, I focus on two components of the interaction: (1) learners' topic management and (2) learners' participant frameworks. Topic management involves what content students orient to during the interaction and how they do so through their discourse (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Rine, 2009; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018). For example, previous studies in this area have examined how learners do collaborative attention work related to grammatical gender in L2 Italian (Kunitz, 2018) or how learners do task management and orient to lexical learning opportunities in L2 Japanese (Mori, 2004). Participant frameworks, on the other hand, are the social roles participants adopt—and manage—throughout the interaction (Rine, 2009; Rine & Hall, 2011; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018). Jacoby and Gonzales (1991), for example, studied how the roles of expert and novice were manifested and ratified on a moment-by-moment basis in the interactions between university physics researchers.

I use these components to highlight the dynamicity of the collaborative writing process by documenting the set of interactional practices and competencies through which students focus on language features of the collaborative task (e.g., how they do being language learners and language users) and construct their individual identities (e.g., how they do being collaborative). I demonstrate how these competencies are constructed, mediated, and displayed in the talk; and I show how these features can be fluid and change on a turn-by-turn basis through a manifestation of "epistemic stances that reveal different levels of (un)certainty" (Kunitz, 2018, p. 65).

Using data from these two sources—collaborative dialogue and individual reflections—I present a case study of one pair of learners to answer the following research question:

What are the means by which members of a collaborative pair position themselves as partners in a collaborative writing activity and how does this change based on whether they orient to content-related or language-related issues?

Methods

The Context of the Study

The case study is drawn from a larger study (Olovson, 2018) that examined the processes (i.e., interactions) and products (i.e., written documents) of a collaborative writing module that focused on the creation of narratives in a fifth-semester Spanish Writing course at a large public university in the Midwest (Midwest University for the purposes of this study). In the larger study, the analysis of learners' collaborative dialogue produced during the planning and writing phases of the interaction focuses on: (1) at a macro level, how learners apportion their time while collaboratively planning and producing a written narrative; and (2) at a micro level, the types, frequency, of their language-related episodes (i.e., the instances where they talk about the language they are producing and question their language use). Learners' jointly produced texts were also examined analytically in terms of complexity, fluency, and accuracy measures, as well as holistically using a rubric. Additionally, a micro-discourse analytic approach was used to examine the means by which members of a collaborative pair position themselves as partners in a collaborative writing activity. In this case study I discuss only the portion of the larger study that pertains directly to the microanalysis.

The Course

The course serves as a bridge between the fourth-semester Spanish course, which is the last course in the university's general education language requirement sequence, and the more advanced courses in Spanish offered by the department in literature, linguistics, culture, and creative writing that are designed for undergraduate majors and minors.

The course has three main goals: (1) to develop L2 writing skills; (2) to provide contexts for oral communication practice using pair/small group work and situational activities; and (3) to develop the ability to think and read critically in Spanish. To meet the course goals, the instructors use a variety of activities done individually, in pairs, in small groups, and as a whole class. Course grades are based on writing and revising several genre-specific compositions, other shorter writing assignments, and class participation

Participants

In the spring of 2017, 16 university Spanish students enrolled in the course were invited to participate in a study. Although 15 students signed consent forms, this research report focuses on the interactions of two participants: Maddy and Nick (pseudonyms). This pair was selected based on several dynamic features of their process data (e.g., how they used their interactional resources to correctly solve

LREs and to mediate their identities throughout their interaction). Additionally, differences in their perceptions of their roles during their interaction and their overall experiences also made them interesting.

Maddy was a 20-year-old sophomore majoring in Global Health and minoring in Spanish. At the time of data collection, she had studied Spanish for four years in high school and had taken three previous Spanish courses (Intermediate Spanish I and II; Spanish Skills: Speaking) at Midwest University. She indicated that she was not a heritage speaker, had no prior experience living/traveling abroad, and that she spoke no other languages besides English and Spanish. She also had no experience with collaborative writing prior to this study.

Nick was an 18-year-old freshman majoring in Spanish. He had studied Spanish for four years in high school and had taken one university-level Spanish course (Spanish Skills: Speaking) prior to enrolling in the course. Additionally, he noted that he had studied Portuguese and Arabic, each for two months. He had not traveled or lived abroad, and to the question of whether or not he was a heritage speaker, he responded, "No, but I am fluent." Like Maddy, he also had no previous experience with collaborative writing. Both students indicated that they knew each other from prior classes and that they had a friendly relationship.

Instruments

Various instruments were used to collect data for this study, including a demographic questionnaire, a collaborative writing task, and reflection assignment. The demographic questionnaire, several versions of the writing tasks, and different versions of the reflection essays had been subjected to pilot testing in a previous semester.

Demographic Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to collect information about the participants. The questionnaire elicited general background information about the students, as well as their previous experiences learning Spanish, including courses in high school and at Midwest University, whether they were heritage speakers of Spanish or another language, and if they had any study-abroad experience. Participants also had to list whether they spoke or had studied other languages besides English and Spanish and, if so, for how long. Finally, they listed their reasons for enrolling in this course in particular and if they had any prior experience with collaborative writing activities.

Collaborative Writing Task. In the collaborative writing task used in this study, the participants recounted a popular children's fairy tale: La Cenicienta (Cinderella). The participants wrote their stories in Spanish based on a series of images. However, the end of the story was open ended, and the participants were encouraged to be creative in inventing their own ending. The directions indicated that students should begin with the setting, describing the background and introducing the main character of the story. Then they needed to describe the supporting characters as they appeared in the story and tell in detail what happened, step by step, being sure to include the characters' feelings and reactions, in addition to the events depicted in the images.

Reflection Essay. Upon completing the collaborative narrative, learners individually composed a reflection to enable the analysis their attitudes toward

collaborative writing and their thoughts about the process (Appendix B). Students were required to write short essay-style answers to questions related to: (1) the experience they had with their partner; (2) their perceptions of the benefits and disadvantages of collaborative composition; (3) whether (or not) they thought any aspects of their language improved as a result of working with a partner; and (4) whether or not they would recommend that other instructors use collaborative writing assignments in their courses. This is similar to reflection tasks used be previous researchers (e.g., Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005).

Data Collection

During Week 3 of the semester the instructor introduced the researcher to the class and explained that participation in this study was optional, would have no bearing on course grades, and that the instructor would not know who had opted or declined to participate. Then the instructor left the room and the researcher presented the study, along with the English version of the fairy tale that served as the base of the writing activity (to assure that they would be familiar with the content) and, finally, a short IRB-approved overview of the study. The researcher distributed the informed consent document and the demographic information questionnaire. Students who did not wish to participate in the study had the option of either indicating so on the informed consent document or simply not returning the questionnaire or the informed consent document. However, all of the students chose to participate.

Students carried out a practice collaborative writing activity one week prior to completing the collaborative writing activity that is the subject of the present study, so that they could get experience with the collaborative writing process before the operational data collection began. Like the task used in the present study, the practice task involved students writing a narration based on a series of pictures, which were taken from a popular Spanish comic. Additionally, the ending of the story was missing, so the students needed to work together to produce a creative ending of their own. The practice activity took place in their regular classroom and students were partnered with the same person/people they worked with for the collaborative narrative used for data collection.

Students completed the writing assignment of the present study during Week 6 of the semester. At this point in the course students had focused on how to analyze and compose narratives, and as part of the unit, the collaborative task involved students composing a fairy tale in Spanish. Data collection took place over a 50-minute class period during Week 6. The majority of collaborative writing studies have limited the task time to 30 minutes or less (Storch, 2013), so the present study extended knowledge in the area by allowing for a longer period to plan, collaborate, and produce the jointly written text.

Data Analysis

After all of the data were collected, the collaborative dialogue that the pair produced during their interaction was transcribed. First, the researcher coded the LREs by type: lexical, grammatical, or mechanical. Lexical LREs were defined as any episode where learners engaged in a discussion of word/phrase meaning or word choice. Mechanical LREs were those in which learners discussed punctuation, spelling, or diacritics. Grammatical LREs were defined as the episodes in which

learners discussed grammatical form. Next, LREs were further coded in terms of whether the participants solved them correctly, incorrectly, or left them unresolved completely.

Next, following van Compernolle (2018), the participants' LRE sequences were transcribed using micro-discourse analytic conventions in order to focus on the pair's interactive footing (see Appendix C). As discussed previously, two components of the pair's interaction were identified and coded: (1) learners' topic management; and (2) learners' participant frameworks. Two themes were identified related to how the participants enacted the role of expert and how the participants embodied doing being good language students.

Findings

For Maddy and Nick, their discursive practices suggest that they viewed collaboration as a way for them to trade off the role of being expert (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991; Rine, 2009; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018). Their interactional patterns imply that they enacted the role of expert based on whether their attention was oriented to content or language (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Rine, 2009; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018). When the pair discussed content, Maddy took on the role of expert and facilitated Nick's understanding of the original story. Meanwhile, Nick embodied the role of story disruptor by questioning the conventions of the fairy tale genre. When the pair focused on lexical issues, Nick took on the role of expert by suggesting a resolution to their lexical LREs right away; however, when they focused on grammar, Nick positioned himself as the teacher, scaffolding Maddy's performance as they worked to collaboratively solve their grammatical LREs. In this way, Nick and did not immediately offer Maddy a solution like he did when the pair focused on lexical issues. In both types of language issues, Maddy's discursive patterns reveal that she acts as a student by orienting to Nick as the language expert.

Doing Being a Language Student

In her reflection essay, Maddy expressed the value of working together in terms of being able to rely on her partner's language knowledge:

> I think my partner helped in choosing the correct verb tense. I get confused often with preterit and imperfect, so that is always tricky for me. I also think he helped with vocab, obviously, there are still many words I don't know in Spanish. [Working with a partner] makes writing a little easier because you don't have to spend time trying to think of a different way to phrase something in a way you can say in another language.

Maddy's belief manifested through the specific interactional pattern of the pair's LRE sequences as Maddy—for better or for worse—defers to Nick as the language expert and accepts without question or further debate his solutions to the LREs she triggers. In this way, she is 'doing being a language student,' because she accepts Nick's authority as if he were the language teacher.

Most of the LREs the students produce together follow a particular sequential trajectory: (1) Maddy mobilizes attention to a problematic word or language form; (2) Nick provides a candidate form; (3) Maddy accepts the candidate form without

further deliberation; (4) Nick writes the accepted form in their essay. In Excerpt 1, this interactional pattern plays out for the better, as the pair correctly resolve an LRE.

Excerpt 1. *Maddy relying on Nick's language expertise - correct LRE resolution*

245	M	*Todo el mundo estaba invitado a una gran fiesta por el ++ por el +++*	[1]
		(Everyone was invited to a grand party by the) (by the)	
246	M	I don't know what <u>prince</u> is.	[1]
247	N	Oh, <u>prince</u>? *Príncipe.*	[2]
		(Prince.)	
248	M	*Príncipe.* Okay.	[3]
		(Prince)	

However, Maddy's strategy of treating Nick as the language expert holds even when Nick offers an incorrect form. Excerpt 2 below is an example of the same sequential trajectory as in Excerpt 1, but this time for the worse, as Nick produced an incorrect form, and Maddy's strategy of relying on Nick thus fails her. In Excerpt 2, Maddy accepts Nick's authority as if he were the teacher, continuing to position herself as a language student in the interaction. In this excerpt the two students are discussing how to correctly say "fairy godmother" in Spanish (i.e., *hada madrina*).

Excerpt 2. *Maddy doing being language student - incorrect LRE resolution*

299	M	*Y cuando ella lloraba, una fairy godmother* +++ <u>No idea</u> how to say that.	[1]
		(And when she was crying, a fairy godmother)	
300	N	I would say, [like +	
301	M	Fairy.	
302	N	*La comadre mágica.*]	[2]
		(magic *godmother)	
303	M	Sí.	[3]
		(Yes)	
304	N	Okay, so she got real sad and then +	
305	M	*La +* <u>fairy g-?</u>	
		(The)	
306	N	*La comadre mágica.* So, <u>I am going to say</u> + *de repente.*	
		(The fairy godmother) (suddenly)	

In this excerpt Maddy triggers the LRE in line 299 by indicating that she does not know how to say fairy godmother in Spanish. Nick offers an incorrect response: *la comadre mágica*, and Maddy accepts his answer by responding *sí* (line 303) without indicating any doubt or uncertainty. Nick then writes his solution in their composition. In the next turn, line 304, Nick begins generating content and ideas for the next part of their story. When Maddy questions whether he is referring to the fairy godmother as the one being sad in line 305, she begins to say *la fairy godmother,* but Nick interrupts her, reinforcing his certainty that *comadre mágica* is the correct term. He then moves on to the next part of the story.

There is evidence to suggest in Nick's reflection essay that, in line with Maddy's perception of him, he also views himself as the language expert:

She and I are at different levels. The truth is that I speak and write with enough fluency that it doesn't matter if I am with a partner or if I am alone. I prefer to write alone more than write with another. Every time in my Spanish classes when I am paired up, the other person always says to me I'm lucky I'm with you, you're the smart one. [Spanish] isn't my native language, but it isn't very hard for me at all. If there were a person like me in every class, it would function optimally.

This belief is evident in Nick's positioning as language expert at several moments while working with Maddy. In Excerpt 3 he asserts himself as more proficient in Spanish than Maddy by teasing her and explicitly talking about his fluency.

Excerpt 3. *Nick positioning himself as language expert*

428	M	*Perdió el zapato. El + high heel.*
		(She lost her shoe. The high heel)
429	N	*El* <u>high heel</u>? ((Nick laughs.))
430	M	Yeah.
431	N	*En voz <u>gringa</u>*? ((Nick laughs.))
		(In a *gringo* voice)
432	N	*El* high heel. That was ME! Oh my God, <u>that was ME</u>. I had no clue how to say that word, and I used to have a <u>*gringo* pronunciation</u> like you until last year.
433	M	<u>THEY never taught me that word</u>. ((In a defensive tone.))
434	N	I know. It's such a + like ++ little disparity. <u>Isn't it sad</u>?
435	N	*Entonces, salió corriendo rápido para el castillo pero*…I'm going to keep it in the same sentence
		(Then, she left running for the castle but)
436	M	*Sí.*
		(Yes)
437	N	*Mientras corriendo* +++ Well, *mientras <u>corría</u>, perdió un tacón.*
		(While running) (while she ran, she lost a heel)
438	M	Oh, it's *tacón?*
		(heel)
439	N	*Sí.*
		(Yes)

While attempting to say that Cinderella lost her high heel, Maddy struggles to find the correct word for high heel in Spanish (i.e., *zapato de tacón alto*), first producing the word for shoe (*zapato*) and then deciding to say it in English, preceded by a Spanish article (line 428). In lines 429–431, Nick teases Maddy with words and through laughter about her gringa pronunciation and about not knowing the word in Spanish. Then, in line 432 he explicitly positions himself as being more advanced than Maddy by overtly expressing that he no longer has a *gringo* pronunciation, and he knows that specific word (unlike Maddy). Essentially, Nick is raising himself up through criticizing Maddy. However, through attempts to build rapport with Maddy in lines 432–434, Nick performs various solidarity moves. We know that they are solidarity moves because Nick implies that he used to speak like Maddy does (i.e., in a *gringo* way) last year, and that someday her Spanish can be as good as his.

Interestingly, Maddy's response to Nick's turn in lines 433–439 suggests that she does not interpret Nick's turn in line 431 as an insult. Instead, her responses

in her subsequent turns are consistent with her *doing* being a student: Maddy has one self-defense move in line 433 and then three turns in which she orients to Nick as the language expert, thereby repeating the sequential trajectory pattern that the two exhibit for solving LREs already discussed. Moreover, Maddy's use of "they" in 433 sets up an opposition between her (as a student) and teachers (as source of new words). This use of "they" could be interpreted as a statement about how Maddy thinks learning happens; her "they teach me" comment is both (1) further evidence that she enacts the role of being a student; and (2) different from how Nick talks about learning (i.e., "I used to do/be X, and now I do/am Y"), with no mention—at least not here—of the mechanisms of that learning.

However, unlike with most of the LREs the pair generates, with this LRE, Nick never explicitly offers Maddy the correct word for high heel in Spanish. It is not until she notices it in Nick's discourse in line 437 that she mobilizes attention to it by explicitly asking Nick if the word for high heel is *tacón*, thereby repeating the sequential trajectory pattern that the two exhibit for solving LREs.

Doing Being a Language Teacher

Although most of the pair's LREs followed the sequential trajectory previously discussed, there was some variation worthy of further exploration. For example, for a few of the pair's LREs, Nick positions himself as not just a language expert, but as a language teacher, offering Maddy scaffolding and direct instruction. He also directly acknowledges his role as a language teacher when he says that "*ella era el cerebro y yo era la pluma* (she was the brain, and I was the pen)" meaning that he made her do the work while he wrote. However, he implies in his reflection essay that he made her do the work not because he did not want to or was not interested, but because he thought it would be of value to her learning—much like a teacher would do with his or her students.

In the instances in which Nick enacts the role of being teacher, the pattern of how the two students engage in LREs is slightly different from Excerpts 1 and 2 as well. The data suggest that the pattern is related to the target of the LRE and the way in which Maddy mobilizes the pair's attention to the form. In other words, when the target of the LRE is grammar, or when Maddy indirectly asks for help using rising intonation or by offering choices, Nick does being teacher through offering metalinguistic hints, rather than supply the candidate form outright, as he did in the lexical LRE sequences in Excerpts 1 and 2.

The sequential trajectory for these grammatical types of LREs is as follows: (1) Maddy mobilizes attention to a problematic word or language form by offering options and/or using rising intonation; (2) Nick offers direct instruction, explicit grammar rules, or some other type of scaffolding; (3) Maddy uses the scaffolding from Nick to reduce her uncertainty and arrive at an answer; (4) Nick either confirms her contribution or offers more scaffolding; (5) Nick writes the accepted form in their essay. By offering scaffolding and repeating steps 2 and 3 until Maddy comes up with the form he believes is correct, Nick acts much as a teacher would with students in the classroom, even celebrating Maddy's success. Excerpt 4 provides an example of Nick positioning himself as Maddy's teacher.

Excerpt 4. *Nick doing being teacher*

177	M	*Un día cuando Cenicienta* +++ Uhh ++ *estaba* + *limpiando?* +++	[1]
		(One day when Cinderella) (was cleaning [imperfect.; *estar*])	
178	M	*Era lipiando?* ++	[1]
		(was cleaning [imperfect; *ser*])	
179	M	*Fuera limpiando?* +	[1]
		(was cleaning [past subjunctive.; *ser*])	
180	N	Hmm. Well, it's not *fuera* +	[2]
		(was [past subjunctive])	
	N	Is it *ser* or *estar*?	[2]
		(to be) (to be)	
181	M	Umm ++	
182	N	Which is the only one that can go with the *-ando* verbs?	[2]
		(-ing)	
183	M	*Estar*. DUH. So, *estaba limpiando*.	[3]
		(to be) (was cleaning)	
184	N	BOOM. *Estaba limpiando*. You GOT IT.	
		(was cleaning)	

In the excerpt above, Maddy signals that she is unsure of how to say, "she was cleaning" by offering three candidate forms in lines 177–179. Rather than provide the correct form in line 180 as he did the sequences discussed previously, Nick begins to do being teacher by offering scaffolding, first eliminating one of Maddy's options and then and giving her a hint about a relevant rule. Her "umm" response in line 181 could be interpreted as either uncertainty or as a placeholder as she thinks about the correct form. It appears that Nick interprets this response as an indication that she needs more help, so he offers her further scaffolding by asking Maddy to use her metalinguistic knowledge to determine which auxiliary verb matches the *-ando* morpheme. She immediately responds with the auxiliary verb in line 183 and then correctly conjugates it to match the subject and tense required. The audio recordings suggest that Maddy's "duh" response was made in a tone of self-deprecation, very much in line with the student role she is enacting; by answering his question, she remembers the metalinguistic information she knows but could not access (as shown in line 177–179). Nick's response of "boom!" and "you got it!" in line 184 is the type of encouragement that a teacher would offer his or her students.

Doing Being Content Expert

Although Nick is largely responsible for doing being a language expert and teacher, there is evidence that Maddy also assumes an expert role during the interaction. Nick admits to not having read the English version of Cinderella before class, and he reveals that he had not read the story or seen a film version of Cinderella during childhood. Therefore, he relies on Maddy to explain the story and facilitate his understanding of the plot.

There are three sources of evidence to suggest that Maddy assumes the role of content expert. First, in their reflection essays Nick explicitly acknowledges that Maddy helped him with the content of the story, and that she helped him better formulate his ideas. Maddy also revealed in her reflection essay that she saw her contribution to the interaction as helping with the plot, for example when she writes:

"I think we contributed equally but in different ways, my partner knows more Spanish, so I think he helped out more with writing in Spanish and phrasing. I contributed more with how the story should be told." Second, the pair spent most of their time together generating content and ideas. While doing this work, Maddy talked more than Nick. Maddy controlled the interaction by positioning herself as the content expert. Third, the interactional patterns in the pair's collaborative dialogue exemplify how Maddy manifested her role as *doing* being content expert.

The sequential trajectory for the episodes in the pair's discourse where they discussed content was as follows: (1) Maddy generates ideas or content by explaining the original story; (2) Nick either (2a) acknowledges with a one-word turn that he follows her explanation of the plot (e.g., okay), or he (2b) follows up with a question; (3) Maddy then either (3a) continues the explanation, or she (3b) answers Nick's question; (4) finally, either (4a) steps 1–3 are repeated, or (4b) the pair stops to discuss how to express in Spanish what Maddy has just said, triggering an LRE sequence, which ultimately leads to Maddy's ideas being reflected in their collaborative essay. Excerpt 5 exemplifies this interactional pattern when Maddy positions herself as the content expert.

Excerpt 5. *Maddy doing being content expert*

28	M	She loses a shoe and then the prince is like, <u>nooo</u>! And then he searches.	[1]
29	N	Oh <u>my gosh</u>.	[2a]
30	M	And then her sisters try to fit in the shoe.	[1]
31	N	[Not to be vulgar, but	[2b]
32	M	And in one.	[1]
33	N	Why can't you just ask, like, is this <u>your shoe</u>? Why do you have to put it on <u>every freaking woman</u>?]	[2b]
34	M	Because everybody wants to marry him, because he's the prince.	[3]
35	N	Ohh.	[2a]
36	M	So, they're going to be like, yes, that's my shoe.	[3]
37	N	Okay, that makes sense now + Okay.	[1]
38	M	But, like, <u>multiple females</u> have the same size of shoes. That's not really realistic.	[3]
39	N	Exactly.	[1]
40	M	But, anyway, apparently this one only fit Cinderella.	[3]
41	N	Okay.	[1]

In Excerpt 5, Maddy is explaining the plot to Nick (lines 28–30). Nick then enacts the role of story disruptor, refusing to stay within the conventions of the fairy tale genre by questioning the reasoning behind the plot in lines 31 and 33. Maddy justifies the storyline (lines 34–36) by offering a list of reasons. However, she then offers her own objection to the logic of the fairy tale (line 38). By doing so, she orients to Nick's interpretative frame, even though she has previously positioned herself as the content expert. Nick ratifies her agreement with what he has been saying (i.e., that the premise of the story is not logical) in line 39. Maddy finds a middle ground in line 40 with the resolution token "but, anyway," which has the effect of bridging between the fairy tale world and the modern, rationalistic world of foot sizes, hygiene, and direct communication. Besides acting as a story disruptor, Nick's contribution to this part of the interaction is limited to short turns.

In some cases, the instances in which Maddy is acting as content expert also trigger an LRE that require the role of expert to shift to Nick (as discussed earlier). Excerpt 6 shows how the position of expert can shift between Maddy and Nick on a turn-by-turn basis.

Excerpt 6. *Shifting expertise from Maddy to Nick*

117	M	And then her *padre* ++ Ummm +++ *casó?*
		(father) (got married [missing reflexive pronoun])
118	N	*Sé casó.* Who'd he get married to?
		(Got married [with the correct reflexive pronoun])
119	M	*Sí.*
		(Yes)
120	N	Okay.
121	M	*A ++una mujer* <u>evil</u>. I don't know what evil is.
		(to) (a woman)
122	N	*Mal.* Or in this case, *mala.*
		(bad) (bad [feminine form])
123	M	There's not a better word?
124	N	Umm +That's + I think that's the only word for evil, like cruel.
125	N	*Entonces su padre se casó con una mujer <u>cruel</u>.*
		(So her father got married to a cruel woman)
126	M	Oh, okay. *Con dos hijas terribles.*
		(with two terrible daughters)

In Excerpt 6, while Maddy is explaining to Nick that Cinderella's father got married, she expresses doubt about the correct form of "got married" in line 117. Nick recasts with the correct form in line 118, and wonders who the father married. Maddy then answers Nick's question about the plot in line 121, but she also signals midturn that that she does not know the word for "evil." Nick proposes *mal/mala* in line 122; Maddy then asks (line 123) for a better word to express "evil." Nick offers an explanation in line 124, Maddy accepts it in line 125, and the interaction continues with her offering more details about the plot.

Excerpt 6 exemplifies the dynamic nature of expertise embodied in the pair's collaborative dialogue. The pair seamlessly switches from Maddy being the content expert to Nick being language expert, and then back again to Maddy being the content expert, all within a matter of a few turns. For this pair, collaboration involved both members enacting expertise throughout the interaction, which ultimately benefits both understanding of the story and the language used to develop it.

Discussion

This study sought to answer the research question: What are the means by which members of a collaborative pair position themselves as partners in a collaborative writing activity and how does this change based on whether they orient to content-related or language-related issues?

To examine participants' perspectives from an emic perspective, I utilized a micro-discourse analytic approach to highlight the situated nature of collaboration and the dynamicity of the collaborative writing process as it became observable, turn-by-turn as the interaction unfolded (Kunitz, 2018; Lazaraton & Davis, 2008;

van Compernolle, 2015). This close analysis of the moment-by-moment unfolding of an interaction permits researchers to explore how learners orient to themselves and to the language they are producing, and what learners *do* with their talk (Markee, 2000), so that we can observe their competence-in-action (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, 2013).

I primarily focused on learners' interactive footing (Goodwin, 2007), specifically on the learners' topic management and their participant frameworks (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Rine, 2009; Rine & Hall, 2011; van Compernolle, 2015, 2018). I used these components to highlight the dynamicity of the collaborative writing process by documenting the set of interactional practices and competencies through which students focus on language features of the collaborative task (e.g., how they *do* being good language students) and construct their individual identities (e.g., how they *do* being expert/teacher/collaborative). The analysis revealed both how these competencies are constructed, mediated, and displayed in the talk, how these features can be fluid, changing on a turn-by-turn basis. The pair's discursive practices suggested that collaboration provided a platform for them to trade the role of expert.

Overall, the pair exhibited a high degree of mutuality and equality, and consequently could be classified as "collaborative" using Storch's (2002) patterns of dyadic interaction. This model assumes that patterns of interaction "are fairly stable…regardless of the task or passage of time" (Storch, 2009, p. 157). However, the results of the micro-discourse data analysis presented in this case study indicate that the collaborative writing process is far more dynamic than Storch's approach would suggest.

