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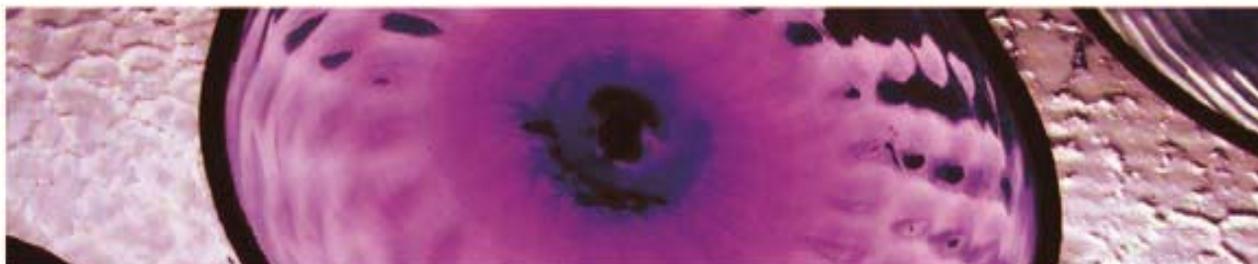Urmia University

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Spring 2014

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Message from the Editor

The Spring 2014 issue of the on-line *TFLTA Journal* offers seven original articles, written by world and second language K-16 educator-scholars, addressing a rich variety of topics that will be of interest to our international readership.

The first article, *Der tote Affe war mein Freund: Principles and Applications of Comprehensible Input for Successful Language Learning*, presents a thoughtful and well-researched piece in which Paul García analyzes the major considerations for successful implementation of comprehensible input in a classroom setting.

Katherine Caventer's *Increasing Oral Communication Among World language Learners,* is the journal's second article in which she describes innovative instructional strategies and tools for world language teachers to help increase their students' oral communication skills.

The third article in the journal, written by Darren Broome, *New Approaches to Assimilating Spanish Pronouns,* offers a comprehensive analysis of some of the prevalent usages of Spanish grammar in common textbooks and suggests other usages that should be added to Spanish textbooks.

Hannah Parks' *A Curious Passport: The Impact of World Language Immersion Education on Adult Alumni,* overviews related literature concerning language immersion programs and reports the results of a qualitative research study in which she investigated the impact of a K-12 French Immersion (FI) program in the lives of its adult alumni.

Preferences of International Students for First-Year Writing Courses: ESL or Mainstream Classrooms, a research piece written by Bandar Aljafen, offers his qualitative study that investigated the preferences of NNES international students regarding their placement in either an ESL/Non-Native English or a mainstream classroom for a mandatory First-Year Writing course.

Our journal's sixth article, *The Effect of the Cooperative Learning Method Advocated by Multiple Intelligence Theory on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Achievement,* co-authored by Maryam Zeinolabedini and Javad Gholami, presents the results of their empirical research study in which they investigated the impact of the Cooperative Learning Multiple Intelligences Model compared with traditional instruction.

The seventh and final journal offering, Non-scripted role-play: A better practice for Thai EFL college students' speaking skills, written by Nuchanan Naksevee and Kemtong Sinwongsuwat, allows the *TFLTA Journal* readers the unique opportunity to explore the efficacy of how role-play can enhance both high- and low- proficiency students' English conversation skills.

The staff of the journal trusts that you will enjoy the current issue.

Call for Papers and Submission Guidelines for Authors

The TFLTA Journal
Volume 6
Fall 2014/Spring 2015

The Editorial Board of *The TFLTA Journal* welcomes original scholarly articles that *have not been previously published or are not under review*. Manuscripts will address issues directly related to best practices in world or second language pedagogy in the K-16 world language (modern and classical) and second language educators in the global arena. Topics may include: original, empirical research studies; meta-analyses; assessment models; innovative language instruction paradigms; cultural issues; and digital literacies. All manuscripts follow a double-tier review process and are first read by the Editor of the journal and then sent for blind review to members of the Editorial Board who have expertise in the focus of the manuscript. Although early submissions are welcome, the absolute *deadline for the Fall 2014/Spring 2015 issue of The TFLTA Journal is January 15, 2015*.