To summarize, the prevailing theme present in Maddy and Nick's collaborative dialogue and reflection essays highlights the ways in which they position themselves within and through the discourse as either experts, teachers, or students. Their interactional patterns imply that they enacted the role of expert based on whether their attention was focused on content or language. When the pair discussed content, Maddy adopted the role of expert and facilitated Nick's understanding of the original story. Meanwhile, Nick embodied the role of story disruptor by questioning the conventions of the fairy tale genre. When the pair focused on lexical issues, Nick enacted the role of expert by providing the answer right away; however, when they focused on grammar, he positioned himself as the teacher, scaffolding Maddy's performance. In both cases, Maddy's discursive patterns reveal that she acts as a student by orienting to Nick as the language expert.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study confirm that collaborative writing activities can be a powerful tool in in an instructor's pedagogical repertoire, as viewed from two perspectives: (1) a fully collaborative writing event is a productive site for co-constructed learning as students pool their knowledge to solve language-use problems and generate content; and (2) the collaborative behaviors students develop and use in their language courses are not limited to that context alone; rather, these skills will serve them later in the workplace. These findings can be directly translated into pedagogical implications at the course level and program level and when making

curricular decisions.

Course Level

At the course level, collaborative writing activities can be used to elicit a particular language form or function. Storch (2013) recommends the backward design approach, in which the teacher starts with a pedagogical goal in mind and then designs a task that will help learners meet it. She argues that there is enough empirical evidence to suggest that if the teacher's primary goal is to draw learners' attention to form–meaning connections and to generate a greater depth of engagement with language choices, then the teacher should use a meaning-focused task (e.g., jigsaw, data commentary). Conversely, if a teacher wants to draw students' attention to form, then the tasks of choice should be ones that focus on language (e.g., dictogloss) or grammar (e.g., cloze). The findings from the present study seem to suggest that narrative tasks offer a way to focus on both form (e.g., preterite and imperfect) and meaning, because the students focus on lexis and grammatical accuracy in their discussions.

Another important finding of the present study is that the language produced between Maddy and Nick throughout the interaction takes place largely in English. In the study students were told that they could use whatever language they desired with each other during the composition process. Therefore, in language courses, an instructor may consider allowing students to use their first language (L1) during collaborative interactions. This pedagogical decision is supported by research on L1 use in metalinguistic discussion. Within the sociocultural approach to interaction research, for example, the L1 is seen as a mediating tool that learners use to establish understanding, manage the task, and support each other as they produce collaborative dialogue (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Philp et al., 2014. Swain and Lapkin (1998) demonstrated that learners use their L1 to reflect on their language production, which facilitates cognitive processing. Swain and Lapkin also found that learners used the L1 to discuss issues that arose during the collaborative composition process, which allowed them to work better together to resolve them. Philp et al. (2014) argue that "L1 use in peer interactions may support learner cognition, allowing for more in-depth discussion of task content and, therefore, a higher level of task completion" (p. 84). The use of the L1 can also affect the relationships formed during the collaborative session. Similar to the case of Maddy and Nick, Kibler (2010) found that the use of the L1 allowed learners to switch between expert and novice roles as they demonstrated knowledge related to language and content.

Program Level

Collaboration is a skill that is used in other courses within and beyond Spanish and also post-graduation. Collaborative writing is a common practice in L1 settings, and it is also found outside of academia in general (Storch, 2013). Therefore, by engaging in collaborative writing in language classrooms, teachers are both extending the practice from other disciplines and preparing students for future careers. Collaborative writing activities provide a platform for teachers to model collaborative behavior and teach students what effective collaboration looks

like, with the goal that students use these skills in other classes and, later on, in the workplace (Kim & McDonough, 2011).

The findings of the present study align with previous micro-discourse analytic research in that collaborative identities shift on a moment-by-moment basis during peer interaction. This implies that there is no one correct way to collaborate productively. With this in mind, teacher may consider designing a module for learners on general strategies for successful collaboration. Previous research has demonstrated that in practice, teachers can do this in a number of ways: (1) by providing explicit training in how to be good collaborators in terms of solving communication difficulties and giving each other feedback (Fujii et al., 2016); (2) by emphasizing collaborative over individual achievement (Dawes, 2004; Philp, 2016); (3) by explaining the rationale for collaborative writing (Storch, 2013); and (4) by teaching general teamwork and task management skills (Arnold et al., 2009; Dovey 2006).

Curricular Decisions

Collaborative writing can contribute to curricular decisions, because collaborative writing activities are part of the repertoire of strategies that teachers use to create a positive classroom environment that promotes teamwork, like that which was exhibited by Maddy and Nick. In classrooms that create this type of positive climate, students are more likely to adopt a collaborative mindset (Ballinger, 2013; O'Donnell, 2006), discuss and solve language issues together, (Wang & Vásquez, 2012), and engage in the overall types of peer interaction that are most helpful for language learning (Philp et al., 2014; Sato & Ballinger, 2016). In their reflection narratives, the students in the present study noted that they enjoyed the collaborative activities, because they felt comfortable experimenting with language in a low-stakes environment where only their peer heard their errors.

Collaborative writing activities also encourage teachers to be cognizant of peer dynamics and how they may influence the outcomes of the interaction. In choosing how to design student pairs or groups there are several factors that need to be taken into consideration. In terms of size, there are generally two schools of thought. Some researchers argue that grouping students in pairs is better, because learners are more likely to feel a stronger sense of text ownership and consequently their individual contributions will be greater (Storch, 2013); and pair work is more conducive to the types of interactions that facilitate language learning (Oskoz & Elola, 2011 Kuteeva, 2011; Storch, 2013). However, those in favor of larger groups argue that more students means more sources of knowledge to collectively pool during the interaction (Ewald, 2005; Fernández Dobao, 2014) and larger groups are more likely to resemble what learners will encounter during their careers after graduating (Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003).

In terms of pair selection, there also seems to be some disagreement within the field. Some researchers argue (e.g., Storch 2005, 2007, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007) that students should be able to self-select their partners, because the freedom to choose is more likely to result in collaborative relationships. Other researchers (e.g., Shehadeh, 2011) suggest that students should be able to self-select, but that they should change partners often—especially when the collaborative writing activity

occurs over an extended period of time. Finally, others argue that teachers should be the ones who assign the groups because they are more likely to be familiar with students' personalities (and can thus avoid potential personality clashes) and they can assign pairs based on learner proficiency level (Choi & Iwashita, 2016; Leeser, 2004; Philp et al., 2014).

Limitations

This study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. First, the qualitative nature of studies of discourse like this one means that the findings are limited to the particular classroom context in which the data were collected. Had data been collected in a classroom at a lower level, for example, the results might have been different, given factors such as students' proficiency level and ability to engage in metalinguistic talk. Additionally, the narrative task may have affected the process outcomes in ways that would not remain constant with the selection of a different writing genre. For example, a data commentary task would certainly elicit many fewer past-tense LREs than the narrative task used in this study.

Another limitation is that data collection was limited to one instance of collaborative writing. Had this study been longitudinal in nature, differences in the processes, discourse patterns, and student perceptions among the pair could have been documented over a period of time. Additionally, had the research design permitted analysis of students in different partner configurations, I would have been able be see how much of what I observed is sustained across pairs, and how much their discourse patterns change in concert with different pair dynamics.

Conclusion

The inductive methodology used to characterize collaborative relationships presented in this article provides a more nuanced way of characterizing collaborative relationships. Instead of trying to make the learners' process fit within the parameters of Storch's (2002, 2009) model of patterns of dyadic interaction like many collaborative writing studies conducted to date (Storch, 2013), a microanalytic discourse analysis of their collaboration highlighted the dynamic nature of collaboration. This approach not only helps to illuminate the situated nature of collaboration, but it allows researchers to observe learners' competence-in-action through the language they produce during the interaction (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, 2013; van Compernolle, 2018). Finally, this study contributes to the limited body of research examining collaborative writing processes through the lens of micro-discourse analysis.

References

Antón M., & DiCamilla, F. (1998) Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *54*(3), 314–342. http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.54.3.314

Arnold, N., Ducate, L., Lomicka, L., & Lord, G. (2009). Assessing online collaboration among language teachers: A cross-institutional case study. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, *8*(2), 121–139.

Ballinger, S. G. (2013). Towards a cross-linguistic pedagogy: Biliteracy and reciprocal learning strategies in French immersion. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, *1*(1), 131–148. http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/jicb.1.1.06bal

Choi, H., & Iwashita, N. (2016). Interactional behaviours of low-proficiency learners in small group work. In M. Sato & S. Ballinger (Eds.) *Peer interaction and second language learning: Pedagogical potential and research agenda* (pp. 113-134). John Benjamins. http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/lllt.45.05cho

Dawes, L. (2004). Talking and learning in classroom science. *International Journal of Science Education*, *26*(6), 677–695. https://doi.org/10.1080/0950069032000097424

Dovey, T. (2006). What purposes, specifically? Re-thinking purposes and specificity in the context of the 'new vocationalism.' *English for Specific Purposes*, *25*(4), 387–402. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2005.10.002

Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. Oxford University Press.

Eskildsen, S. W., & Markee, N. (2018). L2 talk as social accomplishment. In R. Alonso Alonso (Ed.), *Speaking in a second language* (pp. 69–103). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/aals.17.04esk

Ewald, J. (2005). Language-related episodes in an assessment context: a 'small-group quiz'. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *61*(4), 565–586. http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.61.4.565

Fernández Dobao, A. (2012). Collaborative writing tasks in the L2 classroom: Comparing group, pair, and individual work. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *21*(1), 40–58. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2011.12.002

Fernández Dobao, A. (2014). Vocabulary learning in collaborative tasks: A comparison of pair and small group work. *Language Teaching Research*, *18*(4), 497–520.

Fujii, A., Ziegler, N., & Mackey, A. (2016). Peer interaction and metacognitive instruction in the EFL classroom. In M. Sato & S. Ballinger (Eds.), *Peer interaction and second language learning: Pedagogical potential and research agenda* (pp. 63–89). John Benjamins. http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/lllt.45.03fuj

Goodwin, C. (2007). Participation, stance and affect in the organization of activities. *Discourse and Society*, *18*(1), 53–73. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0957926507069457

Jacoby, S., & Gonzales, P. (1991). The constitution of expert–novice in scientific discourse. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, *2*(2), 149–181. https://doi.org/10.5070/L422005141

Kibler, A. (2010). Writing through two languages: First language expertise in a language minority classroom. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *19*(3), 121–142. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2010.04.001

Kim, Y., & McDonough, K. (2011). Using pretask modelling to encourage collaborative learning opportunities. *Language Teaching Research*, *15*(2), 183–199. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1362168810388711

Kuteeva, M. (2011). Teaching and learning in English in parallel-language and EFL settings: Debates, concerns and realities in higher education. *Ibérica*, *22*, 5–12.

Kunitz, S. (2018). Collaborative attention work on gender agreement in Italian as a foreign language. *The Modern Language Journal*, *102*(s1), 64–81. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12458

Lazaraton, A., & Davis, L. (2008). A microanalytic perspective on discourse, proficiency, and identity in paired oral assessment. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, *5*(4), 313–335. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434300802457513

Leeser, M. J. (2004). Learner proficiency and focus on form during collaborative dialogue. *Language Teaching Research*, *8*(1), 55–81. http://dx.doiorg/10.1191/1362168804lr134oa

Li, M., & Zhu, W. (2013). Patterns of computer-mediated interaction in small writing groups using wikis. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *26*(1), 61–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2011.631142

Markee, N. (2000). *Conversation analysis*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410606471

Markee, N., & Kunitz, S. (2013). Doing planning and task performance in second language acquisition: An ethnomethodological respecification. *Language Learning*, *63*(4), 629–664. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12019

Mori, J. (2004). Negotiating sequential boundaries and learning opportunities: A case from a Japanese language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *88*(4), 536–550. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0026-7902.2004.t01-17-.x

O'Donnell, A. M. (2006). The role of peers and group learning. In P. A. Alexander & P. H. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 781–802). Lawrence Erlbaum. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203874790.ch34

Olovson, B.M. (2018). *Are two heads better than one? A process and product analysis of collaborative writing in the Spanish as a foreign language classroom* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa].

Oskoz, A., & Elola, I. (2011). Meeting at the wiki: The new arena for collaborative writing in foreign language courses. In M. J. W. Lee & C. MacLoughlin (Eds.), *Web 2.0-based e-learning: Applying social informatics for tertiary teaching* (pp. 209-227). IGI Global. http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60566-294-7

Pekarek Doehler, S. (2010). Conceptual changes and methodological challenges: On language and learning from a conversation analytic perspective on SLA. In P. Seedhouse, S. Walsh, & C. Jenks (Eds.), *Conceptualising learning in applied linguistics* (pp. 105–127). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230289772_7

Pekarek Doehler, S. (2013). Social-interactional approaches to SLA: A state of the art and some future perspectives. *Language, Interaction and Acquisition*, *4*(2), 134–160. https://doi.org/10.1075/lia.4.2.02pek

Pfaff, E., & Huddleston, P. (2003). Does it matter if I hate teamwork? What impacts student attitudes toward teamwork. *Journal of Marketing Education*, *25*(1), 37–45. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0273475302250571

Philp, J. (2016). Epilogue: New pathways in researching interaction. In M. Sato & S. Ballinger (Eds.), *Peer interaction and second language learning: Pedagogical potential and research agenda* (pp. 377–396). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.45

Philp, J., Adams, R., & Iwashita, N. (2014). *Peer interaction and second language learning*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203551349

Pomerantz, A., & Fehr, B. J. (2011). Conversation analysis: An approach to the study of social action as sense making practices. In T.A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary approach* (2nd ed., pp. 165–190). Sage. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446289068.n9

Rine, E. F. (2009). *Development in dialogic teaching skills: A micro-analytic case study of a pre-service ITA* [Doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University].

Rine, E. F., & Hall, J. K. (2011). Becoming the teacher: Changing participant frameworks in international teaching assistant discourse. In. J. K. Hall, J. Hellermann, & S. Pekarek Doehler (Eds.), *L2 interactional competence and development* (pp. 244–274). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847694072-011

Sato, M. & Ballinger, S. (2016). *Peer interaction and second language learning: Pedagogical potential and research agenda*. John Benjamins. http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/lllt.45

Shehadeh, A. (2011). Effects and student perceptions of collaborative writing in L2. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *20*(4), 286–305. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2011.05.010

Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. *Language Learning*, *52*(1), 119–158. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00179

Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative writing: Product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *14*(3), 153–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2005.05.002

Storch, N. (2007). Investigating the merits of pair work on a text editing task in ESL classes. *Language Teaching Research*, *11*(2), 143–159. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1362168807074600

Storch, N. (2009). The impact of studying in a second language (L2) medium university on the development of L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *18*(2), 103–118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2009.02.003

Storch, N. (2013). *Collaborative writing in L2 classrooms*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847699954

Storch, N., & Wigglesworth, G. (2007). Writing tasks: The effects of collaboration. In M. P. García Mayo (Ed.), *Investigating tasks in formal language learning* (pp. 157–177). Multilingual Matters. http://dx.doi.org/10.21832/9781853599286

Swain, M. (2006). Languaging, agency and collaboration in advanced second language proficiency. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 95–108). Continuum. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474212113.ch-004

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1998). Interaction and second language learning: Two adolescent French immersion students working together. *Modern Language Journal*, *82*(3), 320–337. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb01209.x

Tocalli-Beller, A., & Swain, M. (2005). Reformulation: The cognitive conflict and L2 learning it generates. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *15*(1), 5–28.

van Compernolle, R. A. (2014). Profiling second language sociolinguistic development through dynamically administered strategic interaction scenarios. *Language and Communication*, *37*, 86–99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2014.01.003

van Compernolle, R. A. (2015). *Interaction and second language development: A Vygotskian perspective*. John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.44

van Compernolle, R.A. (2018). Speaking, interactional competencies, and mediated action. In R. Alonso Alonso (Ed.), *Speaking in a second language* (pp. 27–48). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/aals.17.02com

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4

Wang, S., & Vásquez, C. (2012). Web 2.0 and second language learning: What does the research tell us? *CALICO Journal*, *29*(3), 412–430. http://dx.doi.org/10.11139/cj.29.3.412-430

Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Spanish Language Skills: Writing

Please provide the following information about yourself:

1. Name:

2. Age:

3. E-mail address:

4. Where have you lived the longest? Please write the city and state (or country if not in the U.S.).

5. Year of study at the UI (circle):   1   2   3   4   5   6

6. Major(s) and minor(s):

7. Did you study Spanish in high school? If so, for how many years?

8. Which Spanish courses have you taken at the University of Iowa?

9. What are your goals for learning in this course? How (as specifically as possible) do you hope this course will contribute to your learning?

10. Have you studied other languages besides English (and Spanish)? If so, which ones, and for how long?

11. Do you consider yourself a heritage or native speaker of another language? How could you rate your reading, writing, speaking, listening skills in that language?

12. Have you traveled to or have you studied in a Spanish-speaking country? If so, where, and for how long?

13. Have you ever lived in a Spanish-speaking country? If so, where, and for how long?

Appendix B

Reflection Assignment

Please answer the following questions as honestly and completely as possible. Your answers will in no way affect your grade for this assignment—you will be given credit for responding to each question fully.

1. What was the process of working with someone else like? What were your interactions with your partner like? Do you feel like you both contributed to the assignment in equal ways?
2. How did you and your partner spend your time? What kinds of things did you discuss as you completed the assignment?
3. In what specific ways did your partner help you or hinder you?
4. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of writing with a partner versus writing alone? Would you have preferred to write on your own or did you like being able to write with a partner? Why?
5. Would you recommend that other Spanish instructors use collaborative writing assignments in their classes? Why or why not?
6. How helpful do you think collaborative writing activities are for improving your grammar, vocabulary and writing skills?

Appendix C

Transcription conventions (from van Compernolle, 2018)

+	Short pause
++	Long pause
+++	Very long pause
.	Full stop with falling intonation
,	Slightly rising intonation
?	Raised intonation
((comment))	Double parentheses indicate transcribers comments or descriptions
underline	Underlining indicates stress through pitch or amplitude
[	Onset of overlapping speech
]	End of overlapping speech
CAPITALS	Capital letters indicate markedly loud speech

2

Transformative Experiences of Beginner L2 Learners in the Italian Classroom for Social Justice

Giulia Negretto
University of Arizona

Borbala Gaspar
University of Arizona

Abstract

Focusing on two beginner Italian courses, this study demonstrates participants' perceptions of and engagement with social justice topics and materials in a semester-long project. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of surveys, triangulated with interviews and artifacts, such as comments by students during lessons and in their video responses, provide us with a better understanding of students' previous expectations, perceptions and experiences with learning Italian; their background knowledge on social justice; and their reactions to the activities implemented throughout the course. Our findings indicate that learners value classroom activities and learning tools that allow them to share, collaborate, and reflect together. As a result of their engagement with multiliteracies approaches and social justice materials, most learners changed their perceptions of Italy and Italian identities. Most of them went through a transformation to altered frames of reference, changing their mind-sets, habits and meaning perspectives. Implications include discussions on offering learners space for critical reflection on social scenarios that can lead to increased engagement, sense of belonging, and unique transformative experiences.

Keywords: social justice, transformative learning, multiliteracies, Italian, beginner learners

Background

Foreign language departments, particularly programs of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs), are pressured to increase the relevance of their courses, attract learners, move beyond a view of communication that is merely based on linguistic interaction, and offer more holistic learning to develop transcultural and translingual competences (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007). In line with the call for change, scholars suggest a move away from traditional foreign language education to change the approach of only right and wrong proficiency focused approaches and to re-evaluate the standards of foreign language learning.

Recommendations include teaching discourse analysis, critical thinking, self-reflection and overall, a more critically oriented pedagogy (Byram, 2008; Guilherme, 2002; Kern, 2000; Kramsch, 2014; Risager, 2007).

Most published textbooks are not following these recommendations. Chapters in foreign language textbooks for undergraduates, particularly for beginner and elementary levels, tend to fit grammar structure into a broad topic to provide a bit of context. Learners are not engaged in critical analysis of textual genres and they don't have activities designed to reflect on how language functions to convey meaning within them. Texts are often artificially constructed and lack clues that learners may need. The result is that both content and language forms are presented uncritically. Furthermore, textbooks often present "sanitized narratives" (Fabbian et al., 2019, p. 11) that prioritize dominant groups (Grant & Sleeter, 2011), are missing controversial topics (Gray, 2002; 2013) and include culture in a way that it does not require learners to engage in depth with (Canale, 2016, p. 239). These elements all together can lead to misrepresentations (Muirhead, 2009; Kubota 2004).

One way to respond to these discrepancies is to provide learners with opportunities to use relevant authentic texts of different genres, and help them notice, engage and critically reflect on the way information is conveyed. The multiliteracies framework outlined by the New London Group (1996) can assist in achieving these goals, with a particular focus on meaning making. In the meaning making process there are six design elements that represent the "multi" in the multiliteracies framework. These are: linguistic, spatial, gestural, visual, audio meaning, and the multimodal pattern that relate the meanings together to each other. Multiliteracies is divided into four pedagogical stages: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Situated practice and overt instruction activate learners' previous knowledge and help them learn new concepts. Critical framing and transformed practice are designed to work on learners' critical and analytical skills to help them become familiar with a particular genre that they can transform or reproduce using multimodal dimensions. In summary, this framework helps us unify language and literary-cultural content teaching.

Multiliteracies approaches provide a space for learners to participate in, reflect on, and, most importantly, create connections to the social world. Teaching with multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) allows us to bring to the surface the socio-cultural elements of language learning, including social justice topics. It expands on language use and cognition-focus of learning to consider language acquisition as a social act. For example, when learners read, they also connect to groups, community, and culture (Kucer & Silva, 2012). In addition to multiliteracies pedagogies, there is a growing call for social-justice-oriented L2 teaching practices that offers the potential to integrate real life concerns of L2 learners (Akbari, 2008; Levine, 2020; Murti, 2008; Osborn, 2006; Randolph & Johnson, 2017). Social justice, perceived as both a process and a goal (Bell, 2016), is at the center of this study. In the process to attain social justice, learners take on the role of social actors who carry out actions in a mutually shaped society where they work toward creating an equitable, safe, and secure environment (Bell, 2016).

Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) is a fundamental vehicle for achieving social justice; it can change expectations, world views and assumptions that can lead

to altered frames of reference (mind-sets, habits, meaning perspectives). During this transformation these references can become more inclusive, diverse, reflective, and emotionally open to changes that may foster new beliefs and opinions or reinforce existing ones, which in turn sets the stage for possible actions (Mezirow, 2012). Despite these calls that indicate the benefits of such approaches, language educators may shy away from topics that discuss important social issues, and instead cover less complex real-world topics (Ensser-Kananen, 2016; Oura, 2001; Willis & Willis, 2007).

To respond to the call for change and the current state of foreign language education, our study demonstrates how social justice pedagogies paired with multiliteracies approaches impacted the experiences of our first-year Italian learners. Data comes from a study conducted in Spring 2021 in two beginner Italian undergraduate courses, taught live online due to Covid-19. In these courses more complex, often marginalized sociocultural scenarios, were integrated into the existing syllabus. Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data of 23 participants, we discuss the choices, perspectives, and experiences of the participants. The following research questions guided our study:

 1. How have participants perceived and engaged with the material presented in the classroom?
 2. What benefits and challenges have students reported because of their engagement with social justice topics?
 3. How did the participants' perception of, and engagement with, Italian culture and language develop over the course?

 In the following section we begin by orienting our work within the current discussion on studies conducted with foreign language learners using social justice pedagogies, transformative learning and multiliteracies approaches.

Theoretical Framework

Our conceptual basis for social justice aligns with Osborn's view of world language education (2006) that perceives foreign language learning as one that is neither driven by marketable skills, nor can be claimed to be apolitical. Within the field of foreign language learning, social justice pedagogies have been demonstrated to be beneficial for learners. Through their engagement with social justice pedagogies, learners critically reflect on power relations (Levine, 2020), address ethical dilemmas (Murti, 2008), and engage in discussion on language, power, social and taboo topics to disrupt what is considered to be "normal" (Coda, Taylor & Jiang, 2021). The multiliteracies model (New London Group, 1996; Paesani et al., 2016) matches well with the recommendations outlined above. Scholars in literacy studies have emphasized the need to integrate a critical pedagogy of multiliteracies in the introductory levels of L2 teaching (Kern, 2000; Paesani et al., 2016; Warner & Dupuy, 2018). This framework has been used in foreign language teaching with collegiate-level learners (Blyth, 2019; Brown et al., 2016; Choi, 2015; Cunningham, 2021; Schmerbeck & Lucht, 2017; Seijas et al., 2021).

Some of the many benefits is that engagement with literacy helps learners recognize elements of communication that they need to pay attention to, such as textual thinking (Byrnes et al., 2006; Paesani et al., 2016), evoking critical thinking

and reflection in the learner. In the center of the pedagogy of multiliteracies is Design, by this we can understand that we are both inheritors of meaning and at the same time we are also creators of the meaning, therefore we are the receivers and producers of Design. In order to understand different types of text, learners engage in Designing (Paesani et al., 2016, p. 24), moving from the available design (what learners already know for instance, how an Instagram post looks like) to the new, undiscovered design elements (help them apply the known to create FL texts and new Designs). The four stages of the pedagogy of multiliteracies (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practices) also contribute to the important element of reflection. Learners reflect on the learning process, especially in the transformed practice stage when they work on redesigning or transforming a genre. Reflection, as part of the multiliteracies model, is an important link between experience and learning (Correia & Bleicher, 2008), as well as language learning experience, in and beyond the classroom (Crane, 2018). Structured reflection was found to help learners cope with discomfort and recognize it as a vital part of language learning (Rogers, 2011). Structured reflection can promote identity negotiation, self-position, and can help learners recognize the value of language and culture study (Crane & Sosulski, 2020).

The multiliteracies framework, developed by the New London Group (1996), provides a critical lens for learners that allow them to engage in these reflections. Learners can be in the center of their learning journey, while the instructors can take the facilitator role, always there to support learners. For example, in a study by Ryshina-Pankova (2013), German undergraduate learners created and critically interpreted a touristic guide and produced visual media representations. This study shows how moving from "telling the world to showing the world" (Kress, 2003, p. 140) helped learners become critical analysts. In a similar case study, Troyan (2016) demonstrates how Jackie, a fourth-grade Spanish learner, is able, through a genre-based approach, to develop appropriate linguistic representations in a project producing touristic landmark descriptions. These studies support the claim that both beginner and intermediate learners are ready to engage with literacy-based pedagogies. They can make sense of the design and to successfully redesign text in a meaningful, linguistically appropriate representation that increases the willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

While all of these studies and findings are valuable in knowing how we can engage our first-year learners, we still know very little about how first-year foreign language learners engage with multiliteracies approaches paired with social justice pedagogies. Social justice pedagogy provides opportunities for learners to identify real world issues and conflicts (Drewelow, 2020), and offers them the latitude to participate in different discourses, questions, and actions (Bocci, 2016). The pedagogy of social justice fosters learners' engagement by giving them something to say and do (Beghetto, 2016; Osborn, 2006).

To engage in social justice education, learners need to question their assumed and received points of view and shift their perspective through a reflective process. Hackman (2005) indicates five crucial components of social justice education: a) content mastery and information; b) tools for critical analysis; c) tools for social action and change; d) tools for personal reflection; and e) multicultural group

dynamics. Departing from Hackman's recommendation, to fulfill the components needed for a social justice education, we adopted elements of the pedagogical approaches of multiliteracies with the aim of setting the stage for a transformative learning experience.

Transformational learning happens as a process, triggered by a disorienting experience. For example, in a study by Kiely (2005), study abroad students engaged in service learning in Nicaragua, where they experienced feelings of shock, and were overwhelmed by poverty and the extreme living conditions in which others were living. These emotional reactions of shock and confusion contributed to learners' reevaluation of their beliefs and perceptions. Learners found to be repositioning the ways they see themselves as learners (Johnson, 2015; King, 2000), change their views of language and cultures (Crane, 2018; Johnson & Mullins Nelson, 2010; Johnson, 2015), and they take actions because of their engagement with social justice topics (Porto, 2021).

As previously noted, the current study was conducted in a beginner, second semester Italian class. Scholars have argued that the L2 classroom has great potential for the integration of social justice pedagogy, because there is a possibility to introduce transcultural perspectives and do critical work (Tarnsawska-Senel, 2020; Pennycook, 2021). This integration is necessary because systems of oppression and identity markers are already embedded in the language that learners are acquiring (Pennycook, 2021). Furthermore, it would contribute to a better preparation for the real-life challenges that learners may face today.

Studying a second language can be a transformative experience for adult learners in the foreign language classroom even without it being prescribed in the syllabus. The study conducted by Johnson & Mullins Nelson (2010) shows how three Spanish learners experienced a transformation of perspectives. These learners increased their awareness of diversity, they connected with Hispanic cultures and became more aware of ethnocentricity.

However, only a few studies focus on learners' perceptions in relation to structured critical reflection tasks of cultural aspects. This study examines elementary Italian L2 learners' experiences and provides a better understanding of the impact of integrating social justice-oriented materials on elementary Italian L2 language learners.

Methods

Context and Participants

Undergraduate learners enrolled in two sections of second semester Italian were asked to participate in an IRB approved study. In total, there were 23 participants who gave consent and enrolled in the study. Authors accessed the consent forms only after final grades for the course had been posted. Among these learners, one was an Italian major, 3 were minoring in Italian, and 2 were still undecided. Most learners were freshmen (36.8%) or sophomores (26.32%), while the rest were juniors (21.05%) and senior learners (15.7%).

The two first-year beginner Italian courses at the center of the study were

taught by Author 1 in Spring 2021. These courses were offered live online, due to the pandemic. During the 16-week course, learners met with the instructor four times a week, for 50 minutes on Zoom. The *Avanti*, first-year Italian textbook (Aski & Musumeci, 2009) was the core body of the course.

As a first step, learners were asked to complete a questionnaire about their previous experiences in language and culture learning of Italian and their level of previous engagement with topics related to social justice in the context of Italian. We started the course with an identity profile activity. First, the instructor in the course introduced herself telling the class the many of her identities and pronoun preferences and then invited everyone to create and share theirs. In this course we covered five chapters of the textbook and for each we matched a social justice topic, including music, a feminist activists' organization, linguistic debates on the gender use in the names of professions and the Slow Food /fair food movement. The following table provides a summary and description of the incorporated social justice topics.

Table 1

Social Justice Topics

Course Plan	Textbook: Cultural topic(s)	Incorporated, relevant resources with social justice
Introduction	Identity profile	Students and instructors created an identity profile that included identities
Capitolo 7	Italian music	Reflection on the power of music. Music video of the song "Cara Italia" by Ghali addressing issues of citizenship and belonging.
Capitolo 8	Italian festivities and the national holidays	Focus on Women's Day as celebrated in Italy. Presenting a feminist activist association on Facebook. Images and infographics addressing issues of domestic violence and femicide. Women as represented in media.
Capitolo 9	Job and Professions	Names of professions and sexism in Italian; examples of inclusivity in the Italian language.
Capitolo 10	Body and well being	The Slow Food movement in Italy and in the US. Exploring the importance of fair food.
Capitolo 11	House and space	Linguistic landscapes, including Italian former colony city of Asmara (Eritrea) with Google maps. Various messages of protests in public spaces (Italian balconies, graffiti); comparisons between the language of protest in the US and the language of protest in Italy.

Each of the developed activities were designed using the stages of the multiliteracies pedagogy. The situated practice and overt instruction activities introduced the topics and helped learners get familiar with the vocabulary needed to talk about it. For example, we started the activity on the *Non una di meno* organization, with a picture in the textbook representing a *mimosa* flower that Italians traditionally give to women for Women's Day. Following, we discussed opinions about why we should or shouldn't celebrate women's day and what is the history behind Women's Day. Then learners engaged in a critical framing activity, during which they analyzed the genre of protest fliers, the logo of the *Non una di meno* organization and short videos discussing statistics and different life situations of (trans) women. As a transformed practice stage of the multiliteracies pedagogy, learners had the opportunity to create their own protest flyers, as they reflected on local issues such as patriarchy and gender.

After each chapter, learners completed a Flipgrid video response to the material covered in the course in which they could use both Italian and English. First, students responded to a prompt in Italian, and then they were invited to reflect on the social justice material in English. Questions such as: "How did you feel about the materials we have covered during our activities? How did you personally connect with these topics? After you completed the tasks and the assignment, what similarities and differences did you notice in the way advertisements depict gender roles in Italy and the US? Did anything happen with you recently, or have you done anything that relates to what we discussed in class?" were part of these reflections.

In the second half of the semester learners were introduced to a project activity. In an in-class workshop, learners planned their final presentation topic of their choice, using guidelines and concrete ideas provided by the instructor. The final presentation provided choices for learners to engage in a redesign activity of a multiliteracies framework. After writing and receiving feedback for their final presentation proposal, learners started working on their final presentation, which they presented in a PowerPoint slide show, in the live online class on Zoom. An example of a final project idea that students could choose from is the song *Cara Italia* by Ghali that we analyzed and worked on in class. This song contains examples of racism. Learners were invited to transform elements of the song and recontextualize it to represent examples of racism of their own context. Learners were also invited to create an album cover for their song, using the example they analyzed in class as an inspiration to create their own.

Data Collection and Analysis

The aim of this study is to examine how learners engaged with social justice materials and activities and how the social justice topics and scenarios affected their perceptions of sense of self. For this purpose, we adopted a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the surveys. In addition, we used students' comments provided in semi-structured interviews (with the six students who consented to be interviewed) and reflections on Flipgrid to corroborate our findings.

Data Sources

Learners were asked to complete two surveys on Qualtrics, one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester. Survey 1 included questions about their previous experiences with social justice materials and their interest in the topics. Survey 2 focused on their experience in the course with social justice materials and scenarios. For the preparation of Survey 2 we were inspired by Johnson & Mullins Nelson (2010) and their way of adapting and modifying King's (2009) transformative learning questionnaire. Following their steps, we used elements of King's survey that examines if learners have taken on new perspectives. Specifically, out of the sixteen questions we included three questions that resembled Johnson & Mullins Nelson's (2010) and King's (2009) questionnaire. These were related to the change that learners may have experienced and activities that they found impactful in their engagement with social justice. We enriched these questions with open-ended questions such as "What are some resources that you enjoyed seeing or using the most in this course?" and "Has your way of imagining or perceiving Italy and Italian identities changed throughout this course?"

The study includes data from the two surveys conducted in the beginning and at the end of the semester with likert scale and open-ended questions; and a follow up semi-structured interview conducted in English at the end of the course. Furthermore, various types of participants' submitted coursework as well as field notes from Author 1, who was the course instructor, contributed to a rich data set. Table 2 summarizes the data sources including the primary data sets (surveys and semi structured interviews) and secondary data sets (site artifacts, recordings, and observations) that together contributed to our findings.

Table 2

Data Sources

Source type	Sources
Surveys	a. Survey 1 (beginning of the semester) b. Survey 2 (end of semester)
Site artifacts	a. Submitted coursework (Google Doc worksheets, Flipgrid recordings, written compositions, final project proposals, PowerPoint presentations) b. Post in social network platforms c. Textbook used in class and course syllabus d. Field notes e. Class minutes transcriptions
Interviews	a. 6 semi-structured, fully transcribed interviews (Total of 247 transcribed pages / 8 hours of recording)
Recordings	a. Classroom recordings (Approximately 60 hours) b. Flipgrid recordings (Approximately 170 hours)
Observations	a. Participant observer: Field notes of Author 1

Data Analysis

As a first step, Author 1 and Author 2 each did a first-round analysis of the surveys and interviews. The data were analyzed using a first-round coding system during which both Authors created analytic memos that they later compared. Questions of survey 1 focused on learners' beliefs and expectations about learning a foreign language, as well as their previous experiences. Answers to open-ended questions were color-coded and grouped into code categories and subcodes. For the second-round analysis authors consulted positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1999; Kayi-Aydar, 2019). Besides looking at participants' positionings as an analytical tool, within discourse analysis we focused on stancemark analysis of affective and epistemic stances (Chafe & Nichols, 1986; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989). An epistemic stance expresses knowledge and belief, while affective stance refers to attitude, mood, emotion, and feelings.

Following we examined the codes, specifically elemental coding (structural, descriptive and concept coding) and affective coding (conflicts, judgments, emotions, values). Informed by these approaches we again completed an inductive coding to provide a more in-depth analysis of the perspectives, feelings, meaning making that participants reported on.

Findings

Survey 1

Responses to survey 1 were analyzed with the purpose of providing a better understanding of the classroom context of this study. For clarity and purposes, findings are grouped into subheadings reflecting the main areas of inquiry of survey 1: learning a foreign language; previous experience with social justice issues; exposure to Italian culture in textbooks.

Learning a Foreign Language. When learners were asked about what learning a foreign language meant to them, the majority (82%) associated foreign language learning with expanding their cultural knowledge, communicating with others, and connecting with the world. Fewer learners (26%) associated it also with study abroad, traveling, speaking to family, or job opportunities. Table 3 provides a report of the main themes that emerged, together with examples of learners' answers.

Table 3

Participant Perspective on Language Learning

Themes	Q: "What does learning a foreign language mean to you?"
Expand cultural knowledge	"Expanding my own knowledge past my own culture;" "Expanding my knowledge of other cultures and becoming a more well-rounded individual;" "learning about a new culture;" "I think learning other languages is really important in expanding your understanding and appreciation for other cultures, and in general, the world around you;" "being able to connect with another culture. Learning a new language will greatly increase my understanding of cultural diversity."
Connect with the world	"I would like to learn more about the world and the many different languages there are in the world;" "It means wanting to experience the world in a different perspective and be able to communicate and identify with more parts of the world;" "a very special connection and opportunity to connect myself with the rest of the world;" "Diversifying myself as a citizen."
Communicate with others	"I am able to connect with people who I wasn't able to before;" "Learning a foreign language means to open the doorway of ability to learn from and communicate with other individuals of different nationalities and walks of life."
Study abroad	"Learning a foreign language means that I will be able to experience global immersion and communicate with people more properly. I plan to study abroad during college and hopefully live in Italy after college for a couple years."
Travel	"I have Italian relatives, so it is a cool cushion, but I don't see myself using it unless I travel;" "I want to be able to travel and speak to family."
Job opportunities	"it opens so many doors in the future in relation to job search;" "I also think learning another language is a great skill to have when traveling, on a job, communicating with others etc."

The examples of students' answers provided in the table above show that there is a variety of subthemes within each broader theme. The theme of expanding cultural knowledge with the purpose of becoming "a more well-rounded individual," for example, suggests that learning a language is already perceived as a holistic, transformative experience that leads to a broader awareness of the world. Words such as "world," "global," and "citizen," found in some of students' answers suggest the awareness, and desire, to perceive themselves as belonging to different, complex realities and communities outside of the one they experience in their everyday lives, and outside of the classroom context. The answer "I don't see myself using it unless I travel" brings to the surface another important aspect to acknowledge, which is that opportunities for undergraduate learners to use the target language outside of the classroom environment are rare. This suggests that learning a language should go

beyond the goal of training learners for proficiency.

Overall, learners' answers do not reflect the traditional arguments for foreign language study in the US, such as its significance for business, to facilitate travel and tourism, or to be able to understand cultural artifacts belonging to a different language and culture (Reagan & Osborn, 2020). Instead, we found a strong desire of learners to connect with other realities, experience cultural diversity in the rest of the world, and their wish to expand their cultural understandings through the lens of another perspective.

Previous Experience with Social Justice Issues. When we inquired whether students recalled previous experiences engaging with social justice topics in previous language courses, most declared not having any experience. Only four learners out of 23 said they occasionally had some, such as, for example, a teacher sharing stories about post-war Germany in the German language classroom: "I took German in high school, and since my teacher was raised there at the tail end of the nazi regime he would often share stories of what it was like in post-war Germany and how the healing process began." Ten learners reported that social justice topics were addressed in previous courses taken other than a foreign language (e.g. art courses, political science, sociology, history, and linguistics): "they were mostly art course as I feel those have an easier time conveying messages and topics like that." Another student wrote: "I took a linguistics class that had many ties with social justice/injustice within many different cultures! It was very interesting to read/discuss how language can be a very prominent part in discrimination in social/economic/political classes." Even though students may be aware that language, power, and politics are tied to one another, they are used to experiencing content-based courses as spaces that are more fit to discuss social justice topics.

Among those who reported not having any experience engaging with social justice in previous courses other than language, one answered: "No. Everything was pretty straight forward and avoided this topic." The use of the verb "avoided" indicates students' awareness of the teachers' intentionality of not engaging with social justice topics. When students were asked whether they had any awareness of social justice issues in Italy, most learners at the beginning of this class were not aware of any (61%); some learners were somewhat aware or had a vague idea of what issues the population may be facing (21%): "I'm sure Italy deals with many of the social issues that the US does;" and a few named specific topics such as immigration, the mafia, the economy, unemployment, political turmoil, the Covid-19 pandemic, low birth rates, and women's inequality. As expected, most learners (95%) stated being aware of a variety of social issues in their local communities.

Exposure to Italian Culture in Textbooks. Food (23), family (18), sport (16), linguistic diversity (12), and fashion (12) were the most highly ranked cultural aspects learners were exposed to in previous L2 Italian classes. It also emerged that the textbook is the primary source for them to learn about cultural topics in Italy. The images and materials to which learners were exposed in Italian textbooks communicated a view of Italian people as family and community oriented: "I see Italians as kind people and very much focused on family and community;" proud of their culture, "as individuals who take pride in their culture, family, and values;" relaxed: "I always felt that life was more 'relaxed' based on the people and places in

the textbook I was learning from;" "The people look like they truly enjoy life and value relaxation and their surroundings;" and surrounded by beauty and fascinating places: "I always find the places and people depicted to be fascinating;" "the places portrayed in my Italian textbook look gorgeous." More than half of our participants gave answers expressing some sort of fascination and attraction to people and places in Italy, based on generalizations rather than representations of complex and nuanced identities.

Some learners, however, expressed the awareness that the textbook does not provide an authentic representation of Italians, perceiving them "just as a part of the textbook," and that a diverse representation is completely lacking as it "looks like any other textbook for any class." Significantly, one learner wrote: "I doubt that every Italian is named Giovanni and works at a bar or pizza ristorante." Asides from locations, most if not all depictions in the textbooks are simplifications of Italian culture to make them easier to teach. These answers suggest that learners already have an awareness that textbooks only provide a limited and superficial portrayal of the target culture, and that this is expected. Even more significantly, none of the learners could recall any of the images in textbooks introducing topics of social justice: "the textbook didn't seem much involved in politics. I got the impression that the textbook was old, or written by old people, just from how they talked about computers and phones and other technology."

Their answers to Survey 1 revealed that if learners hear or learn about social justice topics in a language classroom, it is not from the textbook adopted in their L2 courses, nor from a consistent exposure to cultural topics integrated in the syllabus. Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between learners' awareness of social issues in their local communities; what they have heard about Italy from resources outside of textbooks; the romanticized and stereotypical images of Italy and Italians provided in textbooks; and what, instead, they would be interested to learn about in the Italian classroom. In fact, most learners (70%) mentioned being interested in, or open to, learning more about immigration and citizenship issues, racial diversity, racism, sexism, feminism, gender inequalities, non-binary language options, religion, politics, social classes, or other social justice related topics in general.

This is a brief summary of some of the main quantitative findings from survey 1, that provide an overview of our participants' thoughts at the beginning of the semester: most of our learners associated foreign language learning with more abstract ideas (82%); most are aware of social issues in their local communities in the US (95%); most were not aware of any social justice issues taking place in Italy (61%); but most were interested in learning more about them (70%).

Survey 2

For the end of the course survey, we asked learners to talk about their experiences with the social justice materials. Nineteen learners completed the survey. The Likert scale questions indicate that most learners (94.74%) reported to be aware of the social issues in their local communities, and most (90%) affirmed that the way they imagined or perceived Italy and Italian identities changed throughout the course.

Learners were asked to read eleven statements and select those that they felt resonated with their experiences. A significant number of learners (52%) had an experience that made them question ideas about social justice, and many of them (42%) questioned the way they acted, yet a similarly high number of learners (47%) relied on their previous experiences and beliefs. Many learners (47%) used their imagination and placed themselves in the shoes of others by imagining living and acting in a different way. Noteworthy to mention that a significant number of learners (47%) went beyond sympathizing with the represented groups and issues, and they engaged in a deeper empathizing process. Furthermore, only one learner indicated that they felt uncomfortable because of their engagement with social justice pedagogies in the class.

The changes in perceptions that most of them reported were the result of part of a class assignment (68.42%). When we asked our learners to point to the assignments that contributed to the change of their perceptions, they noted a large variety of activities. Of these activities the most significant were the Flipgrid reflections (63%), class activities (47%), class group activities (42%), final project (42%) and article summaries (36%).

The Flipgrid oral reflection received surprisingly higher selection than the personal reflection (16%) and writing about concerns (16%). What learners perceived as the most impactful activities were those where learners had the opportunity to share their personal reflections and opinions in their first language, interact, and collaborate with each other.

Survey 2 also had a qualitative segment with nine questions. Among the nineteen students who completed this survey, six students consented for a follow up interview that was conducted by Author 2. With the aim to further corroborate findings of the likert scale survey results, for a well-rounded, triangulated study, we draw from data from the qualitative segment of the survey as well as the six semi-structured interviews with those who completed the survey. We grouped our findings into three main categories: a. Imagining and Perceiving Italy; b. Sharing, Interacting and Collaborating; c. Changing Views and Perspectives. We analyzed the answers paying particular attention to the epistemic (looking at knowledge and belief) and affective (examining attitude, mood, emotions, and feelings) stances. As follows, we elaborate on each of the three categories identified in the survey.

Imagining and Perceiving Italy. Most learners (89%) gave a written answer that was dominated by epistemic stances that show their perception of viewing themselves confident in possessing more knowledge about culture and social justice issues. Learners also used a significant number of metaphors to express their confidence and experience as a whole-body experience. Expressions such as "it was eye-opening," "my view of Italy have gotten more nuanced," "it has shown me social issues that I had not previously seen," "which I hadn't ever really heard of," "has given me a new outlook about places I haven't been in Italy yet," "I got to experience culture," all point to a learning engagement that can be defined as a whole body experience that activated learners' imagination through different channels (visual, auditory, physical experience). These findings show that learners had a deep and impactful engagement with the materials.

Sharing, Interacting, and Collaborating. In the survey's section of the open-ended questions, one student, among just a few, discussed their changing perspectives as a result of a complex process influenced by various social engagements in and beyond the classroom walls. To the question "If you experienced a change in perspectives, was it a person who influenced this change or else?" the student replied: "I think the people and discussions in several of my classes (including this one) combined with new videos and podcasts I was watching? Not like a specific person."

Similarly, another student expressed the positive aspects of classroom conversations, as she stated in the follow-up interview: "...about the women versus men in this advertisement and like guys would speak up and actually like say the right answer so it's like I gotta give me a little bit of hope, because I feel like a lot of the time men can be sort of ignorant …they just don't recognize it…so it's really nice to hear the guys like speak up and recognize them."

Another student positioned interaction with others on Flipgrid to critically reflect: "I think having to, like, form an opinion, like an opinion I can communicate to others, it makes me think critically about the topics we see in class. For as far as personal connections, I can't say I really made a lot of personal connections with other students, but I do make kind of like more, by forming an opinion on a topic I feel like it's…the topic feels slightly more personal to me, I guess, and they do help me reflect on stuff that I've learned in class." Similarly, one student highlighted Flipgrid reflections as beneficial to feel more included in the classroom discourse: "…like our Flipboard assignments, you know she would, of course, make sure that we were paying attention and learning it, but then would want to hear what we thought and it made at least me feel like she was genuinely interested in what we were thinking and so it felt more like a conversation rather than like a lecture and I think that was really great."

Another student highlighted the connections and the importance of his interactions he had in class and his long lasting connections he established with his classmates: "My experience was great, it was awesome you know I still talk to about ten kids from my 102 class and a lot of us are actually going to be trying to take the same time classes together in the future, so it was really nice, I had a great time." All these reflections indicate the importance of social collaboration to connect with the material through social interaction.

The final presentation that students had to prepare was a topic of their choice, based on a social justice issue, connected to what they explored in their class. One student, mentioned that a successful presentation depends on the reaction of his classmates, as he stated: "I was just more or less nervous about I guess how people would look at it like it's, you know, is this going to teach somebody something you know, am I going to be able to be that person that someone thinks about later like oh yeah that was a cool subject that was a cool topic, that's how you know it was a good presentation and I felt really good that people were into it." Similarly to the previous example, another student considered their classroom community as an important element in their preparation of their final project. They decided to give a lesson on how to prepare homemade yogurt as their final presentation. In their reflection they emphasized the importance of interaction, sharing and their collaboration with

classmates. In this presentation the student talked about how, inspired by the Slow Food movement discussions and activities in class, they wanted to have a direct impact on their classmates by helping them eat healthier: "I feel like it had a more direct impact and I feel like yogurt is one of those things that's like oh no it's an expensive food, but it's really healthy for you and it's really easy to make, and so, if people could make good food that is healthy for them without like, even if they can't afford lots of yogurt because yogurt is expensive, and that was annoying to me, so I wanted to spread the yogurt recipes so that I felt like it had more of a direct impact on the people who would be attending." The students' reflection above further substantiates that the engaging activities using multiliteracies framework paired with social justice materials result in helping learners critically reflect, emotionally engage, practice empathy and feel more connected to each other. Based on the likert scaled results and the qualitative data, it is apparent that students perceive the reflections and their social connections and interactions with each other as impactful tools for their learning.

Change in Views and Perspectives. Learners noticeably connected the social justice topics covered in class to their personal interest. Thus, the impact they perceived social justice had on them was connected to their previous experiences and their current activities. However, we also note a significant number of learners (36%) who report on changes in their perceptions, changing their mindset as one of the important steps of transformative learning.

One learner noted: "challenged me to view the world differently and the way I behave in certain situations;" another student stated: "my family tends to be more conservative and against regulation. But personally, I feel I'm like kind of shifting to the opinion that, like, these things are important and government regulation is like it's necessary to set a standard in food quality and also labor and workplace standards." Similarly, another student stated: "The Women's Day unit had impacted my beliefs and attitudes because I realize the importance now of celebrating Women's Day I pay more attention" and "I support slow food's efforts for overall healthy food because food is a major passion of mine."

These reflections show how learners not only acknowledge the need to be more inclusive or empathetic but their realization that they themselves can be responsible to contribute to these changes, indicated by the action verbs such as "I pay attention" and "I support." We also note that some student changed in awareness and empathy. For example, one learner became "aware of processes in different areas of the world;" another mentioned "it allowed me to empathize with people going through such a tedious process;" and another said "I come from a kind of conservative household, and before the class I was I guess mostly indifferent to a lot of issues like immigration…I would say my indifference grew into more progressive feelings."

Finally, a student has pointed out how their engagement in this course helped them change their views about Italy: "I can think about Italy as a real place but you know when you have no idea about the country and, like the actual social dilemmas that goes through… tend to romanticize just the idea and the concept. You know, someone thinks Italy is oh wine and nice sunsets and oceans' or whatever else but no it's a real city with air it's a real place with real problems, just as much as where I live."

Learners who indicated a complete transformation in a sense of their concrete

actions are in most cases changes connected to their lifestyles and way of living a healthier life. For example "I've changed my original way of living," "now I want to eat healthier," another mentioned: "This is an abstract way of saying it, but you know after the class and presentations and talking about that I thought about giving back to, is very abstract, I thought about giving back to like my community more because I work at a job, where we waste a lot of food at the end of the nights I work at a retirement home. And we cook and we make a lot of food and at the end of the night so I'm like I could probably be giving this to people." Finally, a student stated: "I started looking for more like, organic restaurants in Tucson after we were talking about it in class… I was looking at some restaurants and they look so good, and so I've been looking for those and am excited to try them once I feel more like safe going out." Most of these statements only hint at concrete actions, however, they show us examples of how learners are taking the social justice topics beyond their classroom walls and how they are engaged in thinking of potential actions and solutions.

Discussion and Implications

In this study we analyzed how learners perceived and engaged with the material presented in the Italian classroom, how their perceptions of Italian culture developed over the course of one semester, and what benefits and challenges did learners highlight in their engagement with social justice materials. Most of the class expressed their openness and interest to learn more about social justice topics and only one learner felt uncomfortable. Learners reported no difficulties working with authentic and relevant text and different genres in Italian. Findings shows us that learners are ready to engage with materials developed using pedagogies of multiliteracies even at the beginner level of language learning. Despite their different interests, personalities, backgrounds and previous experiences with Italian language and culture, most learners valued their interactions with others and felt a sense of belonging to (classroom) communities in meaningful ways.

The multiliteracies approaches paired with social justice resulted as an effective way to engage learners in a process of transformation of their previous assumptions. Most learners perceived activities that allowed sharing, collaboration, and conversations as impactful in their learning and engagement with social justice topics. Thus, this study reaffirms Hackman's (2005) recommendation to include tools for personal reflections as a crucial component of social justice education. It also complements this recommendation by showing that learners value personal reflection if it's done socially, in collaboration with their peers. Each of the four steps of multiliteracies approaches (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transferred practice) that we used to introduce the social justice materials, allowed more time for learners to observe and experience relevant authentic texts from a variety of genres, and to emotionally connect with topics through reflections.

Most learners initiated their process of transformation by critically reflecting on the social justice materials. While many of them went through a transformation of their mind set by shifting their perspectives and beliefs, only few learners went through a concrete, more easily detectable transformation, by taking concrete actions and integrating new habits. These last steps of transformation, however, are a result of a longer process that is hard to show in a one semester long study (Johnson

& Mullins Nelson, 2010).

Many of these learners went beyond sympathizing with the represented groups and issues, but they also engaged in a deeper empathizing process of imagining living in Italy or participating in different social groups. For most learners the way of them perceiving Italy and Italian identities changed throughout the course, and many reported they used their imagination to empathize with others and imagined living and acting in different ways.

Our brain processes imagined actions the same way as actual ones (Decety & Grèzes, 2006). The use of imagination is an important motivational element to negotiate the self, create a sense of belonging and display emotions co-constructively (Gaspar, 2022). More studies on social justice looking at learners' processes of imagination, could reveal more details of how their agency and negotiation of self are impacted by imagination, and the effects imagination has on learners' motivation.

Furthermore, learners' comments regarding their textbooks as falsely depicting reality, suggest that institutional discourses (including textbooks, departmental home pages, curricula) should consider the lived experiences of learners and their ways of representing them. Institutional discourses often depict prospective learners as tourists in study abroad contexts (Michelson & Álvarez Valencia, 2016) and there is a clear lack of diversity in foreign language textbooks (Anya, 2021). Our findings provide additional information on how foreign language learners perceive different discourses and contribute to the call to revisit these discrepancies.