Absolute Submission Guidelines:

1. Submit your *original* manuscript electronically to Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley, Editor, *The TFLTA Journal (*pdwiley@utk.edu). Manuscripts may not have already been published nor may they be currently under review by another journal.
2. Put *TFLTA Journal article submission* in the subject line of your email and include your name, title, school/office affiliation, email address, contact phones numbers and working title of the manuscript in the body of the email.
3. The manuscript maximum length (double-spaced throughout) is 5,000 words with 1" margins.
4. Create a Microsoft WORD document, Times Roman 12 font; *do not right-justify margins*.
5. Follow APA '09 (6th edition) format in the manuscript for levels of heading, references, figures and tables; *only manuscripts using APA '09 will be considered.*
6. Include two title pages: *one with* author name/affiliation and *one without* this information to expedite the blind review process; paginate the article.
7. All graphics must be *original* or be part of the public domain. *The TFLTA Journal* will not violate copyright. Therefore, the author must include copyright permission granted for inclusion of any table or figure appearing in the manuscript that does not solely below to the author(s).
8. Place each table and figure on a separate page *at the end of paper,* following notes, references and appendices. Use [*insert Table X here*] or [*insert Figure Y here*] in the *body of the text* where tables and figures need to be placed; tables and figures may need to be re-sized for publication; save them as high resolution *jpeg* or *.docx* files. APA '09 format must be used for Table and Figure titles.
9. Include a brief (150-word maximum) abstract of the article on a separate page, following the title page; include a 25-word maximum biographic statement for each author as the last page of the manuscript.
10. Manuscripts are accepted year-round, and authors are encouraged to submit them well ahead of the deadline for the Fall 2014/Spring 2015 issue.
11. Send all inquires to the Editor of *The TFLTA Journal* at: *pdwiley@utk.edu. Put TFLTA Journal article* in the subject line of your email.

Der tote Affe war mein Freund: Principles and Applications of Comprehensible Input for Successful Language Learning

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This article seeks to explain the Comprehensible Input (CI) Theory. CI is a rich, principled foundation for second language learning. It has immediate applicability for classroom activities, irrespective of textual materials and traditionally stated curricular and language acquisition goals. Through developing a series of precepts with examples from his and others' teaching experiences at K-12, the author analyzes the major considerations for successful implementation of comprehensible input in a classroom setting.

When I began teaching at Southwest HS (Kansas City, Missouri) in 1973 , I had the great fortune to meet and work with two researchers[1] at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Harris Winitz and the late James A. Reeds. They introduced me to the potential impact that James Asher would have on our profession.

In subsequent presentations and publications, such as our *Natural Language Learning* (Winitz, Reeds, & García, 1975), a textless picture series for acquiring vocabulary, we emphasized the rapid acquisition of concrete lexical items as the path for teaching and learning. The *learning speed* was based upon this writer using listening comprehension activities in the classroom while maintaining a *simultaneous delay in student speaking*--that extended *silent period*. Our position was that by applying strategies in a highly focused flood of comprehensible input (CI)—such as through my picture wall—with related physical response activities that were designed to be understood by the beginning language learner, we would produce competent listeners and eventual competent beginning speakers (García, 1981).

Having demonstrated the necessity *and* potential for applying principles of CI in workshops and methods courses, I now provide these perspectives for a wider readership, those language educators who dedicate their talents to the Level One Learner. I describe my precepts for applying input below. Each is accompanied by praxis-based examples; they aid the reader in understanding why the move to a language pedagogy based on CI is essential.[2]

The principles—my *Baker's Dozen*—are the direct descendant of a one-page handout that I developed in 1987 for the French, German, and Spanish immersion teachers I supervised. (We were establishing a program for 1,800 students at six K-6 schools as part of a court-ordered, district-wide magnet desegregation program .) My summary page served to ensure that the activities discussed and demonstrated during in-services would be accessible to our classroom teachers—all native speakers of the immersion language , and all newcomers to American education.[3]

The underpinning pedagogical base for CI that appeared then was refined and recast over the years, as I morphed from classroom teacher to language supervisor to university

methods instructor for both pre-service educators and graduate degree seekers. The methods students' expressions of uncertainty about the viability of comprehensible input in their respective teaching settings motivated me to offer a sustained rationale for my advice on how to through CI—thus the present form of that modest handout.

A Baker's Dozen

The major considerations for developing CI in classroom settings are straightforward. The examples highlight points of departure for continuing the conversation and reflecting on these procedural guidelines.

1.   Comprehension Precedes Production

This primary declaration emphasizes the fact that until such time as we who teach see the light in the students' eyes stay *on*, we simply cannot expect appropriate discourse at any level. Whether from the erroneous response, *"mais oui"* to the question, *"Où sont les toilettes?"* to similar *non sequiturs*, they are the product of someone not comprehending before speaking. (Beginning learners offer their teachers a plethora of such anecdotes. Often, they are born of our zeal—and impatience—to "get kids talking.") We need to provide sustained CI or floods of informational language over and over in order for the active use of language to begin. Haste (in making verbal response demands on students) makes waste.