This paper argues that implementing a social justice curriculum paired with (multi)literacies approaches in first year foreign language courses is beneficial and successful. It has the potential to provide a symbolic space for learners to shape their sense of self; by doing so, it is more likely that students keep learning the second language, as they shape a special bond with it and use it as a symbolic tool to build their personal trajectories.

Most participants felt comfortable and were open to engage with social justice topics. By the end of the course half of the participants changed their world views and more than a third of them reported a transformation in their habits and activities. These findings also demonstrate that it is neither too early, nor too difficult or challenging to incorporate social justice topics paired with multiliteracies pedagogies that introduce relevant materials and different genres.

As language educators, we want to make sure that our learners feel a sense of belonging in the foreign language classroom. A growing number of research demonstrates the benefits of socially focused pedagogies (Gaspar & Warner, 2021; Kramsch, 2009; Warner et al., 2021). To avoid shaping our learners into tourists, or into any other accidental prescribed identities, and to create a more inclusive education, we recommend integrating social justice materials into the existing curriculum paired with (multi)literacy pedagogies. Formato (2020) calls instructors to integrate queer-pedagogy in the Italian classroom, creating materials that move beyond heteronormativity. The gender-just education project developed by Kris Aric Knisely (2022) provides innovative and practical ways to create a gender inclusive and non-binary foreign language teaching environment. The ACTFL's special publication in *The Language Educator*, titled Diversifying Language Educators and Learners (Anya & Randolph, 2019) is another great resource on how to foster diversity with a

special focus on power, agency, and equity representations.

We had the opportunity to follow one of the survey participants' journey for two semesters after the study, observing their decision to minor in Italian, and change their preferred name and pronouns. This suggests the importance of case studies, and of longitudinal studies in particular, that could reveal more transformative practices and agency development. One semester might not be enough to note whether these transformations took place. Furthermore, we, the authors, are white, female, heterosexual instructors. Our positionalities might be perceived as privileged and in power. We acknowledge our awareness that this might have influenced our participants' engagement.

The current state of the field, and the possibilities for forthcoming studies help us brightly envision the future of language education and research. Today, as we write our final words of this paper, the Supreme Court ended the constitutional right for women to make decisions about their bodies, and by doing so, they strengthened the power of patriarchy in American society. It is imperative that we continue our work centering on our learners' social shaping, providing them space for their lived experiences. This will contribute to a more inclusive and diverse language education from which we all can benefit.

Acknowledgments

References

Akbari. (2008). Transforming lives: introducing critical pedagogy into ELT classrooms. *ELT Journal, 62*(3), 276–283. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn025

Anya, U. (2021). Critical race pedagogy for more effective and inclusive world language teaching. *Applied Linguistics, 42*(6), 1055-1069. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amab068

Anya, U. & Randolph, L. J. (Oct/Nov, 2019). Diversifying language educators and learners. *The Language Educator*. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/tle/TLE_OctNov19_Article.pdf

Aski, J. M., & Musumeci, D. (2021). *Avanti! Beginner Italian*. (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Beghetto, R. A. (2016). Creative learning: A fresh look. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology, 15*(1), 6-23. https://doi.org/10.1891/1945-8959.15.1.6

Bell, L. A. (2016). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.) *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 3-26). Routledge.

Bocci, M. C. (2016). *(Re)framing service-learning with youth participatory action research: Examining students' critical agency*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Brown, L., Iwasaki, N., & Lee, K. (2016). Implementing multiliteracies in the Korean classroom through visual media. In Y. Kumagai, A. López-Sanchez, & S. Wu (Eds.), *Multiliteracies in world language education*, (pp.158–181). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736143

Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and reflections.* Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Byrnes, H. (Ed.). (2006). *Advanced language learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky*. Continuum.

Canale, G. (2016). (Re)Searching culture in foreign language textbooks, or the politics of hide and seek. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 29*(2), 225-243. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2016.1144764

Chafe, W. L., & Nichols, J. (1986). *Evidentiality: The linguistic coding of epistemology.* Ablex Publishing.

Choi, J. (2015). A heritage language learner's literacy practices in a Korean language course in U.S. university: From a multiliteracies perspective. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education,11*(2),116-133.

Coda, J., Cahnmann-Taylor, M., & Jiang, L. (2021). "It takes time for language to change": Challenging classroom heteronormativity through teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling (TPRS). *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 20*(2), 90-102. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1726755

Correia, M. G., & Bleicher, R. E. (2008). Making connections to teach reflection. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 14*(2), 41-49.

Cunningham, D. J. (2021). Adapting an undergraduate multiliteracies German curriculum for online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Íkala, *Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura, 26*(3), 749-765.

Crane, C. (2016). Making connections in beginning language instruction through structured reflection and the world-readiness standards for learning languages. In P. Urlaub & J. Watzinger-Tharp (Eds.), T*he interconnected language curriculum: Critical transitions and interfaces in articulated K-16 contexts* (pp. 51-74). Cengage.

Crane, C., & Sosulski, M. J. (2020). Staging transformative learning across collegiate language curricula: Student perceptions of structured reflection for language learning. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(1), 69-95. https://doi-org.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/10.1111/flan.12437

Davies, B., and R. Harré (1999). Positioning and personhood. In R. Harré and L. van Langenhove (Eds.) *Positioning Theory* (pp. 32–52). Blackwell.

Decety, J., & Grèzes, J. (2006). The power of simulation: Imagining one's own and other's behavior. *Brain Research, 1079*(1), 4-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brainres.2005.12.115

Drewelow, I. (2020). A positive psychology perspective on designing a technology-mediated learning experience: Engagement and personal development. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning, 2*(1), 90-115.

Ennser-Kananen, J. (2016). A pedagogy of pain: New directions for world language education. *The Modern Language Journal, 100*(2), 556–564. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.1_12337

Fabbian, C., Valfredini, A., & Zanotti Carney, E. (2021). What's in a book? Foreign language textual contents (and discontents). In B. Dupuy & K. Michelson (Eds.), *Pathways to paradigm change: Critical examinations of prevailing discourses and ideologies in second language education* (pp. 9–31). Cengage.

Formato, G. (2021). The shift to a queer-pedagogy in the Italian language classroom. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 9*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.2478/jolace-2021-0001

Gaspar, B. (2022). The effects of multimodal communication on the development of new types of learner imagination. In L. Klimanova (Ed.), *Identity, multilingualism and CALL - Responding to new global realities* (pp. 328-352). Equinox eBooks Publishing.

Gaspar, B., & Warner, C. (2021). Project-based learning and the development of translingual/transcultural subjectivities: Case studies from the Italian classroom. *Second Language Research & Practice, 2* (1), 1-23.

Grant, C. A., & Sleeter, C. E. (2011). *Doing multicultural education for achievement and equity*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203831397

Gray, J. (2002). The global coursebook in English language teaching. In D. Block & D. Cameron, (Eds), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp.161-177). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203193679-12

Gray, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Critical perspectives on language teaching materials*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Guilherme, M. (2002). *Critical citizens for an intercultural world: Foreign language education as Cultural politics*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853596117

Hackman, H. W. (2005). Five essential components for social justice education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 38*(2), 103-109. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680590935034

Johnson, S. M. (2015). *Adult learning in the language classroom*. Multilingual Matters.

Johnson, S., & Mullins Nelson, B. (2010). Above and beyond the syllabus: Transformation in an adult, foreign language classroom. *Language Awareness, 19*(1), 35-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410903079165

Kayi-Aydar, H. (2019). Language teacher identity. *Language Teaching, 52*(3), 281-295. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000223

Kern, R. (2000). *Literacy and language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Kiely, R. (2005). A transformative learning model for service-learning: A longitudinal case study. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 12*(1), 5-22. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3239521.0012.101

King, K. P. (2000). The adult ESL experience: Facilitating perspective transformation in the classroom. *Adult Basic Education, 10*(2), 69-89.

King, K. P. (2009). The learning activities survey: Presented and reviewed. In K. P. King (Ed.) *The handbook of evolving research on transformative learning based on the learning activities survey* (pp.13-30). Information Age Publishing.

Knisely, K. A. (2022). Teaching trans knowledges: Situating expansive possibilities in an intermediate French course. In S. Bouamer & S. L. Bourdeau, L. (Eds) *Diversity and decolonization in French studies* (pp. 165-180). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95357-7_11

Kramsch, C. (2014). Teaching foreign languages in an era of globalization: Introduction. *Modern Language Journal, 98*(1), 296-311. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2014.12057.x

Kramsch, C. (2009). Cultural perspectives on language learning and teaching. In K. Knapp & B. Seidlhofer (Ed.), *Handbook of foreign language communication and learning* (pp. 219-246). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110214246.2.219

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge.

Kubota, R. (2004). Critical multiculturalism and second language education. In B. Norton, & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 30-52). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524834.003

Kucer, S. & Silva, C. (2012). *Teaching the dimensions of literacy* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203118375

Levine, G. S. (2020). Complexity. *The Modern Language Journal, 104*, 9-14. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12609

MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal, 82*(4), 545-562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-781.1998.tb05543.x

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass

Mezirow, J. (2012). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In E. Taylor and P. Cranton (Eds.), *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 73-96). Jossey-Bass.

Michelson, K., & Álvarez Valencia, J. A. (2016). Study abroad: Tourism or education? A multimodal social semiotic analysis of institutional discourses of a promotional website. *Discourse & Communication, 10*(3), 235-256. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481315623893

MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. (2007). Foreign languages and higher education: New structures for a changed world. *Profession*, 234-245.

Muirhead, R. J. (2009). *Aspects of multivariate statistical theory*. John Wiley & Sons.

Murti, K. P. (2008). "Deliberative Dialogue" as a tool for promoting social justice and transcultural awareness in the German language classroom. In R. A. Schulz & E. Tschirner (Eds.), *Communicating across borders: Developing intercultural competence in German as a foreign language* (pp. 147–175). Iudicium Verlag.

New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60–92. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.66.1.17370n67v22j160u

Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. (1989). Language has a heart. *Text-Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse, 9*(1), 7-26. https://doi.org/10.1515/text.1.1989.9.1.7

Osborn, T. (2006). *Teaching world languages for social justice: A sourcebook of principles and practices*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410617194

Oura, G. K. (2001). Authentic task-based materials: Bringing the real world into the classroom. *Sophia Junior College Faculty Bulletin, 21*, 65-84.

Paesani, K. A., Allen, H. W., & Dupuy, B. (2016). *A multiliteracies framework for collegiate foreign language teaching*. Pearson.

Pennycook, A. (2021). *Critical applied linguistics: A re-introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003090571

Porto, M. (2021). A community service learning experience with student teachers of English: Enacting social justice in language education in a community centre. *The Language Learning Journal*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1971741

Randolph, L. J., & Johnson, S. M. (2017). Social justice in the language classroom: A call to action. *Dimension*, 99–121.

Reagan, T. G., & Osborn, T. A. (2020). *World language education as critical pedagogy: The promise of social justice*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003029267

Risager, K. (2007). *Language and culture pedagogy: From a national to transnational paradigm*. Multilingual Matters.

Rogers, R. (2011). Discourse analysis and education: A multimodal social semiotic approach. In J. P. Gee & M. Handford (Eds.), An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education, (pp. 233-254). Routledge.

Ryshina-Pankova, M. (2013). Understanding "Green Germany" through images and film: A critical literacy approach. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 46*(2), 163–184. https://doi.org/10.1111/tger.10139

Schmerbeck, N., & Lucht, F. (2017). Creating meaning through multimodality: Multiliteracies assessment and photo projects for online portfolios. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German, 50*(1), 32-44.

Seijas, J. M., & Parra, M. L. (2021). Engaging students with social, cultural, and environmental sustainability topics in the Spanish-speaking world: A reimagined beginner Spanish curriculum. In M. de la Fuente (Ed.), *Education for sustainable development in foreign language learning* (pp. 87-104). Routledge.

Tarnsawska Senel, M. (2020). Social justice in the language curriculum: Interrogating the goals and outcomes of language education in college. In R. Criser & E. Malakaj (Eds.), *Diversity and decolonization in German studies* (pp. 63–82). Palgrave Macmillan.

Troyan, F. J. (2016). Learning to mean in Spanish writing: A case study of a genre-based pedagogy for standards-based writing instruction. *Foreign Language Annals, 49*(2), 317-335. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/flan.12192

Warner, C. & Dupuy, B. (2018). Moving toward multiliteracies in foreign language teaching: Past and present perspectives … and beyond. *Foreign Language Annals, 51*(1), 116–128. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12316

Warner, C., Gaspar, B., & Diao, W. (2021). Enterprising and imagining multilingual subjects: Beyond commodity-centered discourses of language learning in the US. *Critical Multilingualism Studies, 9*(1), 103-127. https://cms.arizona.edu/index.php/multilingual/issue/view/17

Willis, D, & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford University Press.

3

Word Analysis: Contemplating the Word La Madre to Develop an Approach for the Instruction of Cultural Perspectives

Gregory De La Piedra
St. Petersburg College

Abstract

Word Analysis is an approach to teach second language (L2) students about cultural perspectives which are understood collectively as the ideas, values, beliefs, and experiences many native speakers have regarding cultural domains within their own cultures. Word Analysis is anchored on the relationships between language and communication, and language and culture. The present study researches the history behind the dual value of the term "la madre" [mother] in Mexican Spanish to deliver a practical method that language instructors easily could easily incorporate within their materials to teach L2 culture, or that publishers could integrate within their textbooks. The primary purpose and goal of Word Analysis is to improve cultural awareness, sensitivity, and overall competence among learners. Therefore, the benefits of L2 learning as described by the "Comparisons" and "Communities" standards are supported via the content students learn by studying cultural perspectives (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

Keywords: *Word Analysis, Mexico, La Madre, Cultural Perspectives, Spanish, Colloquial Expression, Cultural Competence, Second Language Instruction*

Introduction

It is undeniable that Open Educational Resources (OER) instructional materials are steadily more commonly used in the effort to teach second languages (Thoms et al., 2018; Thoms & Thoms, 2014; Toetenel, 2014). While the general trend over the coming decades may likely be further expanded use of OERs, today the textbook continues to serve widely in many language classrooms. Cubillos (2014) confirms that in the United States, Spanish textbooks account for 69% of the total language textbook market at the high school level and 52% at the college level (p. 205). Huhn (2018) states "despite what we have come to understand about effective language teaching, the textbook continues to serve as the cornerstone of World Language instruction in many post-secondary classrooms" (p. 3). While the present study does not intend to debate the proper role or usage ratio of OERs versus textbooks within the language classroom, the above references confirm that the latter remain in use significantly.

Over the last two decades, Spanish language textbooks for elementary level college courses have increasingly emphasized cultural subject matter. This paper highlights these beginning textbooks because they frequently serve among the first introductions that second language (L2) students have to Spanish, and the culture of the people who speak the language natively. Additionally, given most associate's and bachelor's degree programs have a language requirement, beginning textbooks also reach the greatest number of students. Within these volumes, meaningful input is delivered about the often studied culture domains of Latin America and Spain such as history, art, literature, music, geography, famous people, and major holidays. Students also receive a detailed presentation on the everyday lives of the people in the Spanish speaking world. Examples of such textbooks include: *Portales* (Blanco, 2017), *Portales 2.0* (Blanco, 2023), *¡Exploremos!* (Blitt & Casas, 2018), *Mosaicos* (De Castells et al., 2015), *¿Qué Tal?* (Dorwick et al., 2007), *Puntos de Partida* (Dorwick et al., 2017), *Poco a Poco* (Hendrickson & Borrás, 1998), *¡Tú Dirás!* (Martínez-Lage et al., 2003), *Avenidas* (Marinell & Oramas, 2002), *Dicho y Hecho* (Potowski et al., 2012) and *¡Dímelo Tú!* (Rodríguez et al., 2010). These textbooks illustrate the incredible effort and ingenuity afforded by foreign language education professionals to present material on several themes like social customs, family life, regional foods and drinks, professional life, common idioms, popular pastimes and sports, indigenous people and influences, and university life. They also include side notes on various culture points that students and instructors alike will likely find intriguing. However, an area of culture instruction that could be further enhanced in these textbooks is material regarding the ideas, values, beliefs, and experiences native speakers have about certain topics within their own culture. Simply stated, their cultural perspectives.

The "Cultures" standards, as provided by *The World-readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, emphasize perspectives from a viewpoint that highlights values and ideas displayed by people who share a common culture (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, pp. 69-80). As an example, the *Standards* comment on the importance of cuisine in France and the idea that meals are events of value, and during meals, French people follow a certain cultural protocol like the avoidance of distracting conversation topics such as money or work (p. 74). The present study further enriches the understanding of cultural perspectives by emphasizing the ideas, values, beliefs and experiences of people as they are expressed through colloquial expression and the words of everyday speech.

Additionally, the findings of this paper seek to complement the expansive body of culture subject matter described in the above textbooks by introducing Word Analysis as a method through which content regarding cultural perspectives can be obtained and delivered to (L2) students. Within the current academic literature, there are multiple publications regarding the analysis of words. These scholarly works tackle the analysis of words through a wide range of investigative endeavor in disciplines such as semantics, mnemonics, grammar, regional lexical variation, etymology and morphology (Barcroft et al., 2011; Bowers & Kirby, 2010; Levin et al., 1988; Malkiel, 1993; Penny, 2000; Penny, 2002; Swan, 2011). This manuscript, by contrast, advances Word Analysis which is defined as an approach through which content on cultural perspectives is gleaned by analyzing certain words and the colloquial expressions native speakers routinely say containing these words. Word Analysis employs a novel

sociohistorical perspective in the field of L2 instruction because it uses the words of everyday speech to help unlock valuable insights regarding the ideas, values, beliefs and experiences native speakers have about certain domains within their own culture. Therefore, L2 students can obtain a glimpse into the cultural perspectives of these people.

Review of Literature

Because culture is complex and expansive with multiple manifestations in any community, it is prudent to define the term culture and then categorize this manuscript's broadened notion of cultural perspectives within the parameters of these definitions.

Brooks (1968) provides a five-part outline which comprises his definition of the term culture. Of particular interest for the present study is Culture4 "patterns for living" which Brooks further divides into two parts "formal culture" and "deep culture" (pp. 210-211). These can be summarized as culture absorption achieved by the individual via his place in society, his personal experiences and achievements, the experiences and achievements of his community, and the history of his community which is shared from generation to generation. The *Standards* define culture as "generally understood to include the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products –both tangible and intangible – of a society" (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, p. 69). The *Standards* also identify language as "the primary vehicle for expressing cultural perspectives and participating in social practices" (p. 70). Everett (2012) defines culture as "the set of values shared by a group and the relationship between these values, along with all the knowledge shared by a community of people, transmitted according to their traditions" (p. 6).

Brooks' concept of "patterns for living" highlights personal experiences, community experiences, and community history. The *Standards* mention perspectives of a society, while Everett draws attention to values that groups of people share. This paper's concept of cultural perspectives fits well within this three-source overview, because as previously referenced, the term is understood and comprised by topics such as the ideas, values, beliefs, and experiences people have regarding cultural domains within their own culture. These perspectives can be found in the words and expressions of everyday speech, and they are transmitted via language which serves as a conduit for communication, while it also transmits culture.

Whorf's theory of linguistic determinism states, "our linguistically determined thought world not only collaborates with our cultural idols and ideals, but engages even our unconscious personal reactions in its patterns and gives them certain typical characters" (1952, p. 41). This theory directly ties language to thought, and therefore even grammar can influence the perceptions and world views people have. Shaul and Furbee (1998) further define Whorf's theory as, "the doctrine that a language, because of its idiosyncratic lexicon (and possibly grammatical categories), determines how a native speaker of the language perceives reality and thinks" (pp. 42-43). However, the extent to which language and thought are interwoven, and the extent to which thought occurs independently from language, is debated among scholars (Clark, 1973; Jackendoff, 1987; Nuyts, 1990). Everett (2012) posits "it is immediately obvious that the most important thinking tool at our disposal, besides our brain,

is not a calculator, a book, or a computer, but language…and without language it would be impossible to sequence our thoughts well, to review them in our minds, to engage in contemplation" (pp. 49-50). However, later in the same publication, Everett also opines "even though language contributes to human thought, thinking nonetheless goes on in non-human heads also, just as it went on in pre-human hominid heads. In fact, if thought were not possible in some ways without language, we could never have achieved language in the first place" (p. 158). As an example of non-linguistic thought, Nuyts (2012) contends convincingly that when people think about three-dimensional space and movement through three-dimensional space the most efficient and therefore effective way to do so is non-linguistically (pp. 329-330). Please see Nuyts and Pederson (1997) for a comprehensive overview on the topic of non-linguistic thought.

Work in sociolinguistics has shown that people frequently employ different speech styles, dialects and vocabularies when speaking in different social contexts and locations. Sociolinguistic research has also affirmed that people within common economic strata or occupational groups actively use jargon, colloquialisms or slang terms as a means to identify with and accommodate other members of their respective stratum (Bonvillain, 1993; Penny, 2000; Trudgill, 1983). In describing the "the heart of a language," MacGregor-Mendoza (2020) states "it is found in the ways that people interact with one another in their own communities to joke, to barter, to praise, to educate and connect with one another to express love, joy, sympathy, remorse, and a host of other sentiment" (p. 30).

This paper maintains that the everyday language of native speakers, the words and expressions themselves, represent a vast resource for culture understanding. This assertion is supported by the standing that there exists a connection between language and culture (Damen, 1987; Peck, 1998; Perkins, 1992; Seelye, 1993; Shaul & Furbee, 1998; Stroinska, 2001; Thanasoulas, 2001). Fawcett et al. (1984) contend that "a culture as a whole may be characterizable as a vast integrated semiotic in which can be recognized a number of subsemiotics, one of which is language" (p. 96). Whorf (1956) articulates "every language contains terms that have come to attain a cosmic scope of reference, crystallize in themselves the basic postulates of an unformulated philosophy, in which is couched the thought of a people, a culture, a civilization, even an era" (p. 61). Even though McWhorter (2014) takes to task those elements regarding Whorfianism that he compellingly concludes are overreaching, he nevertheless comments, "readers may justifiably sense an implication at this point in my argumentation that language has nothing to do with culture, or at least nothing important or interesting. Nothing could be further from the truth…I must make clear that I am referring solely to a *particular* argument about language and culture" (p. 59). Lastly, Agar (1994) succinctly adds, "culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture" (as cited in Garrett-Rucks, 2016, p.8). For a concise but thorough overview regarding the history of scholarly work on the topic of language and culture, please see Kramsch (2011).

The present study does not wish to enter the debate regarding the extent to which language and thought, or language and culture are interconnected. Instead, based on this body of scholarly discourse, this manuscript draws the conclusion that the analysis of words and expressions to glean teachable cultural content for

L2 students has merit because language contains cultural knowledge, and its communicative value plays a central role in the transmission of culture from person to person, and generation to generation.

Goals of the Study

The *Standards* (2015) identify many benefits students realize by studying a second language. One benefit described in the "Comparisons" goal area is gaining insight into the "multifaceted nature of interaction between language and culture" (p. 91). The "Communities" goal area claims, "competence in more than one language and knowledge of other cultures empowers learners to communicate more effectively in the various environments that they will experience during their lifetime" (p. 103). The cultural subject matter derived via Word Analysis research on colloquialisms supports these benefits and would help L2 students achieve them. As McWhorter (2014) affirms, "especially intuitive to all of us is that words and expressions in our language can be cultural" (p. 59).

As an example of Word Analysis, this paper's focus is concentrated on the dual value of the word *la madre* [mother] as expressed in Mexican colloquial speech. The word *la madre* in Mexican society can be used in expression that symbolizes love and sanctity, and it is also frequently used in coarse speech and the most hurtful of insults. So severe are the possible misunderstandings that can stem from this word that foreign visitors are sometimes encouraged to avoid using the term entirely. De Mente (1996) states:

> *Madre* is used in good as well as bad references to motherhood, in prayers and in the most serious kinds of insults. In fact, Mexicans are so sensitive to the word that some 'cultural experts' recommend that foreigners simply do not use it at all because it is so easy to misuse. (p. 176)

This dual value of the term la madre can be explained by analyzing four focal points found in Mexican history, literature and society: (1) *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, (2) The matriarch of the family, (3) *La Chingada* and (4) *La Malinche*. The soft and loving quality can be traced to *La Virgen de Guadalupe* and the matriarchal role of mothers within the Mexican home. The hurtful and insulting quality can be traced to the tragic history of indigenous women during the Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire, from which comes *La Chingada* who is a figure that represents indigenous women raped by Spaniards resulting in the beginning of the mestizo ethnicity. Finally, the hurtful quality also stems from the story of *La Malinche*, an Indigenous Mexican woman who was given to conquistador Hernán Cortés as an enslaved person.

By conducting a historical and literary overview of these four areas, the origin of the contrasting meanings of the word *la madre* unlocks. Consequently, cultural content for the L2 classroom can be produced and taught so that students not only learn about Mexico's history and culture, but more specifically, gain awareness with respect to a unique phenomenon within the country's cultural perspectives. This outcome will help students develop their own cultural competence of Mexican perspectives, which will meaningfully improve their experiences while interacting with Mexican people. This is the principal goal of Word Analysis.

La Madre - Background

The first source of the soft and loving qualities of the word *la madre* in Mexican Spanish is tied to the history of *La Virgen de Guadalupe*. In 1531, an indigenous man named Juan Diego saw an apparition of the Virgin Mary while walking in the countryside. The Virgin of Guadalupe, as she later became known, appeared with dark skin and is affectionately regarded today as the mother of Mexico. This is especially true for Mexico's Catholic population which continues to be the majority in the country (Cultural Atlas, 2021). Brasch (1967) offers the following commentary about the *Virgen de Guadalupe*:

> The First Lady of most nations is usually the ruling monarch's or president's wife. There is no doubt that in Mexico she is the Virgin of Guadalupe. People have asked why she chose an ignorant peasant to carry her message. It has been explained that the choice was meant to emphasize the Virgin's love for the poorest of the poor. (p. 119)

Representations of *La Virgen* are commonly found within Mexican households and in places of business. *La Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* [The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe] located in northern Mexico City is a religious shrine that hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit each year. Among many interesting details regarding *La Virgen* during Mexico's colonial era, Taylor (1987) provides an overview of baptismal records that show the frequency of people, female and male, who were named Guadalupe, and he also describes the key religious role of *La Virgen* as an intercessor and mediator between the spiritual and physical worlds (pp. 16-21). For millions of Mexicans today, *La Virgen* de Guadalupe continues to be a sacred mother, and from her prominent place in Mexican history the word *la madre* in Mexican Spanish takes on and conveys softness and love.

The second source for the positive connotation of the word *madre* is the matriarchal figure within the Mexican home. Although Mexican society continually changes and gender roles are reforming (Cerrutti & Zenteno, 1999; Chant & Craske, 2003), historically it lends itself to the practice of *machismo* in which domestic responsibilities and the overall household are domains of mothers. Mothers in Mexico are known for placing a high priority on their families. De Mente (1996) comments:

> When used in positive references to motherhood, the word *madre* instantly conjures up an image of mothers who are a cross between angels and saints—mothers who are still virginal, who are kind, tender, loving, loyal, and self-sacrificing. In other words, the mother of Jesus Christ incarnate. They [Mexican mothers] sacrificed themselves to their children and husbands, but life within the household revolved around them, not the fathers. (p. 177)

Nobles (2013) describes the impact that the migration of Mexican men to the United States has had on the increasing number of children being raised in fatherless homes. In 1992, 1 in 100 Mexican children had a father in the United States; by 2005, 1 in 22 children had a father in the United States. In rural areas the percentage of children being raised in fatherless homes is even more pronounced (pp. 1307-1311). Nobles et al. (2015) document the adverse emotional toll that this migration

pattern has on nonmigrant mothers. While the primary motivation of this migration pattern is financial need, not machismo, a social outcome that occurs is that the central place within Mexican homes remains occupied by mothers. In summary, the history and spiritual salience of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* along with the revered status of Mexican mothers as household pillars explain why the word *madre* often has a tender, unconditionally loving value in Mexican speech and culture.

Both explanations for the hurtful and insulting property of the word *madre* stem from the violent end of the Aztec civilization in Mexico at the hands of Spanish conquistadors. The first source comes from the widespread assault and rape of indigenous women, the *madres* of the mestizo ethnicity, by Spanish soldiers. This horrible fact regarding the Conquest of Mexico has left a wound in the Mexican psyche that may never fully heal. In his book *El Laberinto de la Soledad* [*The Labyrinth of Solitude*], the famous Mexican writer and Mexico's only laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Octavio Paz (1997) says the following about this tragic truth, "*Para el español la deshonra consiste en ser hijo de una mujer que voluntariamente se entrega, una prostituta; para el mexicano, en ser fruto de una violación*" [For the Spaniard, dishonor consists in being the son of a woman who voluntarily submits herself, a prostitute; for the Mexican, in being the result of a rape] (p. 55). MacLachlan and Rodriguez (1980) assert, "The Spaniards [conquistadors] tended to view native women as part of the booty" (p. 198).

From this historical tragedy comes the figure *La Chingada* whose name is used in many of the most hurtful insults in Mexican Spanish. Paz (1997) defines *La Chingada* as "*La Madre abierta, violada o burlada por la fuerza*" [The mother who is exposed, violated or scorned by force] (p. 87). Paz continues his commentary on *La Chingada* with the following, "*Si la Chingada es una representación de la Madre violada, no me parece forzado asociarla a la Conquista, que también fue una violación, no solamente en el sentido histórico, sino en la carne misma de las indias*" [If *La Chingada* is a representation of the violated mother, it does not seem forced to me, to associate her with the Conquest which was not only a violation historically but also of the flesh of indigenous women] (p. 94).

Additionally, the word *madre* has obtained a hurtful and insulting quality from the story of *La Malinche*. Although for decades numerous scholars have justly called for a reconsideration of *La Malinche's* legacy (Candelaria, 1980; Cypress, 1991; Godayol, 2012; Romero & Harris, 2005; Tate, 2017), for many Mexicans *La Malinche* is considered a traitor to Mexico's indigenous people and history. She is remembered for directly aiding Hernán Cortés in his destruction of the Aztec Empire. At first, she was his slave and used as a translator. Later she became a vital asset in Cortés' conquest. She is credited for notifying Cortés about Motecuhzoma II's plan to ambush him. When Cortés learned of this plot, he ordered a preemptive attack on the Aztecs which resulted in most of the best Aztec warriors being killed (León-Portilla, 1987, pp. 105-110). *La Malinche* went on to become Cortés' lover and eventually she gave birth to Cortés' son which, in myth, started the mestizo ethnicity (Ashby & Ohrn, 1995, pp. 42-43). A lingering feeling of resentment or betrayal is associated with *La Malinche*, the mythical mother of all mestizos, who today represent the overwhelming majority of Mexico's population. Concerning *La Malinche*, Paz (1997) writes "*el pueblo mexicano no perdona su traición a La*

Malinche" [the Mexican people do not forgive their betrayal from the Malinche] (p. 94). From her name comes the term *Malinchism* which Pereira (2020) defines as, "A social phenomenon, distinctive of Latin America, which generates an internalisation of valuation patterns characterised by denying and underestimating local cultural expressions and considering foreign cultures as models of emulation" (p. 1176). In summary, the dire history of indigenous women during the Spanish Conquest, coupled with the memory of *La Malinche* and the myth surrounding the origin of the mestizo people, lead to the deeply wounding capacity of the word *madre* when used in certain expressions.

La Madre - Contemporary Colloquial Uses

The manifestation of this duality regarding the term *madre* is broadly visible in Mexican Spanish and culture. The famous genre of Mexican cinema, the Melodrama, offers titles of films with very positive usages of the word *madre*. Such titles include *Mi Madrecita* and *Madre Adorada* which translate as "My Sweet Mom" and "Adored Mother" (Standish, 1996, p. 185). There are also many common sayings that denote a very positive connotation to the word and concept of *la madre*. The following two expressions are examples: *Que Dios bendiga a quien le parió* [May God bless the one who gave birth to you] and *Madrecita Santa* [Sweet Holy Mother], which is often said during prayers. Furthermore, if a Mexican swears on his mother, *Lo juro por mi madre* [I swear it on my mother], it is generally taken and understood with utmost seriousness.

Contrary to these positive values, there is an abundance of expressions that use the term *madre* in a way that many would consider the most insulting and hurtful forms of Mexican vulgarity. The following examples are a small sample among a multitude: *Huele a madres, Me vale madres, El tráfico está de madres, ¡Ni madres!, Hijo de tu pinche madre,* and *Chinga tu madre*. In the first expression, which translates as "It smells horribly," the term *madre* is used as a synonym for the word *mierda*, which is the Spanish word for "shit." The second expression is an impolite form of saying "I don't care." The third negatively describes traffic congestion by curiously using the term *madre*. The fourth expression is used to coarsely say "No way!" when a proposition is rejected. The fifth means "Son of your deplorable mother." The final vulgarity has woven within its meaning the legacy of *La Chingada*, causing it to be amongst the most offensive Mexican profanities. It literally means, "Go fuck/violate your mother." However, in the context of appropriate language for classroom instruction, the translation "Go rape your mother" is advised.

Pedagogical Implications

When studied through the lens of Mexican history, the origin and rationale behind these positive and negative expressions using the term *madre* are more easily understood and explained. These cultural messages are not difficult to teach. One method to convey the history, culture and overall Mexican experience behind these expressions is the use of condensed readings followed by class discussion. Throughout the textbook *Abriendo paso Temas y Lecturas* (Díaz & Nadel, 2014) readings on a variety of topics are the center of instruction, which are then followed

by *después de leer* [after reading] questions and discussion. In this same vein of teaching methodology, please see the Appendix which offers four examples of Spanish readings with English translations that encompass *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, the Mexican mother, the origin of *La Chingada* and finally the story of *La Malinche*.

If during the *después de leer* follow up, students were given a list of positive and negative Mexican colloquialisms using the term la *madre*, and then were asked to evaluate those expressions against the historical summaries provided via these four readings, this paper advances the raison d'être of these dichotomous and extreme expressions in everyday Mexican Spanish would unlock. If used for a unit on Mexican culture, or a unit on *la familia* [family], these paragraphs could prompt lively ensuing class discussions and would therefore be ideal for a conversation class. The advanced vocabulary, grammar and writing would challenge composition students or those taking the third level of an elementary sequence. Heritage speakers, particularly those of Mexican descent, could learn about the history and culture of their ancestry in a way that captures the uniqueness of Mexico. By becoming acquainted with Octavio Paz, these students would perhaps take pride in learning about Mexico from one of its most famous 20th century writers. Regardless of the course or student profile, this topic and the corresponding readings would help learners grasp, understand and appreciate the dual values the term *la madre* carries in everyday Mexican Spanish. They would attain a glimpse of what the term can mean to Mexicans and how their expressions reflect its cultural and historic value. This lesson would likely endure in the memories of the students long after the conclusion of the course. As the *Standards* (2015) contend:

> Whether or not learners continue the study of a particular language throughout their formal education, the understandings gained about the nature of language and its interaction with culture carry over into future circumstances where they, as learners and workers in the 21st century, will have the confidence and competence to interact in other cultural settings. (p. 92)

Also worthy of note, Garrett-Rucks (2016) draws attention to challenges foreign language educators continue facing in the context of teaching culture. In chapter 5 of her book, successful culture learning projects are described which serve as templates for instructors to follow in their classrooms. As an additional value, this manuscript's simple lesson plan to teach Word Analysis mateiral provides educators with an easy method to deliver meaningful presentations on the cultures they target in their courses. This lesson plan could also be integrated within current OERs and textbooks as a source of new subject matter that would complement their scope of culture instruction.

In summary, efforts to teach culture that incorporate Word Analysis content will help L2 students learn about the cognitive cultural perspectives associated with the vocabulary usage of native speakers. As a result, they will continue developing their cultural competence and awareness of target cultures which will improve the experiences they have while interacting with native speakers. To reiterate, this outcome is the principal goal of Word Analysis. Otherwise, as Hendon (1980) points out, the students will learn only utterances and not the cultural appropriateness connected to these utterances (as cited in Fleet, 2006, p. 7).

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study stem from the vastness of languages and cultures. If scholars decide to conduct future Word Analysis research, how do they choose which cultural category to prioritize? Why would one category warrant attention above another? In the case of Spanish, given the number of Spanish speaking countries, how do scholars objectively target one country for research over another? Perhaps a simple solution for scholars is to give priority to a particular category or country by following the existing outline of lesson topics found in textbooks. Nevertheless, these questions illustrate the challenging exploratory endeavor scholars will face if cultural subject matter derived through the Word Analysis approach is broadly embraced for inclusion in language instruction materials.

An avenue for future research that broadens further the Word Analysis approach in an exciting way, and also employs a different method, is the use of free-listing tasks. Free-listing tasks are a common data collection technique used by linguistic scholars, cultural anthropologists and language historians (Nolan, 2002; Ryan et al., 2000; Weller & Romney, 1988; Wolfram & Schillings-Estes, 1998). This method is effective for evaluating patterns of salience, or relative order of mention of terms in a list compiled by sampling targeted groups. Salient terms are the most typical, representative and commonly used terms mentioned early in the list and by multiple respondents; for example, the top five most commonly mentioned terms. Free-listing tasks are interviews in which a researcher will ask groups of respondents to list things in a domain (example: listing the types of plants or animals in the local environment). Quinlan (2005) describes free-listing tasks as a research method that rests on three principles. "First, when people freelist, they tend to list terms in order of familiarity. Second, individuals who know a lot about a subject list more terms than do people who know less. Third, terms that most respondents mention indicate locally prominent items" (p. 2).

If applied from the perspective of Word Analysis, free-listing based research could be used to examine the cultural insights found in everyday words and expressions among the targeted groups. For example, if targeted groups of respondents within a community were asked to list the first ten words or expressions that come to mind when the interviewer says the terms *las fiestas y celebraciones* [parties and celebrations] or *tu pareja ideal* [your ideal partner], the author of this manuscript posits there will be identifiable overlapping patterns within the respondent groups for each emic category that could yield insightful content to share with L2 students. The data would likely reveal a coup d'oeil regarding the ideas, values, and beliefs that the respondents have about the selected domains. Regarding free-listing as a research tool, H. Russell Bernard (2018) comments, "Free listing is a deceptively simple, but powerful technique…you'd be surprised how much you can learn from a humble set of free lists" (p. 235). Current efforts to teach culture to language students could be well complemented by incorporating Word Analysis subject matter derived from free-listing based research.

Conclusion

The foundation of the Word Analysis approach is rooted in the belief that

cultural messages can be found in everyday colloquialisms, and they represent a treasure trove of largely untapped content on cultural perspectives. This paper understands cultural perspectives as the ideas, values, beliefs, and experiences native speakers have regarding cultural domains within their own culture. Historical and literary references are examined to glean understanding regarding the origin of the wide ranging connotation that the term *la madre* has in Mexican Spanish. The follow up discussion offers a simple lesson plan for educators to follow that examines several examples of illustrative words and expressions using the term *la madre* against a backdrop of concise readings on *La Virgin de Guadalupe*, *La madre mexicana*, *El origen de La Chingada* and *La Malinche*. The origin of the extreme dual value the term *la madre* carries in Mexican Spanish unlocks by studying these illustrative words and expressions in tandem with the concise readings. Through the Word Analysis approach, this paper demonstrates that L2 students will better understand what the term *la madre* can mean to Mexicans and the historical reasons behind its double meaning and usage in Mexican Spanish. In short, this outcome will enable learners to attain a glimpse into Mexican cultural perspectives. This glimpse will allow learners to develop an empathy which serves as the cornerstone for developing their cultural competence and sensitivity toward target cultures.

In summary, the pedagogical contribution of this study has the potential to significantly enhance the culture instruction L2 programs offer in their beginning level courses. This study's findings could also further broaden the already robust culture presentation found in elementary level language textbooks and their ancillary materials. Whether researchers continue to analyze colloquial expressions by conducting historical and literary overviews, or if they choose to use free-listing tasks to gather cultural data, the blueprint is established for an approach and method that allows cultural perspectives to unlock for the benefit of students. Lastly, while this manuscript focuses on Mexico and Mexican Spanish, the Word Analysis approach is certainly not limited to one country or language.

As language instruction professionals, our collective goal remains to continually advance the field. We must continue to embrace the challenge of teaching the culture woven within the words our students learn because "understanding the words is not the same as understanding the message" (Seelye, 1993, p. 2). By studying the dual value of the term *la madre* in Mexican Spanish, this paper's findings are a small step into the vast arena of cognitive cultural perspectives and their corresponding delivery to L2 students. The central goal of this undertaking remains to increase the cultural sensitivity and competence among L2 students which is a fundamental priority of second language instruction. The *Standards* contend, "culture cannot be understood as being static in terms of its products, practices and underlying perspectives but rather we must remain open to new hypotheses and questions as we seek to interact with cultural competence and understanding in the world of today and of the future" (p. 70). It is the sincere hope of this manuscript's author that the contribution of this paper will foster conversation around a new hypothesis that has potential to meaningfully impact our collective endeavor to teach culture, and therefore improve the understanding of our students.

Acknowledgements

References

Agar, M. (1994). *Language shock: Understanding the culture of conversation.* William Morrow.

Ashby, R & Ohrn, D. G. (Eds.). (1995). *Herstory: Women who changed the world.* Viking.

Barcroft, J., Sunderman, G. & Schmitt. (2011). Lexis. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 571-583). Routledge.

Bernard, H. R. (2018). *Research methods in anthropology* (6th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Blanco, J. A. (2017). *Portales.* Vista Higher Learning.

Blanco, J. A. (2023). *Portales 2.0.* Vista Higher Learning.

Blitt, M. A. & Casas, M. (2018). *¡Exploremos!* National Geographic Learning/ Cengage Learning.

Bonvillain, N. (1993). *Language, culture, and communication.* Prentice Hall.

Bowers, P. N. & Kirby, J. R. (2010). Effects of morphological instruction on vocabulary acquisition. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 23*(5), 515–537.

Brasch, R. (1967). *Mexico a country of contrasts.* David McKay Company.

Bright, R. (1958). *The land and people of Mexico.* The MacMillan Company.

Brooks, N. (1968). Teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals, 1*(3), 204-217.

Candelaria, C. (1980). La Malinche, feminist prototype. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, 5*(2) 1-6.

Cerrutti, M. & Zenteno, R. (1999). Cambios en el papel económico de las mujeres entre las parejas mexicanas [Changes in the economic role of women between Mexican couples]. *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos - El Colegio de México [Urban and Demographic studies – El Colegio de México], 15*(1), 65-95.

Chant, S. H. & Craske, N. (2003). *Gender in Latin America.* Rutgers University Press.

Clark, H. (1973). Space, time, semantics and the child. In T.E. Moore (Ed.), *Cognitive development and the acquisition of language* (pp. 28-64). Academic Press.

Cubillos, J. H. (2014). Spanish textbooks in the US: Enduring traditions and emerging trends. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching, 1*(2), 205-225.

Cultural Atlas. (2021). https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/mexican-culture mexican-culture-religion

Cypress, S. M. (1991). *La Malinche in Mexican literature: From history to myth.* University of Texas Press.

Damen, L. (1987). *Culture learning: The fifth dimension in the language classroom.* Addison-Wesley.

De Castells, M., Guzmán, E., Lapuerta P. & Liskin-Gasparro, J. (2015). *Mosaicos* (6th ed.). Prentice Hall.

De Mente, B. L. (1996). *NTC's dictionary of Mexican cultural words.* National Textbook Company.

Díaz, J. M. & Nadel, M. F. (2014). *Abriendo paso temas y lecturas.* Pearson.

Dorwick, T., Pérez-Gironés, A., & Becher, A. (2017). *Puntos de partida* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Dorwick T., Pérez-Gironés, A., Knorre, M., Glass, W., & Villarreal, H. (2007). *¿Qué tal?* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Everett, D. L. (2012). *Language the cultural tool.* Vintage Books.

Fawcett, R. P., Halliday, M.A.K., Lamb, S. M., & Makkai, A. (Eds.). (1984). *The semiotics of culture and language*. Frances Pinter.

Fleet, M. (2006). The role of culture in second or foreign language teaching: Moving beyond the classroom experience. ERIC Database I.D. ED491716 https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED491716

Garrett-Rucks, P. (2016). *Intercultural competence in instructed language learning: Bridging theory and practice*. Information Age Publishing.

Godayol, P. (2012). Malintzin/La Malinche/Doña Marina: Re-reading the myth of the treacherous translator. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies, 18*, 61-76. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14701847.2012.716645

Hendon, U. S. (1980). Introducing culture in the high school foreign language class. *Foreign Language Annals, 13*(3), 191-199.

Hendrickson, J. M. & Borrás, G. (1998). *Poco a poco* (4th ed.). Heinle & Heinle.

Huhn, C. (2018). Integration of the National Foreign Language Standards in post-secondary beginning Spanish textbooks. *Tennessee Foreign Language Association Journal, 7*, 3-13. http://www.tflta.org/uploads/1/0/6/9/10696220/tfltajournal2018.pdf#page=6

Jackendoff, R. (1987). *Consciousness and the computational mind*. MIT Press.

Kramsch, C. (2011). Language and culture. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 305-317). Routledge.

León-Portilla, M. (1987). *Los antiguos mexicanos* [The ancient Mexicans]. Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Levin, J. R., Carney, R. N. & Pressley, M. (1988). Facilitating vocabulary inferring through root-word instruction. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 13*, 316-322.

MacGregor-Mendoza, P. (2020). Language, culture, and Spanish heritage language learners: Reframing old paradigms. *Dimension, 55*, 19-34.

MacLachlan, C. M. & Rodriguez O., J. E. (1980). *The forging of the cosmic race.* California University Press.

Malkiel, Y. (1993). *Etymology*. Cambridge University Press.

Marinelli, P. J. & Oramas, M. (2002). *Avenidas*. Heinle & Heinle.

Martínez-Lage, A., Gutiérrez, J., & Rosser H. L. (2003). *¡Tú dirás!* (3rd ed.). Heinle & Heinle.

McWhorter, J. H. (2014). *The language hoax: Why the world looks the same in any language*. Oxford University Press.

National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages* (4th ed). Author.

Nobles, J. (2013). Migration and father absence: Shifting family structure in Mexico. *Demography, 50*(4), 1303-1314. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-012-0187-8

Nobles, J., Rubalcava, L., & Teruel, G. (2015). After spouses depart: Emotional wellbeing among non-migrant Mexican mothers. *Social Science & Medicine, 132*, 236-244. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4562970/

Nolan, J. (2002). Wild plant classification in Little Dixie: Variation in a regional culture. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology, 6*(1), 69-81.

Nuyts, J. (1990). Linguistic representation and conceptual knowledge representation. In J. Nuyts, A.M. Bolkestein & C. Vet (Eds.), *Layers and levels of representation in language theory: A functional view* (pp. 263-293). Benjamins.

Nuyts, J. (2012). Language is an instrument for thought. Really? *Pragmatics & Cognition, 20*(2), 317-333.

Nuyts, J. & Pederson, E. (1997). *Language and conceptualization*. Cambridge University Press.

Paz, O. (1997). *El laberinto de la soledad* [*The labyrinth of solitude*]. [Reprint of 1950]. Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Peck, D. (1998). Teaching culture: Beyond language. *Yale-New Havens Teachers, 3*(6), 1-9. https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/units/1984/3/84.03.06.x.html

Penny, R. J. (2000). *Variation and change in speech*. Cambridge University Press.

Penny, R. J. (2002). *A history of the Spanish language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Pereira, G. (2020). Malinchism as a social pathology. *Philosophy and Social Criticism, 47*(10), 1176-1198. http://doi.org/10.1177/0191453720962542

Perkins, R. D. (1992). *Deixis grammar and culture*. John Benjamins Company.

Potowski, K., Sobral, S., & Dawson, L. (2012). *Dicho y hecho* (9th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Quinlan, M. (2005). Considerations for collecting freelists in the field: Examples from Ethobotany. *Field Methods, 17*(3), 219-234.

Rodríguez Nogales, F., Samaniego, F. A., Blommers, T. J., & Chuffe, E. (2010). *¡Dímelo tú!* (6th ed.). Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Romero, R. & Harris, A. N. (Eds.) (2005). *Feminism, nation and myth: La Malinche*. Arte Público Press.

Ryan, G., Nolan, J., & Yoder, S. (2000). Using successive free lists to generate explanatory models. *Field Models, 12*(2), 83-107.

Seelye, H. N. (1993). *Teaching culture: Strategies for intercultural communication* (3rd ed.). National Textbook Company.

Shaul, D. L. & Furbee, L. N. (1998). *Language and culture*. Waveland Press.

Standish, P. (Ed.) (1996). *Dictionary of twentieth century culture: Hispanic culture of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*. Gale Research.

Stroinska, M. (Ed.) (2001). *Relative points of view*. Berghahan Books.

Swan, M. 2011. Grammar. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 557-570). Routledge.

Tate, J. (2017). La Malinche: The shifting legacy of a transcultural icon. *The Latin Americanist, 61*(1), 81-92. https://doi.org/10.1111/tla.12102

Taylor, W. B. (1987). The Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain: An inquiry into the social history of Marian devotion. *American Ethnologist, 14*(1), 9-33.

Thanasoulas, D. (2001). The importance of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. *Radical Pedagogy, 3*(3), 1-25. http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org

Thoms, J. J., Arshavskaya, E. & Poole, F. J. (2018). Open educational resources and ESL education: Insights from US educators. *TESL-EJ, 22*(2).

Thoms, J. J. & Thoms, B.L. (2014). Open educational resources in the United States: Insights from university foreign language directors. *Systems, 45*, 138-146.

Toetenel, L. (2014). Social networking: A collaborative open educational resource. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 27*(2), 149.

Trudgill, P. (1983). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society*. Penguin Books.

Weller, S. & Romney, K. A. (1988). *Systematic data collection*. Sage Publications.

Whorf, B. L. (1952). *Collected papers on metalinguistics*. Foreign Language Institute.

Whorf, B. L. (1956). *Language, thought and reality*. M.I.T. Press.

Wolfram, W. & Schillings-Estes, N. (1998). *American English: Dialects and variation*. Prentice-Hall.

Appendix

La Virgen de Guadalupe: Una historia breve

Poco después de la conquista Española, la Virgen María apareció a un campesino indígena llamado Juan Diego. La Virgen era una mujer morena y se parecía mucho a una mestiza. Le habló a Juan Diego como si fuera su hijo y le pidió que construyera una iglesia en aquel lugar que antes era el sitio de un templo Azteca en honor de la diosa del maíz y la tierra. La Virgen le dijo, "Yo soy la Madre de todos ustedes que viven en esta tierra". Juan Diego fue a decirle al arzobispo la demanda de la Virgen pero él estaba demasiado ocupado para recibirle. Cuando eventualmente llegó a hablar con el arzobispo, solamente recibió rechazo. La Iglesia no creía que la Virgen escogiera a un hombre indígena para llevar su mensaje. Decepcionado, Juan Diego volvió a ver la Virgen. Él aceptó la culpa de su fracaso porque pensó que otro hubiera podido entregar de mejor manera el mensaje de la Virgen al arzobispo. Sin embargo, la Virgen insistió en que él fuera su mensajero. Entonces Juan Diego volvió a ver al arzobispo, y con lágrimas en los ojos, le dijo por segunda vez el mensaje de la Virgen. El arzabispo decidió mandar miembros del Clero para seguirle a Juan Diego al lugar en dónde la Virgen le había visitado. No obstante, cuando el grupo llegó al destino, ellos no vieron nada y aún peor, Juan Diego se les perdió de la vista. El grupo regresó con el arzobispo y le acusaron de mentiroso y fraudulento a Juan Diego. Después del fracaso, la Virgen habló con Juan Diego por tercera vez. Le dijo que volviera el siguiente día para recibir un símbolo para llevar al arzobispo, aunque no le dijo que iba a ser el símbolo. Tristemente, Juan Diego no regresó para ver a la Virgen. Tal vez porque ya había perdido la fe. Sin embargo, la Virgen lo buscó y le ordenó que fuera al lugar en dónde apareció ante él la primera vez. Cuando Juan Diego llegó al sitio, encontró rosas castellanas, una variedad extranjera a esta región que nada más tenía cáctuses. Él recogió las rosas en una tela para llevarlas a la iglesia. Cuando abrió su tela ante unos miembros del Clero, uno de ellos se sorprendió de que las rosas se habían formado parte de la tela. Inmediatamente llamaron al arzobispo y cuando llegó, Juan Diego, con las manos temblando, dejó caer la tela al piso. En este instante una imagen en color de la Virgen apareció en la tela. Después de eso, el arzobispo no dudaba más que la Virgen había aparecido ante Juan Diego. Hoy en día hay una basílica en la loma donde se cree que la Virgen apareció y allí se encuentra el manto original (adapted and translated from Brasch, 1967, pp. 115-117; Bright, 1958, pp. 36-37).

The Virgin of Guadalupe: A brief history

Shortly after the Spanish Conquest, the Virgin Mary appeared to a peasant named Juan Diego. The Virgin was dark-skinned and she looked like a mestizo woman. She spoke to Juan Diego as if he were her son and she asked him to build a church in the place of their meeting, which used to be an Aztec temple honoring the earth and corn goddess. The Virgin told him, "I am the mother of all you that live on this earth." Juan Diego went to tell the archbishop the Virgin's demand but he was too busy to receive him. When he eventually spoke with the archbishop, Juan Diego only received rejection. The Church did not think the Virgin would choose an indigenous man to take her message. Disappointed, Juan Diego returned to see the Virgin. He

blamed himself for his failure and thought another would have delivered better the Virgin's message to the archbishop. However, the Virgin insisted that he continued as her messenger. Juan Diego went again to see the archbishop, and with tears in his eyes, he told him the Virgin's message. This time the archbishop sent members of the clergy to follow Juan Diego to the place where the Virgin had visited him. When they arrived at the destination they did not see anything, and worse still, they lost sight of Juan Diego. They returned to the archbishop and accused Juan Diego as a fraud and liar. After this failure, the Virgin spoke with Juan Diego a third time. She told him to return the next day to receive a symbol to take to the archbishop, although she did not tell him what the symbol would be. Sadly, Juan Diego did not return to see the Virgin. Maybe because he had lost faith. However, the Virgin looked for him and ordered him to go to the place where she appeared the first time. When Juan Diego arrived, he found Castilian roses, a foreign variety to that region which only had cactuses. He picked up the roses in a cloth to take to the church. When he opened his cloth in front of some clergy members, one was surprised to see the roses had become part of the cloth. They immediately called the archbishop and when he arrived, Juan Diego with his hands trembling, dropped the cloth. In that moment an image of the Virgin appeared in color on the cloth. After that, the archbishop never doubted again that the Virgin had appeared to Juan Diego. Today, there is a basilica on the hill where it is believed the Virgin appeared and there you can find the original cloth (adapted from Brasch, 1967, pp. 115-117; Bright, 1958, pp. 36-37).

La madre mexicana

La relación entre la palabra madre y todo lo que es bueno y malo en México es un concepto tan fuerte en la cultura mexicana que la palabra ha llegado a ser de las más usadas, más honradas, más sensibles y más peligrosas en todo el idioma. Históricamente, hombres mexicanos de todos los niveles sociales han pensado que la crianza de los niños es trabajo femenino y por lo tanto han sido padres ausentes la mayoría del tiempo. Esta actitud se llama el machismo. Hoy en día, la migración de los hombres mexicanos a Los Estados Unidos es otro factor por el cual muchos niños son criados en hogares sin padres. En el año 2005, se calculó que de cada veintidos niños mexicanos, uno vive sin su padre debido a la migración. En las comunidades rurales la ausencia de los hombres por la migración es aún mas destacante. Por lo tanto, las madres mexicanas viven en una sociedad que todavía tiene ragos del machismo, y por necesidad económica, un porcentaje alto de los hombres viajan al extranjero para buscar empleo. Esta combinación causa que la responsabilidad de criar a los niños caiga sobre los hombros de las mujeres mucho más que sobre los hombros de los hombres. El resultado cultural y societal es que las madres mexicanas siguen ocupando un lugar sumamente especial y son adoradas por el pueblo mexicano (adapted and translated from De Mente, 1996, pp. 105-108, 176-177; Nobles, 2013, pp. 1307-1311).

The Mexican mother

The relation between the word mother and all that is good and bad in Mexico is a concept so strong in Mexican culture that the word has become one of the most used, most honored, most sensitive and most dangerous in the entire language. Historically,

Mexican men at all social levels have thought that child rearing is a feminine job and they have been absent fathers most of the time. This attitude is called *machismo*. Today, the migration of Mexican men to the United States is another factor that causes many children to be raised in fatherless homes. In the year 2005, it was calculated that of every twenty-two children in Mexico, one lives without a father because of migration. In rural communities, the absence of men due to migration is even more pronounced. Therefore, Mexican mothers live in a society that still has characteristics of *machismo*, and out of economic necessity, a high percentage of the men travel abroad to search for work. This combination causes the responsibility of childrearing to fall on the shoulders of women much more than on the shoulders of men. The cultural and societal result is that Mexican mothers continue occupying a very special place, and they are adored by the Mexican people (adapted from De Mente, 1996, pp. 105-108, 176-177; Nobles, 2013, pp. 1307-1311).

El origen de La Chingada

Por contraposición a Guadalupe, que es la Madre virgen, La Chingada es la Madre violada. ¿Quién es la Chingada? Ante todo, es la Madre. La Chingada es la madre que ha sufrido, metafórica o realmente, la acción coactiva e infame implícita en el verbo que le da nombre. Cuando [el verbo 'chingar'] se alude al acto sexual, la violación o el engaño le prestan un matiz particular. Él que chinga jamás lo hace con el consentimiento de la chingada. En suma, chingar es hacer violencia sobre otro. Es un verbo musculino, activo y cruel: pica, hiere, desgarra y mancha. Provoca una amarga y resentida satisfacción en él que lo ejecuta. El "hijo de la Chingada" es el engendro de la violación, del rapto o de la burla. Si la Chingada es una representación de la Madre violada, no me parece forzado asociarla a la Conquista, que también fue una violación, no solamente en el sentido histórico, sino en la carne misma de las indias. Toda la angustiosa tensión que nos habita se expresa en una frase que nos viene a la boca cuando la cólera, la alegría o el entusiasmo nos llevan a exaltar nuestra condición de mexicanos: ¡Viva México, hijos de la Chingada! (adapted from Paz, 1997, pp. 82-94).

The origin of *La Chingada*

As opposed to [The Virgin of] Guadalpue, who is the virgin Mother, *La Chingada* is the violated Mother. Who is *La Chingada*? Above all else, she is the Mother. *La Chingada* is the mother who suffered metaphorically or literally the infamous coercive action implied in the verb that gives her, her name. When the verb '*chingar*' alludes to the sexual act, rape or betrayal give it a particular tinge. He who '*chinga*' [third person singular conjugation of the verb chingar], never does it with the consent of *La Chingada*. To summarize, the verb '*chingar*' is to do violence to another person. It is a masculine verb, active and cruel; it bites, hurts, rips and stains. It provokes a bitter and resented satisfaction in the one who administers it. The 'son of the *chingada*' is the spawn of rape, shame or insult. If *La Chingada* is a representation of the violated mother, it does not seem forced to me, to associate her with the Conquest which was not only a violation historically but also of the flesh of indigenous women. All of the anguished tension that inhabits us is expressed in one phrase that comes to our mouths when anger, glee or enthusiasm makes us exalt

our condition as Mexicans: Long Live Mexico, sons of *La Chingada*! (adapted and translated from Paz, 1997, pp. 82-94).

La Malinche: Una introducción breve

La Malinche es una mujer envuelta en contradiciones históricas. La Malinche nació de una princesa de Viluta, un pueblo indígena en México al comienzo del siglo dieciséis. Su estatus social le permitió ser educada, un previlego no disponible para la mayoría de las niñas de su tiempo. Durante una época de guerra y turbulencia, ella fue o capturada o vendida, y después vendida de nuevo por los Mayas como una esclava a los Aztecas. En este momento, su vida privilegiada se acabó. Sin embargo, su belleza, inteligencia y capacidad de hablar varios idiomas la separó de las otras esclavas. Ella llegó con los españoles como parte de un tributo que los Aztecas mandaron a Cortés con el deseo, irónicamente, de parar su conquista. En poco tiempo, Cortés reconoció la capacidad verbal e intelectual de la Malinche y le prometió la libertad si ella le ayudaba a establecer buenas relaciones con la gente indígena de México. Como una esclava, no tenía muchas opciónes. Aunque al inicio Cortés dudaba de su fidelidad, su preocupación se terminó cuando la Malinche le reveló que los Aztecas planeaban un ataque contra él. Cortés respondió con un ataque preventivo y como resultado los Aztecas perdieron la mayoría de sus mejores guerreros. En el año 1521 Cortés y los españoles completaron la conquista del Imperio Azteca. Además de recibir de Cortés su libertad y abundante riqueza, la Malinche también se convirtió en su amante y tuvieron un hijo. Según la leyenda, la etnicidad del mestizo empezó con el hijo de la Malinche y Cortés. No hay duda de que el éxito de Cortés puede ser atribuido directamente a la ayuda que recibió de la Malinche. Para el pueblo mexicano de hoy, ella es una figura histórica controversial y muchos la consideran como una traidora de la cultura e historia Azteca de México (adapted and translated from Ashby & Ohrn, 1995, pp. 41-43; León-Portilla, 1987, pp. 105-110).

La Malinche: A brief introduction

La Malinche is a woman wrapped in historical contradictions. *La Malinche* was born to a princess of the village Viluta, Mexico at the beginning of the 16th century. Her social status allowed her to be educated, a privilege not made available to the majority of girls of her time. During a time of war and turbulence, she was either captured or sold, and later sold again by the Maya as a slave to the Aztec. In this moment, her privileged life ended. However, her beauty, intelligence and ability to speak many languages separated her from the other female slaves. She arrived with the Spanish as part of a tribute the Aztecs gave to Cortés with the hope, ironically, of halting his conquest. Cortés quickly recognized the verbal and intellectual ability of *La Malinche* and promised her freedom if she helped him to establish good relations with the indigenous people of Mexico. As a slave, she did not have many choices. Although initially Cortés doubted her trustworthiness, his concern was over when she told him of an attack the Aztecs were planning against him. Cortés responded with a preemptive attack which resulted in the Aztecs losing the majority of their best warriors. In the year 1521 Cortés and the Spaniards completed their conquest of the Aztec Empire. Not only did *La Malinche* receive her freedom and abundant wealth from Cortés but she also became his lover and they had a son. According to

legend, the mestizo ethnicity began with the child of *La Malinche* and Cortés. There is no doubt that Cortés' success can be directly attributed to the help he received from *La Malinche*. For Mexican people today, she is a controversial historical figure, and many consider her a traitor of the Aztec culture and history of Mexico (adapted from Ashby & Ohrn, 1995, pp. 41-43; León-Portilla, 1987, pp. 105-110).

4

A Review of Language Practice Exercises within Commercially-available eBooks and Electronic Companion Practice

Carolyn Gascoigne
University of Houston-Downtown

Abstract

Following a brief historical review of the second language teaching profession's relationship with first- and second-year textbooks, this article examines the treatment of language practice activities as found in beginning post-secondary French eBooks, as well as their accompanying electronic workbooks and online learning platform practice. Using Aski's 2003 typology, five post-secondary eBooks and accompanying electronic practice are reviewed in order to examine their use of mechanical drills, meaningful drills, communicative drills, and communicative practice. Two structures were targeted for review across all formats. Electronic workbook and learning platform practice was found to be both more mechanical in nature and more drill-focused than what has been recommended in the literature. Electronic workbook and online learning platform practice was also found to be more mechanical than the corresponding eBook activities.

Keywords: *Drills, eBooks, Electronic Workbooks, Online Learning Platform Practice, Textbooks*

Background

Regardless of the level of instruction, the language educator's relationship with their textbook has been a long and complicated one (Aski 2003, 2005; Chen, 2016; Etienne & Sax, 2009; Wagner, 2015; Walz, 1989). Our needs as educators have evolved, as have our materials, in terms of content, technique, and medium of delivery. Still, our professions' historical reliance on commercially-available materials has fueled our vigilant examination of them. For example, numerous studies of and recommendations for the development of foreign language textbooks and materials span the 1920s to the present day. Our focus has run the gamut. We have examined specific topics such as the treatment of vocabulary (Bieber et al., 2004; Etienne & Sax, 2009; Keller, 1991; Neary-Sundquist, 2015; Talalakina, Brown, & Kamrotov, 2019), grammar (Aski, 2005; Azaz, 2018; Frantzen, 1995; Glisan & Dresher, 1993; Lally, 1998; Mason & Nicely, 1995; Requena & Tissera, 2018; Scott & Randall, 1992), reading (Gascoigne, 2002; Horton, 2020; Osa-Melero, 2012), writing (Lally, 1998; Liao & Chen, 2009; Scott 1996), culture (Li, 2016), sexism (Brosh, 1997; Graci, 1989), accuracy (Herschensohn, 1988: Wagner, 2015), dialects (Schoonmaker-Gates,

2017; Wieczorek, 1991), pragmatics (Vellenga, 2004), strategy use (El Essawi, 2013), and the need for ancillaries (McGrath, 2002; Wagner, 2015). We have also offered guidance to one another on the textbook selection process (Angell, DuBravac, & Gonglewski, 2009; Enkin, 2015; López-Medina, 2021), given general critiques (Aski, 2005; Rings, 2008), and suggested alternative sources of content (Russell & Swanson, 2022).

Certainly, technology has produced some of the most exciting and impactful areas of change within commercially-available second language materials. While we have been using technology for decades (Church, 1986; Corbeil, 2007; Smith, 1991; Yang, Hsieh, & Wu, 2020), a post-pandemic world only accelerates and deepens our relationship with it, as well as our need to examine it (Russell & Swanson, 2022). The following pages, therefore, endeavor to review long-standing and repeated recommendations from the literature made for commercially-available foreign language materials, ostensibly physical textbooks, to see if any traces of these recommendations may be found current online materials. However, before focusing on recent technology, we must pause to examine what the profession has consistently requested of, and what it has found in, commercially-available materials at several points in recent history. To further narrow our focus, we will limit our consideration to the treatment of language practice exercises within commercially-available materials.

A Recent Historical Perspective

Given the intimate relationship between language educator and language materials, our profession has spent more time and energy than most reviewing pedagogical materials, creating and sharing adoption rubrics, and conducting comparative studies of student learning outcomes (Aski 2003, 2005; Bieber et al., 2004; Etienne & Sax, 2009; Lally, 1998; McGrath, 2002; Rings, 2008; Walz, 1989). While these queries span decades, even centuries (Jespersen, 1904) we will focus on the last few decades, beginning with Walz' 1989 review of language practice activities in beginning college-level textbooks, moving on to Lally's 1998 review, and to Aski's 2003 review. We conclude with a 2022 review of language practice and drills as found in eBooks and their corresponding online practice materials (electronic workbook and online learning platform practice) for introductory French.

Drills have long been a staple of instructed language learning even throughout various proclamations for or against their utility. As Walz (1989) stated, despite evolving language acquisition theory, "the idea of practicing language has survived" (p. 160). In his review of twenty-five beginning French textbooks, Walz sought to describe the types and level of contextualization of language practice activities. He found that three of the textbooks examined contextualized essentially all drills, thirteen did so for many or most drills, and nine had no contextualization whatsoever. Moreover, he went on to note several problems with the contextualization that was found, such as:

- a lack of continuity of thought across related activities within a unit;
- a reintroduction of repetitiveness in drills;
- an increase in the use of unfamiliar vocabulary;
- a general lack of forced choice activities in which comprehension is essential

for completing the task;
- a masking of the distinction between mechanical, meaningful, and communicative activities;
- an increase in class time needed to complete contextualized exercises; and
- a falsification of reality resulting from the creation of unrealistic sentences and situations. (Walz 1989 as cited in Lally, 1998, p. 308)

Regrettably, Walz concluded that contextualization "is not an adequate solution to the need for more realism because many of the drills take too much time, confuse drill and communication, and encourage inappropriate meanings or no meanings at all" (p. 165). He also called for a reduction of mechanical drills and an increase in the number of forced-choice activities, wherein the context must be understood in order for the correct answer to be provided.

Ten years after Walz' review, Lally (1998) returned to the introductory college French textbook to see whether or not Walz' suggestions had found their way into the classroom by way of adopted textbook material. In addition to examining the treatment of writing, Lally also compared the number of mechanical drills versus communicative activities along with the availability of forced-choice practice. As opposed to Walz' extensive review of twenty-five textbooks, Lally instead limited her focus to six introductory French textbooks, all of which overtly claimed to espouse a communicative approach. Her review categorized language practice activities into three main types: drills, communicative, and forced-choice. Drills were mechanical in nature and included substitutions and transformations. Communicative activities involved real-word tasks and encouraged open-ended responses. Forced-choice activities forced the learner to select from among alternative responses but required that the context be understood in order for the correct selection to be made.

Table 1

Summary of Activity Type by Textbook **(Lally, 1998)**

	Drills	Communicative	Forced-choice	Other
Text 1	41%	33%	15%	11%
Text 2	19%	49%	16%	16%
Text 3	37%	27%	18%	18%
Text 4	34%	31%	22%	13%
Text 5	30%	15%	42%	13%
Text 6	18%	45%	10%	27%

The majority of the textbooks reviewed still relied heavily upon drills, while also offering communicative practice. Forced-choice activities were rare, with one

exception. Indeed, only one of the six books (Text 5) could be said to have made any strides toward incorporating recommendations from second language acquisition (SLA) research into language practice exercises.

In 2003, Aski conducted a textbook analysis based on a typology of production activities that measured the degree to which learners were forced to process meaning. Aski, however, focused her review on beginning post-secondary Italian textbooks. Ultimately, she too found that language practice activities as found in commercially-available introductory textbooks, lag "behind the findings and recommendations of SLA research" (p. 59). Specifically, she found a reluctance to embrace the importance of language practice activities that emphasize the relationship between form and meaning. In addition to her review, Aski's typology of language practice activities measured the degree to which learners are required to process and negotiate meaning. Activities within the typology range from "mechanical exercises that manipulate forms but require no meaning to be processed, to the most communicative type, in which the primary goal is to generate original and meaningful exchanges" (p. 57). Aski's (2003) typology consists of the following major categories:

- Mechanical drills, such as substitutions and transformations where students substitute or manipulate forms without needing to understand the prompt. Typically, mechanical drills have only one correct response option.
- Meaningful drills, such as verb pools, certain fill-in-the-blank exercises, translation   exercises, or some pair work. Meaningful drills are those in which an understanding of the input and the output is needed, yet there is still only one possible correct answer. Students do not negotiate or generate meaning and no new information is created or exchanged.
- Communicative drills such as yes/no questions, or disjointed questions for group or pair work contain information that is new or unknown to the asker of the question. There will also usually be multiple correct answers. While communicative drills may be formulaic, they allow for student creativity or opinion.
- Communicative language practice requires attention to meaning in order to produce the correct form. There will be no pattern or formula to rely upon. Examples include role-playing, or information-gap or task-based activities. (2003, pp. 60-61)

Examining seven introductory textbooks and limiting the focus of her review to the language practice activities accompanying two preselected grammatical structures, Aski found that only 14% of the activities could be described as communicative language practice for the first target structure, and a mere 3% of the language practice activities qualified as communicative language practice for the second target structure.

What do these three reviews completed across the last three decades have in common? Each found that, in general, commercially available introductory post-secondary language materials (textbooks and ancillaries) lag behind the recommended SLA research concerning language practice activities. Also, since drills neither take up much time in the classroom, nor much space on the page, they have dominated our materials. In spite of this overarching trend, each review also

found a blend of activity types in most materials, with a slowly emerging trajectory toward embracing more recent recommendations--at least in some of the materials. This should not be surprising. It takes time for research and recommendations to manifest themselves in published material, either through new editions or entirely new products.

But what about eBooks and electronic workbook type activities commercially produced for use in first-year post-secondary language study? There may be an expectation that these resources, and the language practice activities they contain, will be cutting edge, and therefore nimble and responsive to research and best practices. To find out, the following pages apply Aski's 2003 typology of mechanical drills, meaningful drills, communicative drills, and communicative language practice to five introductory French books available in an eBook format, along with additional practice offered via corresponding electronic workbooks and companion learning platforms, nearly twenty years later.

Materials Review

Most publishers offer their introductory language material in multiple formats to include bound physical paper books, the ability to print off certain page selections, or full electronic versions that mirror the physical book. In most cases, commercially available eBooks for first- and second-year language study tend to be mirror images of their physical book siblings (or twins, rather). While eBooks often have the added benefit of portability and embedded audio and video at the students' fingertips, there are typically no differences in content or organization between the electronic book and the bound physical book.

Electronic workbooks and companion learning platforms providing additional practice can range from interactive and adaptive online practice to the more mundane. Certainly, online resources can provide a wealth of listening, viewing, and writing practice through embedded video and audio links or interactive chat. Even speaking practice can be achieved through online chat or audio pairings, as well as through recordings and playbacks.

Without question, technology offers opportunities for language learning that were unimaginable only a generation ago. But how do these developments and options manifest themselves in our introductory materials, specifically in terms of language practice activities? Do our electronic resources reflect the consistent recommendations repeated over the last few decades concerning the use and nature of drills and other language practice? To begin to answer this question, the following pages apply Aski's (2003) typology of language practice activities, not to physical textbooks as commonly done in the past, but to eBooks and to their companion practice often mediated by publisher-specific online learning platforms.

Methodology

In the fall of 2021, the present author contacted several publishers of introductory French textbooks (Cengage, McGraw-Hill, Vista) to request review access to eBooks, electronic workbooks, if available, as well as access to companion learning platform practice. Recent editions (2017-2020) were targeted for review. As

this project is not intended to be a book review, individual titles are not identified. The anonymity of materials is a practice commonly employed in an effort to keep the readers' focus on the trends and not the individual texts (Byrnes, 1988; Etienne & Sax, 2009; Lally, 1998; Walz, 1989).

Target Structures

Just as Aski (2003) did in her original study, this review limits its focus to the practice activities that accompany two structures. In this case, the focus is on two structures commonly presented in beginning French materials: the present tense of the verb avoir and demonstrative adjectives. The present tense of the verb avoir is usually presented early in textbooks or eBooks, whereas demonstrative adjectives tend to be covered toward the middle or near the end of first-semester materials.

Materials

The instrument employed to review practice activities was Aski's 2003 typology that includes mechanical drills, meaningful drills, communicative drills, and communicative practice. Mechanical drills typically include transformations, pattern practice, or substitutions. Here, learners substitute or manipulate forms without needing to understand the prompt or the answer. In meaningful drills, on the other hand, students must understand the prompt and the answer, but do not generate their own meaning. Examples can include pair work based on given information, yet where no new information is exchanged (Q: How much does a cup of coffee cost in France? A: 5 Euros.) Unlike meaningful drills where there is one correct answer known to all, communicative drills contain information that is unknown to the person presenting the prompt, such as in an interview. Often one part of the communicative drill is scripted while the other part is left open to the creativity of the students. Communicative language practice requires attention to meaning in order to produce the correct form. According to Aski (2003), the goal of communicative practice is to immerse the learner in a meaningful context in which he or she is motivated to respond. Examples of communicative practice include role paying where learners are able to negotiate meaning, as well as information-gap, and task-based activities.

Procedure

All practice activities for the target structures were identified across all five eBooks and companion electronic practice. After identifying the chapters containing the target structures, each chapter was reviewed twice; once line by line and again using a search function. The present author, a professor of French with 25 years of teaching experience, then reviewed each practice activity using Aski's typology above. In cases where a given classification was not immediately clear, the present author consulted with a colleague before making a final classification.

Findings

The breakdown of language practice types by structure, textbook program, and format is presented in Tables 2-5 below.

Table 2

EBook (EB) Language Practice for the Verb "Avoir"

	EB 1	EB 2	EB 3	EB 4	EB 5
Mechanical drills	46.5%	11%	75%	19%	50%
Meaningful drills	40.5%	56%	25%	31%	25%
Communicative drills	13%	22%	0%	25%	25%
Communicative practice	0%	11%	0%	25%	0%

While drills (mechanical, meaningful, and communicative) constitute the majority of language practice across eBook activities for the verb avoir, we see modest attempts to infuse communicative practice.

Table 3

EBook (EB) Language Practice for Demonstrative Adjectives

	EB 1	EB 2	EB 3	EB 4	EB 5
Mechanical drills	31.5%	75%	50%	0%	33%
Meaningful drills	37.5%	25%	50%	67%	67%
Communicative drills	25%	0%	0%	33%	0%
Communicative practice	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Language practice activities for demonstrative adjectives within eBooks is heavily weighted toward mechanical and meaningful drills, with the inclusion of communicative drills in two of the five eBooks.

Table 4

Electronic Companion (EC) Language Practice for the Verb "Avoir"

	EC 1	EC 2	EC 3	EC 4	EC 5
Mechanical drills	50%	90%	100%	38%	88%
Meaningful drills	33%	10%	0%	31%	12%
Communicative drills	17%	0%	0%	17%	0%
Communicative practice	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%

With a few exceptions, language practice across electronic companion activities for the verb *avoir*, is predominantly devoted to mechanical drills.

Table 5

Electronic Companion (EC) Language Practice for Demonstrative Adjectives

	EW 1	EW 2	EW 3	EW 4	EW5
Mechanical drills	70%	100%	100%	25%	83%
Meaningful drills	18%	0%	0%	0%	17%
Communicative drills	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Communicative practice	4%	0%	0%	75%	0%

Two of the five electronic companion practice sets for demonstrative adjectives are exclusively dedicated to mechanical drills. One of the programs, on the other hand, employed a large number of communicative practice activities.

Discussion

In reviewing the findings of Table 2, language practice for the verb *avoir*, two of the reviewed eBooks offered practice activities in all four categories (mechanical drills, meaningful drills, communicative drills, communicative practice), with one of the two eBooks offering a relatively similar number of activities across all four types. Two other eBooks offered practice in three of the four areas, and only one textbook

was void of any communicative drills or practice whatsoever, devoted instead to mechanical drills (75%), followed by meaningful drills (25%). When looking at language practice activities for demonstrative adjectives, on the other hand, only one of the five eBooks offered language practice across all four types. The remaining four eBooks provided language practice in only two of the four types, but not necessarily the same two. While three of the four eBooks offered only the most limited type of practice (mechanical drills and meaningful drills), one of the five offered meaningful and communicative drills only. Taken together, there appears to be as much variation in the type of language practice across eBooks themselves as there is across the target language structure. For example, eBook 2 offered relatively few mechanical drills for the target structure *avoir* (11%), but 75% of all language practice for demonstrative adjectives were mechanical drills. Only one eBook (eBook 3) was consistent in its treatment of both structures.

In terms of the electronic companion resources, language practice activities for the target structure *avoir* were disproportionally mechanical in nature, with mechanical drills accounting for 90% of language practice in e-workbook 2, 100% in e-workbook 3, and 88% in e-workbook 5. When reviewing practice for demonstrative adjectives, this penchant is even stronger, with mechanical drills accounting for 100% of language practice in both e-workbook 2 and 3, 83% in e-workbook 5, and 70% in e-workbook 1. E-workbook 4 was the outlier by offering all four types of language practice for *avoir*, and a split between the extremes of mechanical drills (25%) and communicative practice (75%) for demonstrative adjectives.

On the whole, and with the exception of one program, the electronic companion materials appear to be more committed to lower-level mechanical drills than their respective eBooks, and therefore also their physical book companions. So, not only do lower-level drills survive in eBooks, they appear to thrive in electronic companion practice. This then begs the question: should electronic workbooks online learning platforms not be more nimble and responsive to the research regarding language practice activities since they can be updated without the costs associated with reprinting physical textbooks? They may still be. Because electronic companion practice is ostensibly taking place outside of the classroom, be that a physical, virtual, hybrid, it allows for more time during any type of synchronous interaction to be devoted to meaningful practice. Certainly, flipped or inverted models of instruction wherein the traditional order and manner of instruction are inverted have not only gained in popularity but are almost second nature to many language educators (Moranski & Henery, 2017; Moranski & Kim, 2016). Here, instead of an educator presenting new content during a synchronous class and students completing practice activities as homework, new content might be presented outside of class via video thereby freeing up synchronous meetings for more meaningful interaction and practice (Garrett-Rucks & Russell, 2022).

As language educators have routinely sought to maximize the opportunities for meaningful language practice while together, either through a flipped model or not, we have also tended to push mechanical or skill-getting practice outside of the synchronous class (Cherrez, 2022; Zhang & Cherrez, 2021). As such, finding a higher level of mechanical and meaningful drills among the electronic companion material, or material that we expect will be completed outside of any synchronous meetings,

need not be surprising after all. Perhaps, more mechanical practice, while commonly accepted as inferior to meaningful practice, lends itself to the electronic companion setting. Immediate and unequivocable feedback, such as that which Aski (2003) describes as having only one possible correct answer, lends itself to both automaticity and asynchronicity. If offered as a sacrifice that affords more meaningful practice to take place elsewhere, the current findings become much more palatable. Of course, this assumes that more meaningful practice is indeed the priority.

Conclusion

There are limitations concerning the scope of this study: it looks at materials for one language (French), it limits its review to five textbook programs, and it targets two structures. Therefore, one cannot definitively predict that all other programs, or the treatment of all language features therewithin, will be similar. These limitations have, however, allowed for a review that closely parallels that of Aski's original study, but is now extended to eBooks and corresponding electronic practice either in the shape of electronic workbooks or corresponding online learning platforms.

The findings of this review suggest that eBooks, and the physical textbooks that they reflect, tend to offer a blend of mechanical drills, meaningful drills, communicative drills, and communicative practice. Companion electronic practice, on the other hand, was found to be both more mechanical in nature and more drill-focused than what has been recommended in the literature. This could be due in part to the language teaching profession's embrace of flipped-classroom techniques as well as those where mechanical and meaningful drills are used outside of the classroom thereby freeing up class time for meaningful interaction when together. A follow-up study surveying language educators about their use of eBooks, e-workbooks, and corresponding online learning platforms in general, as well as when, where, and how language practice activities are assigned would shed additional light on this question. Until then, companion electronic practice appears to be less responsive to the recommendations of SLA research than their eBook or physical book companions despite existing within the most nimble and easily updated format possible.

References

Angell, J., DuBravac, S., & Gonglewski, M. (2009). Thinking globally, acting locally: Selecting textbooks for college-level language programs. *Foreign Language Annals, 41*(3), 562-573.

Aski, J. (2003). Foreign language textbook activities: Keeping pace with second language acquisition research. *Foreign Language Annals, 36*(1), 57-65.

Aski, J. (2005). Alternatives to mechanical drills for the early stages of language practice in foreign language textbooks. *Foreign Language Annals, 38*(3), 333-343.

Azaz, M. (2018). The link between morphosyntactic accuracy and textbook presentation: The morphosyntax of subject-verb agreement in Arabic. *Foreign Language Annals, 51*(4), 831-851.

Bieber, D., Conrad, S., & Cortez, V. (2004). If you look at...: Lexical bundles in university teaching and textbooks. *Applied Linguistics, 25*, 371-405.

Brosh, N. (1997). The sociocultural message of language textbooks: Arabic in the Israeli setting. *Foreign Language Annals, 30*(3), 311-326.

Byrnes, H. (1988). Whither foreign language pedagogy: Reflections in textbooks, reflections on textbooks. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German, 21*(1), 29-36.

Chen, A. (2016). A critical evaluation of text difficulty development in ELT textbook series: A corpus-based approach using variability neighbor clustering. *System, 58*, 64-81.

Cherrez, N.J. (2022). Instructors as designers of learning experiences: A case study of a flipped intermediate Spanish course. *Dimension, 57*, 108-129. https://www.scolt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/5_Instructors-as-Designers.pdf

Church, D.M. (1986). Textbook-specific computer exercises for elementary French students. *Modern Language Journal, 70*(3), 251-257.

Corbeil, G. (2007). Using the French tutor multimedia package to teach two different French past tense verbs: Which method is more effective? *Calico Journal, 24*(2), 313-330.

El Essawi, R. (2013). Language learning strategies in Arabic as a foreign language textbook. *Al-Arabiyya, 46*, 37-59.

Enkin, E. (2015). Supporting the professional development of foreign language graduate students: A Focus on course development and program direction. *Foreign Language Annals, 48*(2), 304-320.

Etienne, C., & Sax, K. (2009). Stylistic variation in French: Bridging the gap between research and textbooks. *Modern Language Journal, 93*(4), 584-606.

Frantzen, D. (1995). Preterit/Imperfect half-truths: Problems with Spanish textbook rules for usage. *Hispania, 78*(1), 145-158.

Garrett-Rucks, P., & Russell, V. (Eds.) 2022. Special issue: Focus on online, hybrid, and flipped language instruction. *Dimension, 57*. https://www.scolt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Dimensions2022.pdf

Gascoigne, C. (2002). Reviewing reading: Recommendations versus reality. *Foreign Language Annals, 35*(3), 343-349.

Glisan, E., & Dresher, V. (1993). Textbook grammar: Does it reflect native speaker speech? *Modern Language Journal, 77*(1), 23-33.

Graci, J. (1989). Are foreign language textbooks sexist? An Exploration of modes of evaluation. *Foreign Language Annals, 22*(5), 477-486.

Herschensohn, J. (1988). Linguistic accuracy of textbook grammar. *Modern Language Journal, 72*(4), 409-414.

Horton, A. (2020). Evaluating ESL textbooks for functional and sociocultural lessons of literacy. *TESOL Working Papers Series, 18*. https://jstor.org/stable/community.31298305

Jespersen, O. (1904). *How to teach a foreign language*. [English version] The Macmillan Co.

Keller, H. (1991). Word frequency and pedagogical value: Contrasting textbook vocabulary lists with word frequency counts. *The Slavic and East European Journal, 5*(2), 228-244.

Lally, C. (1998). Back to the future: A look at present textbooks and past recommendations. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*(1), 307-314.

Li, J. (2016). The transmission of cultural values via EFL Textbooks in China. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society, 8*(2), 128–144.

Liao, M., & Chen, C. (2009). Rhetorical strategies in Chinese and English: A comparison of L1 composition textbooks. *Foreign Language Annals, 42*(4), 695-720.

López-Medina, B. (2021). On the development of a CLIL textbook evaluation checklist: A focus-group study. *Teaching English as a Second Language Journal (TESL-EJ) 25*(1). https://tesl-ej.org/pdf/ej97/a17.pdf

Mason, K., & Nicely, K. (1995). Pronouns of address in Spanish-textbooks: The case for vos. *Foreign Language Annals, 28*(3), 360-370.

McGrath, I. (2002). *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching*. Edinburgh University Press.

Moranski, K., & Henery, A. (2017). Helping learners to orient the inverted or flipped language classroom: Mediation via informational video. *Foreign Language Annals, 50*(2), 285-305.

Moranski, K., & Kim, F. (2016). 'Flipping' lessons in a multi-section Spanish course: Implications for assigning explicit grammar instruction outside of class. *Modern Language Journal, 100*, 830-852.

Neary-Sundquist, C. (2015). Aspects of vocabulary knowledge in German textbooks. *Foreign Language Annals, 48*(1), 68-81.

Osa-Melero, L. (2012). A Comparative analysis of the impact of cooperative versus textbook-based individual pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension of students of Spanish. *Hispania, 95*(2), 299-315.

Requena, P. E., & Tissera, M. V. (2018). Variation in second language Spanish textbooks: A study of variable clitic placement. *Hispania, 101*(1), 55–68. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26387641

Rings, L. (2008). Modifying the first-year textbook dialogues along a Hymesian model of meaning: A Theory of in-depth language processing for the L2 classroom. *Foreign Language Annals, 33*(2), 181-188.

Russell, V., & Swanson, P. (2022). Communicative online language teaching in disruptive times: A redesign of the introductory Spanish curriculum. *Dimension, 57*, 1-34. https://www.scolt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1_CommunicativeOnlineLang.pdf

Schoonmaker-Gates, E. (2017). Regional variation in the language classroom and beyond: Mapping learners' developing dialectal competence. *Foreign Language Annals, 50*(1), 177-194.

Scott, V. (1996). *Rethinking foreign language writing*. Heinle & Heinle.

Scott, V., & Randall, S. (1992). Can students apply grammar rules after reading textbook explanations? *Foreign Language Annals, 25*(4), 357-363.

Smith, G. (1991). Tomorrow's foreign language textbook: Paper or silicon? *Calico Journal, 8*(4), 5-15.

Talalakina, E., Brown, T., & Kamrotov, M. (2019). Lexical profile of L2 Russian textbooks. *Russian Language Journal / Русский Язык, 69*, 195–212. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26877883

Vellenga, H. (2004). Learning pragmatics from ESL and EFL textbooks: How likely? *ESL-EJ, 8*(2), 1-18.

Wagner, J. (2015). *Vocabulary, variation, and culture in American university textbooks of French*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of South Australia.

Walz, J. (1989). Context and contextualized language practice in foreign language teaching. *Modern Language Journal, 73*(2), 160-168.

Wieczorek, J. (1991). Spanish dialects and the foreign language textbook: A sound perspective. *Hispania, 74*(1), 175-181.

Yang, F.-C. O., Lo, F.-Y. R., Hsieh, J. C., & Wu, W.-C. V. (2020). Facilitating communicative ability of EFL learners via high-immersion virtual reality. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 23*(1), 30–49. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26915405

Zhang, S., & Cherrez, N.J., (2021). Seamless integration between online and face-to-face: The design and perceptions of a flipped-blended language course. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching, 11*(4), 19-39.

5

Multi-Level World Language Classes: Teacher Perspectives and Practical Solutions

Christina Huhn
University of Pennsylvania

Patricia Davis-Wiley
The University of Tennessee

Abstract

Multi-level classes, classrooms that incorporate multiple levels of learners simultaneously, have existed for decades, yet have received little scholarly attention with respect to world language programs. This article presents a review of relevant literature on the topic and reports an analysis of the data from a national survey of U.S. K-16 world language teachers who currently teach or have taught multiple levels or multiple languages in the same class period (n=124). The findings of this exploratory study confirm the long-standing existence of multi-level classes in the U.S. educational landscape and offer suggestions to support teachers confronted with this challenge and ideas for future research.

Keywords: Multi-level Classes, World Languages

Background

The impetus for the present research stems from the authors' personal experience with teachers who found themselves splitting time and energy between two or more different student populations. Additionally, hearing countless stories of World Language (WL) teachers' efforts to manage multiple grade books to collect and maintain data from multi-level courses contributed to the need to investigate this ongoing challenge in which the teachers are charged with making the best of a difficult situation (Hunter & Barr-Harrison, 1979). This situation restricts teachers' ability to focus on research-driven and proven practices such as proficiency-based instruction, High Leverage Teaching Practices (HLTPs) and interpersonal communication (as developed by Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021).

Multi-level world language (WL) courses are not a new phenomenon in the U.S. and have proliferated over the past few decades due to declining WL enrollments in public schools (AMACAD, 2017, Stein-Smith, 2021), diminished school budgets for non-STEM subjects, and competition with AP and advanced level content area classes scheduled at the same time as WL classes (Wells, 2019). Despite being a long-standing issue in WL Education, there appears to be no recent empirical research

that has been conducted regarding how to address the issue both administratively and in the daily classroom. Furthermore, multi-level instruction is not generally addressed in teacher training (Ashton, 2018; Hunter & Barr-Harrison, 1979). In fact, to date, "there is a lack of research into effective pedagogy in the foreign language multilevel classroom" (Ashton, 2018, p. 106).

Indeed, this is a current conundrum for WL teachers who are literally forced to choose between concurrently offering multi-level, single-period classroom languages classes or not offering a particular language class at all. At present, there truly is no viable answer to alleviate this issue, and thus, the rationale for the authors to survey WL teachers who are in this untenable situation. There may be some who feel that combining separate single-level language classes into a larger class could free up a WL teacher to offer a smaller-sized upper-level WL class in a single period is the answer to this problem, yet, these scenarios have their own inherent challenges (Chavez, 2006; Harfitt, 2012). Given these factors, the researchers developed a survey to elicit qualitative data to discover how prevalent this phenomenon is, how the challenge can be alleviated, and what are some strategies used by current instructors to move beyond just "making the best of the situation."

Literature Review

As previously noted, there exists a paucity of published research on the multi-level classroom (Campbell, 1993; Hunter & Barr-Harrison, 1979). Furthermore, much of the tangentially related research dates back decades (Hunter & Barr-Harrison, 1979; Levy, 1982; Robinson, 1990; Strasheim, 1979), or was conducted in a non-U.S. context (Ashton, 2018, 2019; Passmore, 2019). Thus, in order to explore this phenomenon within the present U.S. educational context, it is first necessary to establish a definition of a multi-level classroom.

Operationalizing a Definition of a Multi-Level Classroom

In the published literature, there is no singular, operationalized definition of a multi-level class. The term is used to refer to multi-level, multi-grade, and mixed classes. Strasheim (1979) defines multi-level as "the teaching of two or more levels of foreign [world] language in a single class period" (p. 423). More recently, Carr (2005) expanded this definition to include students at diverse levels of proficiency, background, and experience, while Ashton (2019) adds that it evolved as a means of dealing with declining enrollment numbers. While these perspectives were generated in an international context, anecdotal conversation provides clear connections to the U.S. educational context, including situations where different world languages are taught in the same classroom. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the above definition does not refer to the differentiated instruction that occurs naturally in any classroom due to learning differences among learners. For the purpose of this research investigation, the multi-level classroom is defined as a WL classroom in which learners of varying proficiency levels, curricular levels, and/or language studied are combined into a single class period.

Why do Multi-Level Courses Continue to Exist?

Contrary to what many may believe, school administrators do not necessarily schedule multi-level classes carelessly, casually, or arbitrarily. Historically, multi-level courses have been offered for a number of reasons. In many cases, multi-level classes provide an opportunity to offer courses that do not meet a minimum number of students, or the multi-level class is offered in place of paying a teacher for an overload, or in the absence of additional staff. It may also be driven by the budget of the school which demands using a teacher's services in another subject content area in addition to a WL class and giving the WL teacher the option of teaching a multi-level class versus not teaching a particular language/level at all. In many cases, offering multi-level WL classes can be seen as a victory: Allowing a WL or an advanced level of a WL to be taught rather than be eliminated completely from the curriculum. WL teachers may volunteer to offer multi-level classes in an effort to preserve a more extended sequence and to provide students with opportunities to continue to study and develop proficiency. Additionally, multi-level WL offerings are a way in which a school can continue offering a language in response to enrollment attrition or when there is a very small minority of the total student population interested (Ashton, 2018; Commins, 1996; Strasheim, 1979) in studying a language (i.e., Latin, Russian). Often, these multi-level classes are the result of needing to make the best of a bad situation" (Hunter & Barr-Harrison, 1979, p. 426).

Passmore (2019) notes that the issues from the 1970s and 1980s still exist today and adds that often, multi-level classes become a necessity to address the challenge of low WL enrollments. While more prevalent in international literature, anecdotal evidence suggests that this challenge thrives in U.S. public schools, in particular under the current educational context.

Despite the scarcity and outdated nature of research studies examining the issue of multi-level WL instruction in the same classroom, a thorough review of the extant literature does reveal common themes, including the continued existence of multi-level classes, challenges, and potential strategies for managing this situation.

Quality teaching of more than one level of language in a single class period can certainly present challenges, as documented by Strauber (1985) and later by Campbell (1993) in his review of empirical research studies examining the efficacy of multi-level French and English-French bilingual language instruction in Ontario, Canada (Carleton Board of Education, 1990; Daniel, 1988; LaLonde et al., 1980; Reed, 1991). The environment created by combining multiple levels of instruction in the same classroom at the same time sets up a very difficult dichotomy to manage, which goes well beyond the extremes of classroom differentiation. In today's K-12 teaching environment, where teachers are already overworked and overwhelmed by the demands placed on them, the multi-level classroom increases those already inherently heavy preparation pressures (Bell, 2004).

In a more recent study conducted in the WL classroom, Passmore (2019) reported the results of a study of multi-level classes by New Zealand French teachers. She offers several explanations for why multi-level classrooms are a challenge. First is that traditional pedagogy may not accommodate the needs of multiple levels of learners. Teachers are accustomed to leading and controlling their single-language-

level classrooms which have a different dynamic than multi-level classrooms. A multi-level classroom, by its nature, commonly places the onus on the learner, with an expectation of self-direction and motivation. Yet, when the learner is not a self-directed, focused student, the efficacy of being in a multi-level classroom may not provide the strongest learning environment for all students.

Additionally, Passmore (2019) reports that teachers tend to view the different language levels as separate classes, which they feel requires unique lesson plans for each level. Maintaining the focus and energy for what amounts to two simultaneous classes is draining for the teacher and tends to be ineffective (Levy, 1982; Strasheim, 1979). Teaching each group or level separately can also make students feel disjointed, unsettled, and possibly rushed (to get the work done in a finite period of classroom time). As a result, students in a multi-level classroom may experience a lack of classroom unity and consequently may feel disenfranchised without having the discourse community of a traditional one-level language classroom (Passmore, 2019). Ashton (2018) adds that in the multi-level classroom, "the diversity of the population of learners pose[s] a significant challenge to their teachers…[and]…is more complex as teachers also need to adequately prepare students for the curriculum and assessment requirements at each year level" (p. 105).

Although there is a dearth of empirical research on this issue published during much of the last four decades, current research on WL Education speaks to proficiency-based instruction, high-leverage teaching practices (Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021), and cultural competence, all of which may be further impacted by the demands of the environment created by multi-level classes. Multi-level classes divide the teachers' attention and make it difficult to create the classroom community that is supported by this research. As one example, High Leverage Teaching Practice number #1 (Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility) is made significantly more challenging if the learners in the class are at two different proficiency levels and are focused on completing different tasks. It puts the responsibility on teachers to develop methods that support the research on input when they are forced to multi-task between two different groups of learners. All good classroom teachers differentiate instruction to support student learning. However, multi-level classes provide a challenge beyond differentiation in that the teacher must at times disregard the needs of one group of students in favor of another group, and rely on student self-motivation for success.

Lack of Support and/or Training

Ashton (2019) and Passmore (2019) both noted a lack of professional development for teachers of multilevel language classes. In fact, 85% of the teachers who responded to Ashton's (2019) survey indicated that they had never received any specific professional development (PD) for teaching multilevel classes. The teachers in Ashton's (2017) study also expressed a need for more help with curricular planning and the opportunities to explore new techniques in order to be more successful in the multi-level classroom, contributing to the impetus for this current study.

Given the gap between research completed decades ago and the more recent studies having been conducted in non-U.S. contexts, the topic of multi-level classroom support plays an important role in the current, budget-conscious context of WL

teaching. Previous research provides limited insight into instructor perceptions of multi-level classes, nor does the research identify both challenges and benefits to either teachers or students. Furthermore, research lacks a source of strategies that instructors can use to create a successful learning experience in a multi-level class.

Research Questions

To explores this issue, this study was guided by the following research questions:
1. How do WL instructors feel about teaching multi-level WL classes?
2. What are the challenges of teaching multi-level WL classes?
3. What are some strategies that instructors use to create successful learning environments in multi-level WL courses?

Methods

Survey Instrument and Procedures

Following a thorough search of published literature on multi-level WL classes, the next step was to develop the survey instrument. The authors conducted a small group roundtable at an ACTFL conference, in which a preliminary literature review was presented along with a first draft of the survey. Feedback from participants at the roundtable session helped inform the development of the final survey (Appendix A).

The Qualtrics survey instrument consisted of 25 questions answerable in a Likert-like scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended formats. Following IRB approval, the online survey link and an explanation of the current study were posted on multiple discussion boards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Special Interest Groups, on the FL Teach listserv, and sent via email requests to the presidents of the state WL Associations.

This project used a mixed-methods approach; data were both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. Simple descriptive statistics were calculated for the quantitative responses identifying participant demographics to establish the broad demographic base of respondents while a thematic analysis identified recurrent themes for each set of open-ended answers to allow the teacher perspectives and potential solutions to surface.

Participants

As intended, the survey reached a broad spectrum of the nationally-targeted population which consisted of 124 respondents. The tables below show this population in terms of WL levels taught (Table 1), languages taught (Table 2), years of experience (Table 3), and professional memberships (Table 4). In sum, at the K12 level, there were 111 (90%) high school teachers, 23 (19%) middle school teachers, and six (5%) elementary teachers. Additionally, sixteen respondents (3.2%) taught at a 2-year community college, 4-year university (9%), or another educational venue (1%).

Table 1

Levels of Instruction

Levels of WLs Taught*	% (N=124)	n
High School (9-12)	89.5	111
Middle School (6-8)	18.5	23
4-year University	8.9	11
2-year Community College	3.2	4
Elementary PreK-5	4.8	6
OTHER	.8	1

*n=124, yet some respondents taught multiple levels

Table 2

Languages Taught by Participants

World Languages Taught	%	n
Spanish	48 .4	60
French	26.6	33
German	5.6	7
Chinese	.8	1
Japanese	.8	1
ESL/TESOL	.8	1
OTHER	16.9	21
Total Respondents:		124

Table 3

Teaching Experience of Participants

Years of Teaching Experience	%	n
1-2	3	4
3-5	5	6
6-10	17	21
11-15	13	16
16-20	19	23
>20	42	52
Retired	2	2

In sum, the majority of our respondents are experienced educators, with 52 subjects (42%) self-identified as having more than 20 years of teaching experience in the WL classroom. Additionally, Table 4 shows that our participants are active within the WL profession.

Table 4

Professional Membership of Participants

World Language Association	%	n
State WL association	31.76	81
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)	26.67	68
Regional WL association	6.67	17
American Association of Teachers of French (AATF)	10.59	27
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP)	10.59	27
American Association of Teachers of German (AATG)	3.14	8
American Classical League (ACL)	2.75	7
OTHER	7.84	20

Additionally, of the 124 survey respondents, approximately half (50.8%, n = 63) belong to a small cohort of language teachers in their schools, universities, or school districts, whereas others were the only WL teacher in similar groups (18.55%, n = 23) or part of a large cohort of WL teachers (30.65%, n = 38).

Additionally, the respondents were equally divided between urban (26.6%, n = 33), rural, (35.5%, n =39), and a mix of urban and rural (34.6%, n =38) teaching venues, with an additional 8.9% (n=11) indicating they work in a suburban district and an additional 2.4% (n=3) indicating a unique situation such as a private school, small town, or other classification. In sum, these demographics provide a profile of our respondents that shows a wide variety of backgrounds, teaching experiences, and teaching contexts.

Qualitative Data Analysis

To further explore the role of multi-level classes in today's U.S. educational context, the authors sought to understand how teachers perceived their multi-level classes. Using grounded theory, the researchers discovered common themes from the qualitative data collected via the open-ended responses. As noted above, the survey offered broad, open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide their perspectives; many respondents shared both positive and negative opinions, often within the same response. Several themes emerged from the responses: positive aspects and benefits of multi-level language classes, including pedagogical benefits, and challenges and drawbacks of multi-level classes (for both teachers and students), including a lack of administrative understanding and support, and a need for increased professional development and training.

Findings

Positive Aspects and Benefits of Multi-Level Language Classes

Despite the anecdotal impressions that formed the impetus for this research, many teachers found teaching multiple levels of the same WL to be a positive experience for a variety of reasons. One WL teacher reported that it makes students develop a feeling of family or being part of a community. "When they know that everyone develops at different speeds and with different skill sets, they feel confident about learning to communicate" (Spanish/Russian teacher, 20+ years of teaching). This same teacher commented:

> …students have models who can operate at a higher level… Lower-level students are inspired to achieve more. Gentle competitions can mean that the lower-level students work harder, because if they can win over a native speaker on any language task, they feel very confident. Native speakers often have home resources that can come into the classroom, …bring credibility to the classroom, and they feel valued for what they can contribute. (Spanish/Russian teacher, 20+ years of experience)

Similarly, this sentiment was echoed by younger teachers who commented that "it is good for them to be able to review previous knowledge" (French teacher, 6-10 years of teaching) and "I love it for the AP level because we all learn from one another, including myself as I sometimes have native speakers in the course and we focus a lot on culture and current events" (Spanish teacher, 6-10 years teaching). A more experienced respondent commented:

> … [Combining]two-year alternating curriculum classes [will] also build your enrollment…some of the kids in the lower level emerge as stronger, more proficient students than some of the upper-level kids. (Spanish/French/Latin/ESL teacher retired, 36 years teaching)

Expanding this description of the positive benefits of a multi-level classroom, with multiple language levels in the same classroom, "higher-level students can motivate lower-level students, [and] lower-level students are exposed to higher-level language and may acquire [it] faster" (Spanish, 20+ years teaching). In fact, "many of the lower-level students see the situation as an opportunity to 'step-up,' 'excel' and enjoy that." Of particular benefit to the lower-level student is that if they can communicate with an upper-level student, and perhaps even a native speaker on any language task, they may feel very confident. When exposed to upper-level instruction, lower-level students may have "their interest…piqued by …what [an upper-level or] AP class is doing. They often like to 'eavesdrop' and try to understand the… [language] being spoken" (Spanish teacher, 6-10 years teaching).

Furthermore, one teacher noted that "older [upper level] students can get review on older concepts, and younger students can get a preview of new concepts" (Japanese, 11-15 years teaching). Along the same vein, another teacher added that, "the upper-level students become stronger in their skills because of the careful attention…[the teacher is] paying to making everything comprehensible for everyone" (Spanish, 3-5 years teaching).

In sum, language teachers identified a certain benefit of students learning from each other and expanded opportunities to connect students and build a larger classroom community. Despite these possibilities however, respondents were quick to identify drawbacks and challenges to having multiple class levels combined into a single class period.

Challenges and Drawbacks of Multi-Level Classes

Challenges for Teachers

When asked to expand on the challenges they faced in teaching multi-level courses, many survey respondents found teaching multi-level classes presents similar

challenges to those previously identified by Ashton (2018, 2019) and Passmore (2019). Among the challenges, respondents identified issues of time, balancing the varied student levels and classroom management due to student maturity.

The first challenge concerned issues related to time. Teachers reported having insufficient time to plan, prepare materials, give feedback, and work individually with students and give them "the individual time and instruction that they deserve, and in some cases, really need" (French, 1-2 years teaching). Additionally, multi-level language teachers reported not being able "to fully support each level," (ASL, 3-5 years teaching) find appropriate resources and "plan effectively, making sure the proficiency levels are clearly differentiated within the same theme" (ASL, 3-5 years teaching).

Relatedly, a second challenge voiced by the teachers, confirms Passmore's view (2019) concerning the attempt to balance keeping students on task while providing support for student-centered learning. One respondent summed up this idea:

> It's a very hard balance to walk, teaching 2 classes at the same time. Students end up with less instruction time overall. It's hard for the teacher to do 2 things at once, because students end up asking questions as they encounter them anyway or they get stuck and their group can't figure something out. (Latin, 3-5 years teaching)

Other respondents identified issues related to curriculum and the challenges of meeting the needs of two or more different student populations during the same class period, and "keeping everyone moving forward and covering all the information that both levels need to cover that year" (Italian teacher, 11-15 years teaching).

In addition to the difficulties that arise when addressing student populations that may lack the maturity level and focus that is necessary for student-centered learning, there were WL teachers who found it difficult at to keep students on task and advanced students focused. This can be particularly difficult when: "native speakers can get bored, and beginners can feel frustrated if either end of the language ability group has too much focus." Teachers found it "frustrating to have to continually clarify for students at the lower level, or to keep slowing down the pace of the higher level…[and]…always have the right reading levels available for the whole class." One of the biggest frustrations for one teacher was "keeping everyone on track" and deal with the realization that students were "…not able to do some of the larger group activities with the smaller numbers in a single-level group within the multi-level class…[because] they would be a distraction to the others." Likewise, another teacher expressed a non-language-related issue, "discipline problems can be worse if the kids are given too much freedom" especially when "immature students [are] unable to work independently" (Spanish/Russian teacher, 20+ years of experience).

Challenges for Students

Intertwined with the challenges faced by teachers in the multi-level classroom, students in their multi-level WL classrooms also experienced multiple challenges in this environment including motivational, organizational, and maturity issues. From the teacher's perspective, respondents observed that "upper-level kids are usually very motivated and have reasons to learn the language…[while] many lower-level kids just want the credit to graduate or get into college" (French teacher, 16-20 years teaching).

To be successful in a multi-level classroom environment, students must learn to work independently while the teacher worked with the upper-level students, be self-regulated to stay on task, and "spend much more time in self-paced learning than they would if classes were split." (ASL teacher, 6-10 years teaching.) Thus, "they have to be self-starters and take the initiative in their learning" (Russian teacher, 20+ years of teaching).

Furthermore, there were "students who do not want to be there [may] cause behavioral disruptions," (Spanish teacher, 11-15 years teaching). It is possible this is due in part to being "frustrated that they don't get much individualized time with… [the teacher] because there are so many people in the class" (Spanish, 16-20 years teaching). Another challenge to students in the multi-level classroom was having to deal with the "noise level in a small space" (Spanish, 6-10 years teaching] and staying focused when the teacher is working with the other language level. As one teacher reported, "students today get bored and revert to the phones whenever they are not actively involved with the teacher" (Latin teacher, 20+ years teaching).

Lack of Administrative Support

This study's participants expressed similar concerns as those noted in Ashton's (2018) and Passmore's (2019) research that found that administrators do not necessarily seem to understand the realities of the multi-level classroom. One teacher, in particular (who taught Russian for over 20 years) reported, "I don't [know] whose bright idea it was to place all six levels in one class at my school, but they have done their best to diminish the quality and experience of the program" Another responded added that the "administration would never combine Algebra 1 and calculus yet think nothing of combining level 1 and AP of a language." (Latin, 16-20 years teaching. Another teacher echoed this idea:

> Multi-level classes would be O.K. if the administration and scheduling folk would realize that teaching a multi-level class is like teaching two separate subjects to separate groups/classes in the same periods. It's all about expectations. If I didn't feel so pressured to deliver the curriculum content to the students then I would not be so stressed. (French/German teacher, 16-20 years teaching)

With regards to the level of support they receive from their administration, some respondents (51%, n=63) reported that their institutions or school district were somewhat supportive of them (i.e., training, funding, curricular freedom, resources), while others (42%, n = 52) felt very supported. One participant summed up this varied level of support by commenting: "We are provided with a variety of teacher-generated resources. Our administration will provide us with support, but there are always limits" (Spanish, 6-10 years teaching). Another teacher echoed this idea:

> Most of the administration supports me as the expert in my field. I've had one big issue with a nonsupportive [sic] assistant principal but the principal supports my method as well and thinks it is innovative. Parents and students need explanations and assurance but ultimately,

they like it too. Some other staff still criticise [sic] but they always will.
(Spanish teacher, 6-10 years teaching)

In addition to inconsistent administrative support, participants noted that the value of multi-level classes had evolved over time.

Changing Value Over Time

As noted above, when asked how they feel about having multi-level classes, teachers had mixed reactions. Many reported teaching multi-level classes as being problematic and reported it as having more value in the past than it did at the time that they completed the survey. Two respondents observed, "I do not support it. I do not think that there is educational value behind it as it merely is a strategy to consolidate classes and open up teachers' schedules. (Spanish, 20+ years teaching) and "I do not like it- [it is] hard on students and teacher alike [having] usually large classes" (French, 20+ years teaching). Some teachers found teaching multiple WL levels something that they used successfully at one time, but with increasing class sizes and program cuts, found it a lot less beneficial across languages:

I used to like them [multi-level classes] because it was the only way I could offer 4. As class sizes grew, I started to not like them because it became harder to make sure all were on task and I couldn't give them undivided attention. (Spanish, 6-10 years teaching)

I didn't mind it when there were two FT people in my language, but now that they have cut the other position and I also have to [do] everything, I'm starting to feel exploited. (French teacher, more than 20 years teaching)

I had a thriving Russian program of about 55 students, across two class periods in 2015-2016. Somehow leadership did not allow students to enroll in Russian in Spring 2016. This cut my program in half. Now we are 36 in one class period and at six levels. Meanwhile, today's students see the necessity of studying more than Spanish and French and feel that the school system is not preparing them for the global economy. (Russian teacher, 20+ years teaching)

Not surprisingly, many teachers considered multi-level classes to be a necessary evil or a means to an end. Available published literature noted the value of multi-level classes as a means to an end: Being able to offer upper-level classes (Ashton, 2018; Ward & East, 2016). These sentiments are echoed by several teachers, describing it as "… something I have to do in order to gain/not loose [sic] in student numbers. I feel the drawbacks are more powerful than the benefits" (French teacher, 16-20 years teaching). Another teacher from a rule area stated, " In a rural school with few teachers, it is a way to allow more students to take classes at times that fit in their schedule (Spanish teacher, 20+ years teaching). A teacher striving to support offering AP classes wrote, "Because it is the only way that I can offer AP Literature, I've accepted it as a necessary part of my workload. I would rather have it this way than not be able to offer my students AP" (Spanish teacher, 16-20 years teaching).

Speaking to the teacher shortage, another teacher wrote:

> …this is the current reality in my district. I feel as though [if] I do not do this, my program would be in danger because there would not be enough opportunity provided for students to advance to the upper levels due to staffing. (French teacher, 11-15 years teaching)

Another teacher spoke to need for multileveled courses with fluctuating enrollment,

> For many of us it is a way to keep our language programs going, giving us the opportunity to continue when maybe one year, level 1 numbers are low, to keep that class going instead of cancelling it, and giving the impression that that language is being phased out. (French teacher, 16-20 years teaching)

However, despite the possible benefits of using multi-level class scheduling to address enrollment issues, respondents expressed concerns that the challenges and labor of multi-level classes may overshadow any possible benefits, such as "I wish I could have a more balanced class to reach them with plenty of time to reach their full potential" (Spanish, more than 20 years). A seasoned instructor who has taught Spanish in high school and two years at a university wrote:

> I realize that as I have time to develop a curriculum, this will get better. But I am lobbying for my school to split the levels so that I have better class sizes and can sequence my instruction better. (Spanish 16-20 years at multiple levels)

In sum, many teachers recognize that multi-level classes may be a necessary part of our educational landscape, and in some ways beneficial. However, respondents were quick to acknowledge the ongoing lack of support and training to make the most of these classes.

Need for Professional Development/Training and Support

In previous literature, Ashton (2019) and Passmore (2019) noted a lack of training and support as a significant factor in the issue of multi-level classes. In order to respond to the challenges presented by multi-level courses, many respondents expressed a desire for training and support for conducting these classes. According to 94.4% (n = 117) of the respondents, they did not receive any type of training on teaching multi-level languages in their teacher education programs. Additionally, one of the reasons multi-level classes are problematic is that teachers do not generally receive training or professional development in how to harness the potential of multi-level classes, nor in how to manage such classes. Among the scarce responses that indicated they had received some professional development (.05%, n=6) the activities were described by two respondents as "Other teachers spoke about what they have done that works and does not work for them." (Italian, 11-15 years teaching)" or "I have attended some presentations at KSWLA to receive ideas about how to reach each level within the class period." (Spanish, 11-15 years teaching). In the absence of that professional development, one respondent took on the responsibility to fill that void: "…on my own I figured that a two-year alternating combined class curriculum was the best way to go for both my students and me. I share this with my pre-service teacher candidates. I also share how to do this with others on WL Facebook blogs and the ACTFL discussion group." Interestingly, despite this limited opportunity, 76% (n=71 of 94 respondents) of the survey respondents reported they felt somewhat

confident or very confident in their ability to manage a multi-level course.

The thematic responses of the survey respondents re-affirm that the challenge of multi-level classes is alive and well in the present-day K-12 system. The wide variety of teacher backgrounds and demographics show that this challenge remains widespread and has gone unanswered by professional development. The results of this research study provide some significant detail and depth of understanding that has been primarily absent from the published literature, dating back several decades. The question then is where to proceed from here so that the same cannot be said in another decade.

Discussion

Returning now to the three research questions that guided this study:

1. How do instructors feel about teaching multi-level WL classes?

As seen in the responses noted above, survey respondents offered a variety of perspectives about teaching in the multi-level classroom, both positive and negative. Teachers expressed how multi-level classes have the potential to be effective but have changed in nature over time and in some cases have remained or become something to "make the best of a situation" as noted in the research conducted decades ago. A lack of administrative support and the ongoing need for professional development and training in teacher preparation programs were high on the list of challenges expressed by respondents.

2. What are the challenges in teaching multi-level WL classes?

Equally, the respondents identified numerous challenges faced in teaching in multi-level classes, including a lack of time for the additional planning needed for a multi-level class. It is important to reiterate here that challenges faced in the multi-level classroom cannot be overcome by simply differentiating instruction – something that occurs in any good language classroom given the nature of proficiency development. Teaching in a multi-level environment (or a multi-language environment) requires a conscious decision making, careful planning and working with the students to become motivated, self-directed learners. While all language teachers must advocate for their language programs, teachers in multi-level classrooms need to work with administration for a common understanding of the limitations of such classes and potential internal solutions.

3. What are some strategies that instructors use to create successful learning environments in multi-level WL courses?

Finally, we asked our participants to offer suggestions and strategies that they have found beneficial in managing multi-level classes. Levy (1979) and Strasheim (1979) suggested possible strategies that teachers may find effective, indicating that multi-level classes may require a teacher to find opportunities to go beyond the pages of the text in order to meet the needs of their students. These strategies remain applicable

in today's educational context, and include a split period approach, rotating course approach or special interest course, as well as the use of student aids and supportive staffing. independent study, and individualized instruction. Our respondents offered additional suggestions that mirrored the research-based strategies presented in previous published research, as well as offering a number of expanded suggestions for successful learning experiences in multi-level classrooms:

- Proficiency-driven methods, comprehension-based methods, and a communication focus, rather than a grammar driven curriculum, including TPR and TPR Storytelling.
- Split the curriculum: combine years 4 and 5, alternate curricular years (A/B), 2-year curriculum for levels 4 and 5 so that no student has the same units of study for two years or alternate thematically.
- Project-based learning (e.g., a project about human rights with student presentations on the human rights issues faced in a specific country.)
- Service learning (level 4 students taught a class at the elementary school once a week. They created lesson plans and materials and did a reflection for each lesson they taught).
- Use higher level students as resources, peer support or a peer tutor model. Pair heritage speakers or upper-level students with lower-level students.
- Stations or mini-group structure within the classroom.

In previous literature, Levy (1982) and Galloway (1983) also suggested that increasing administrative support and training and teacher networking, combined with the use of teacher aides and volunteers, can support the multi-level classroom. This too remains valid for today's teacher. Decades later, the findings noted above of the continued limited offerings of professional development and teacher preparation programs reaffirms that effective language teaching in multi-level classes remain an issue to be addressed.

Furthermore, Macaro (2000), as cited in Passmore (2019) and Ellis (2003), believed that a teacher-led environment does not enable spontaneous learner-talk. because the teacher is controlling the conversation. It remains essential to develop a proficiency focus in any WL classroom, which can be hindered by the challenging environment of a multi-level classroom. In response to this problem, Glisan and Donato (2017) proposed six essential abilities (HLTP, high leverage teaching practices) that guide teacher's decision making and practices in an effective language classroom.

- HLTP #1: Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility
- HLTP #2: Building a Classroom Discourse Community
- HLTP #3: Guiding Learners to Interpret and Discuss Authentic Texts
- HLTP #4: Focusing on Form in a Dialogic Context Through PACE
- HLTP #5: Focusing on Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives in a Dialogic Context
- HLTP #6: Providing Oral Corrective Feedback to Improve Learner Performance.

HLTPs support decision-making in the classroom, rather than imitation of a prescribed teaching method (Glisan & Donato (2017). However, placing multiple levels in a single class period makes it challenging to enact these research-supported

practices, for example, the use of the target language in a classroom discourse community, using a PACE lesson to focus on grammar in context, and providing oral corrective feedback. As the WL community strives to continue to work towards proficiency-focused instruction, the existence of too many multi-level classes could prove detrimental to seeing students reach higher levels of proficiency.

Regardless, in both previously published research and as observed by our participants, there are cases when multi-level classes may remain a necessary evil. Several potential strategies for managing the multi-level classroom were noted by Passmore (2019). She suggests that the teacher's role must vary greatly in the multi-level classroom, stepping away from traditional teacher-fronted strategies. Direct instruction may still play a role, but the teacher should strive for active learning, rather than passively receiving information from the teacher, should be the primary focus in any WL classroom. Consequently, appropriate pedagogy for this environment should include opportunities for students to actively construct meaning and apply what they have learned. Beneficial classroom activities may include opportunities for researching information, asking questions, solving problems, and thinking critically about their topic (Blumberg, 2009; Taole, 2017; Weimer, 2013; as cited in Passmore, 2019). In sum, the key to success in a multi-level class is shifting the role of learner from receiving direct instruction from their teacher to a learner's self-driven structure.

The results of the present research survey support the strategies listed above and build on these ideas by offering a number of useful strategies that could be used to manage multi-level classes. These results are discussed in the previous section. Despite the limited research and lack of training and professional development, the responses of survey respondents from their first-hand experience have provided a rich collection of potential strategies. One of the most salient results of this research is the practical aspect of supporting the teachers who continue to be faced with these challenges. Given that the challenges facing language education programs and addressing the needs of today's students will likely be present for a while, the strategies presented here could be useful planning and implementing instruction in a multi-level course.

Limitations and Future Directions

All research naturally has inherent limitations, and this study is no exception. Due to the fact that there is no comprehensive database for WL educators in the U.S., the authors developed their own system of identifying potential respondents to the research study. Thus, a link to the online research survey was posted on selected ACTFL Discussion Boards, FL Teach, and distributed to language associations and long-term language educators, which may contribute to a certain homogeneity to the study's respondent population. The research focused on the responses of teachers who are actively engaged in the profession. Teachers who are not actively engaged with these organizations may offer additional perspectives on this issue.

Future research should expand the quantitative and qualitative investigation of student engagement and one-on-one interviews and classroom observations to document the realities of multi-level classrooms. In many areas of current WL research agendas, classroom observations and student performance remain largely

absent from research projects, possibly in part due to the challenges of conducting research in classrooms involving minors. Future research should include these measures to document what the multi-level classroom in the U.S. truly looks like, including explorations of student engagement and interaction.

Conclusion and Future Directions

This study sought to investigate the depth and breadth of multi-level classes in the U.S. K-12 educational context, captured through the lens of the surveyed WL teachers who live this reality. The results of this study corroborate the fact that this phenomenon still exists throughout the U.S., and teachers remain largely unsupported in their efforts to manage these courses. A similar trend was reported by both Passmore (2019) and Ashton (2018, 2019) in New Zealand. The teachers' perceptions provided by this research provide a basis in support of their colleagues who may be tasked with offering multi-level WL classes or not having the opportunity to offer any WL classes.

While multi-level classes are not always an ideal situation, they do sometimes serve a key purpose in a WL curriculum. Multi-level classes have the potential to allow for an expanded curriculum (versus cancellation of programs or course levels) and an opportunity for higher-level students to interact with more novice learners. The present study also presents ways in which teachers reported on how they have managed and even leveraged multi-level classes. Multi-level classes, while not necessarily ideal, have the potential to provide a means to allow a WL program to offer higher-level courses, or maintain a program in the light of declining enrollments and budget cuts.

The strategies presented by the teachers in this survey also align with the needs of the Generation Z students who currently constitute the population in WL classrooms and who need more learner-centered educational foci. The role of the 21st-century teacher is not just to give students information for them to passively memorize and to repeat back. Rather, as the knowledge of effective language learning is increased, and fluctuations in proficiency levels continue, the strategies that have the potential to make multi-level classrooms a success will also inform and strengthen the traditional pedagogy of the classroom as compared with self-directed learning, a valuable skill for this generation of students.

While the present study did find ways in which multi-level classes can be harnessed to meet curricular needs for upper-level courses or under-enrolled languages, there remains a need to offer languages to all students at all levels in environments that promote the development of language proficiency and cultural competence – something that may be more challenging in a multi-level course.

Finally, the issue of multi-level classes and the need for teacher support is an area that ACTFL should consider, perhaps as part of its guiding principles or position statements. Additionally, given the observations about the lack of professional development and the inclusion of this contemporary topic in teacher preparation programs, both ACTFL and the state language associations could meet that need by offering professional development on the topic. ACTFL and the regional and state language organizations could meet that need by offering Professional development on multi-level classes. Furthermore, this is a topic that should be present in pre-

service methods courses.

In the current educational climate of reduced enrollments, budget cuts, and post-pandemic realities, multi-level classes are likely to remain part of the educational landscape, and teacher preparation training of and support for teachers addressing this phenomenon will continue to be essential. The present research supports the role of the teacher, student control, and learner-centeredness as keys to supporting teachers tasked with working in multi-level classes.

Acknowledgment

References

American Academy of Arts & Sciences (AMACAD). Commission on Language Learning. (2017). *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century*. Retrieved from https://www.amacad.org/publication/americas-languages

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2017). Educators rising: Recruiting world language teachers. ACTFL. https://www.actfl.org/advocacy/educators-rising

Ashton, K. (2018). Exploring teacher views of multi-level language classes in New Zealand secondary schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 69*, 104–118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.10.002

Ashton, K. (2019). Approaches to teaching in the multi-level language classroom. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 13*, 162–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2017.1397158

Ashton, K. (2021) Novice teacher agency in the multi-level language classroom. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 34*, 242-256. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.1818766

Bell, J. (2004). *Teaching multilevel classes in ESL (2nd ed.).* Pippin Publishing Corporation.

Blumberg, P. (2009). *Developing learner-centered teaching: A practical guide for faculty*. Jossey-Bass.

Campbell, G. (1993). Assessing the impact of multigrade classes: An annotated bibliography. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 49*, 345-64.

Carleton Board of Education. (1990). *Review of the literature regarding multigrade classes*, Nepean: Author.

Carr, J. (2005). More thoughts on the usefulness of tasks in the multi-level language classroom. *Babel, 39*(3), 31–38.

Chavez, M. (2006). Classroom-language use in teacher-led instruction and teachers' self-perceived roles. *IRAL 44*(1), 49–107.

Commins, L. (1996). Facing the challenge: Multi/proficiency levels in the language classroom. *Babel, 31*(3), 10-15

Daniel, I. (1988). Doing the splits: Core French in the elementary schools. The impact of combined classes on students. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue Canadienne des langues, 45*(1), 146-154.

Ellis (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Galloway, V. B. (1983). Foreign languages in the schools: Through the looking glass. *The Modern Language Journal, 67*, 342-355.

Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2017). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices*. (Vol I). American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2021). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices* (Vol. II). American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Harfitt, G. J. (2012). Class size and language learning in Hong Kong: The students' perspective. *Educational Research, 54*, 331-342.

Hunter, H. B., & Barr-Harrison, P. (1979). Look what they've done to my class, Ma! *Foreign Language Annals, 12*, 425-438.

LaLonde, D., et al. (1980). *Evaluation of combined grades*. R.C.S.S.B. committee report.

Levy, S. L. (1982). *Teaching multi-level foreign language classes* (ED221056).

Macaro, E. (2000). Issues in target language teaching. In K Field (Ed.), *Issues in modern foreign languages teaching* (pp.171-189). Routledge

Passmore, A. (2019). *Multi-level language teaching in a New Zealand secondary school: A practitioner research study* (Unpublished master's thesis). Unitec Institute Technology.

Reed, L. (1991). *Results of the survey on core French split classes*. The Wentworth County Board of Education.

Robinson, G. E. (1990). Synthesis of research on the effects of class size. *Educational Leadership, 47*(7), 80-90.

Stein-Smith, K. (2021). Foreign languages in higher education in the US--Issues and advocacy. *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice, 21*(2), 50-61.

Strasheim, L. A. (1979). The issue: Multi-level classes. *Foreign Language Annals, 12*, 423-425. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1979.tb00207.x

Strauber, S. (1985). *Observing and evaluating the multi-level foreign language class--- Some guidelines and explanations. NASSP Bulletin, 69*, 92-99.

Taole, M. J. (2017). Identifying the professional knowledge base for multigrade teaching. *Gender & Behaviour, 15*, 10419–10434.

Ward, D., & East, M. (2016). Is language learning languishing? Stakeholders' perspectives on the provision of secondary school of foreign language programmes in New Zealand. *The New Zealand Language Teacher, 42*, 42-62.

Weimer, M. (2013). Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Wells, M. (2019). Student motivation for taking high school German. [Unpublished master's thesis.] Southern Utah University.

Appendix

Multi-level Classes Preliminary Survey

1. What level do you teach? (Check all that apply)

____ Elementary PreK-5

____ Middle School (6-8)

____ High School (9-12)

____ 2-year Community College

____ 4-year University

____ Other _____

2. Which language(s) do you teach?

____ French

____ German

____ Spanish

____ Chinese

____ Japanese

____ ESL/TESOL

____ Other _____

3. How many years experience do you have teaching this language?

____ 1-2

____ 3-5

____ 6-10

____ 11-15

____ 16-20

____ More than 20 years

____ Retired. Please enter years of language teaching experience

4. I am a member of the following organizations: (Check all that apply)

____ A state World Language Association

____ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL)

____ A regional World Language Association (NECTFL, SCOLT, CSCTFL, SW COLT, PNCFL)

_____ American Association of Teachers of German (AATG)

_____ American Association of Teachers of French (AATF)

_____ American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP)

_____ American Classical League (ACL)

_____ OTHER _____

5. I am:

_____ The only language teacher in my school/university/district

_____ One of a small cohort of language teachers in my school/university/district

_____ Part of a large cohort of language teachers in my school/university/district

_____ N/A

6. I am: (Select all that apply)

_____ An elementary school teacher

_____ A middle school teacher

_____ A high school teacher

_____ A university tenure-track faculty member

_____ Non tenure track faculty member

_____ Retired

_____ Community member

_____ I am a student

_____ Other _____

7. My institution or district:

_____ Is primarily urban

_____ Is primarily rural

_____ Is a mix

_____ Other _____

8. My institution or district:

_____ Is not supportive of my work

_____ Is somewhat supportive of my work

_____ Is very supportive of my work

9. How many years have you been teaching multi-level language classes?

_____ 1-2

_____ 3-5

_____ 6-10

____ 11-15

____ 16-20

____ More than 20 years

____ Retired - years teaching _____

10. Which levels do you teach together in a single class period/block/class?

11. Did your teacher preparation program include training on multi-level classes?

_____

12. Have you received training for teaching multi-level courses from your school district/ institution or professional organization?

Yes - Please describe your experience _____

_____

No

13. Why do mixed-level classes exist in your program?

14. What strategies do you use to teach multi-level classes? Please be specific and list as many as you use.

15. Which strategies do you think are the most successful for teaching mixed-level classes? Why?

16. Please describe how you plan for and structure a typical multi-level class (or several typical classes if necessary)?

17. What are the benefits of a multi-level classroom?

18. What are the drawbacks of a multi-level clasroom?

19. How do you feel about teaching multi-level classes? Why do you feel as you do? This is your opportunity to mention anything else you would like to say about teaching multi-level classes.

20. How confident do you feel teaching multi-level courses?

_____ Not at all confident

_____ Not very confident

_____ Somewhat confident

_____ Very confident

21. How does your school/district/institution support you?

22. What are the main challenges you face in teaching multi-level classes?

23. What do you view as the main benefits for students in multi-level classes?

24. What do you view as the main challenges for students in multi-level classes?

25. Please feel free to enter any additional comments on multi-level classes:

Southern Conference on Language Teaching
Board of Directors
2022-2023

2023 Individual Sponsors

Elizabeth Adams	AL	Kelly Davidson	GA
Lucy Alfonso	VA	Bertha Delgadillo	GA
Janis Antonek	NC	Jennifer de Lima	NC
Lou Baldwin	NC	Susan Duemmel	NC
Morgan Bennett	VA	Nathalie Ettzevoglou	GA
Pamela Benton	FL	Doris Feliciano-Vega	GA
Rick Blanchard	SC	Rebecca Feng	SC
Erin Boldin	VA	Albert Fernandez	FL
Teresa Breitenthaler	VA	Paloma Fernandez	NC
Virginia Browne	NC	Mary Ellen Foye	VA
Janet Bunch	MS	Paula Garrett-Rucks	GA
Jen Carson	VA	Heather Giles	SC
Krista Chambless	AL	Cristina Green	AL
Jennifer Charles	AL	Ann Marie Gunter	NC
Charles Cherry	SC	Effie Hall	VA
Mara Cobe	NC	Tiffany Hamilton	NC
Amy Cohen	VA	Terri Hammatt	LA
Catherine Danielou	AL	Ellen Hart	NC

2023 Individual Sponsors

Elizabeth Harrison	MS	Liz Lawrence-Baez	SC
Alison Hayter	TX	Courtney Lee	FL
Jennifer Hoban	KY	Raegan Lemmond	AL
Laurel Hodges	MS	Douglas Lightfoot	AL
Sandrine Hope	AL	Patty Lister	VA
Marsha Hotch	AK	Lisa Loyd	AL
Rebecca HwangBo	GA	Laurie Massery	VA
David Jahner	GA	Susana Mayrides	SC
Anne Jensen	CA	Patricia McCoy	GA
Di Anne Johnson	GA	Juan Carlos Morales	FL
Joelle Jones	AL	Emily Muñoz	FL
Norah Jones	VA	Leigh Noble	AL
Claudia Kechkian	TX	Michelle Olah	FL
Kailey Keels	SC	Olga Padilla-Falto	NC
Grace Kellermeier	FL	Stephen Poe	TN
Caroline Kelly	NC	Stacey Powell	AL
Sonia Khawar	UAE	LJ Randolph	NC
Cécile Lainé	TN	Heidi Rice	NC
Monica Lamelas	MS	Robbie Richwine	NC

2023 Individual Sponsors

Sue Robertson	VA	Tammy Tobin	AL
Amanda Romjue	NC	Heidi Trude	VA
Tracy Rucker	KY	Jill Vargas	VA
Victoria Russell	FL	Virin Vedder	GA
Maria Cruz Salazar	GA	Ana Velazquez	NC
Nancy Sanchez	GA	Linda Villadoniga	FL
Linda Santiago	FL	Kim Watson	MS
Kelly Scheetz	TN	Marsha Webster	NC
Carmen Scoggins	NC	Dowler Wheat	VA
Erica Scott	MS	Meredith White	GA
James Sito	VA	Greg Williams	NC
Helen Small	VA	Elizabeth Willingham	AL
Thomas Soth	NC	John Wilson	GA
Kathleen Stein-Smith	NJ	Savannah Wilson	NC
Erika Stevens	TN	Maria Wodele	SC
Ken Stewart	NC	Lisa Worthington-Groce	NC
Elizabeth Stickley	VA	Carolyn Wright	NC
Christina Thurman	Al	John Zyck	GA

2023 Patrons Representing
Institutions and Organizations

AATF, IL
Jayne Abrate

AATF, IL
Serge Abrate

SCFLTA, SC
Jason Bagley-Cooler

SCOLT, NC
Leslie Baldwin

Auburn University, AL
Sue Barry

Avant Assessment, OR
Andres Bernal

Wayside Publishing, ME
Vic Bosak

Wayside Publishing, ME
Stephen Carter

Wayside Publishing, ME
Becky Chateauneuf

AATF, CO
Megan Diercks

Global Seal of Biliteracy, IL
Linda Egnatz

Avant Assessment, MA
Bety Gegundez

Avant Assessment, SC
Amanda Hajji Minnillo

UNC Charlotte, NC
Bobby Hobgood

SCOLT, GA
David Jahner

Bayside Academy, AL
Yohanna Jimenez

Avant Assessment, SC
Delandris Jones

National Latin Exam, VA
Mark Keith

GA Southern University, GA
Horst Kurz

Savannah Chatham County
Public Schools, GA
Mark Linsky

SCOLT, VA
Lynne McClendon

Duolingo, PA
Tracee Miller

Rock Hill Schools, SC
Flor de Lis Morales Torres

University of Florida, FL
Greg Moreland

2023 Patrons Representing Institutions and Organizations

Fulton County Schools, GA
Jamie Patterson

EF, GA
Roger Prill

Guilford County Public Schools, NC
Kimberly Pilling

Cobb County Schools, GA
German Suarez

AATSP, AL
Sheri Spaine Long

AATF, NC
Heather Tedder

Lexington School District 1, SC
Liza Speece

CULTR, GA
Kristy Winkler

Global Virginia, VA
Bettina Staudt

ACTFL, VA
Celia Zamora

EF, GA
Mike Shafer