2. Problem-Solving Is An Essential In Language Learning Activities

Success breeds success. Students want to impress peers and parents (occasionally) with showing off a 90-100% mastery *without trying*, as they effortlessly pointing at the correct picture on the picture wall. (See García, 1981; Dörnyei, 1990, 2003; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei and Schmitt, 2001; Hernández, 2006, 2008, 2010, on the relationship between instrumental and integrative motivation to students' language improvement.) Not only do images tell us what is taking place or has taken place, but we learn that a photo of the Easter Bunny, for example, carrying a basket of eggs gives us a semantic field that rules out, say, thoughts on Independence Day. When given the task of talking about one's immediate family, the beginning speaker does not have to search for names and ages of parents and siblings. Thus, problem-solving involves assisting the student to search the right *semantic field* of his or her own memory.

3. Language Acquisition Is A Non-Linear Series of Experiences

We learn language in discreet pieces—*chunks of sounds*—that may not be found in traditional, textbook-designed sections, nor in the order that they offer teachers. Three examples clarify this. For Spanish, students may understand *hay*. They do not know the word's connection to either verb forms or high-frequency usage. Yet, by following the teacher's gestures and/or visual and physical act of putting books on the table, the students problem-solve, and make appropriate judgments (and *memory entries*) on what they see taking place. They may express

their conclusion with an incorrect, first-language interference, *Hay es dos libros en la mesa* (There is/are two books on the table.) when they first begin to speak, but the input flood offered by the teacher will inhibit the error's future occurrence. Initially, the meaning of *hay* varies for students. They use the term properly and improperly as their memory entries sort out what to do. Some may even question their teacher as they *worry* about "What's the plural of *hay*?" That the students use *hay* with the additional *es,* while it indicates transfer from English to Spanish (L1 to L2), also points to later-stage input trying to become language output.

The second example is from German. Concept learning and vocabulary are related in many intuitive and not formal ways that we know work for students. Such is the case with the phrase *auf dem Tisch*, as in *Ist das Buch auf dem Tisch* (Is the book on the table?) As an active learning technique, the CI game, *Was ist auf dem Tisch?* (What's on the table?), the prepositional phrase is heard literally dozens of times in the course of a lesson, without students perceiving the dative case in this instance, or that there exists that "doubtful" list of prepositions in German that because of a verb's meaningful govern the usage of either the dative or accusative marker that precedes the noun.

Despite those well-intentioned texts or teacher manuals that either implicitly or explicitly suggest a consecutive order to learning, second language learners simply don't only move from Point A to Point B. There are too many incidental, high-frequency, and useful pieces of language and culture to be picked up before Point B is in sight. And that is the role of comprehensible input and input flooding—to make the most out of context and frequency and concrete in-class acts and images.

The third example is from Hungarian. How often might one hear in a Hungarian language class the word *tessék* [4] in multiple contexts in order to comprehend (if one were a German speaker) that the word is equivalent to *bitte* and its variants, *bitte sehr* and *Wie, bitte?* ("Here you are," "If you please," "Please repeat," "Pardon me.")

Conjugating verb forms is not a CI activity. It cannot produce a comprehended thought followed by an appropriate response to "Where is Mary going?" or *Wie geht's*? (Instead, we get "I'm going to the movies," or the equally erroneous German, *Ich geht's gut.* As a poor comprehender of French (skill level: *je parle français comme une vache espagnole*), I realized one day that because of the context and the frequency in an overheard conversation (those wonderful immersion teachers again), *moi, je...* could be a useful colloquial "speaking skill," one that I'm not at all certain that textbook authors provide students. M*oi, j'habite à Lyon* (Me, I live in Lyon.) worked for me. I "got" how speakers made comparisons to their towns.

Central to this extended discussion is the frequency of usage and a clear situational context. It does not come in the form of charts or tables. Instead, it arrives through the amount and focus of *teacher talk*, or CI *in* the language, and not the teacher talking *about* the language. Teachers providing CI to their students must talk *in* the language, not *about* it.

4. **Short Bursts of Meaningful Speech Are More Important and More Effective Than Longer *Strings* of Sounds/Words**

My younger readers do not remember A-LM Spanish, Unit 1 or 2, and the (in)famous *No sabría qué decir si tuviera que hablar español todo el tiempo.* (See back-learning, and "dialogues that the natives never understood when approached, because they didn't know their line.) Give me a *moi, je...* any time. *Albóndigas, sin duda,* indeed! (For those who do not recognize the "Meatballs, without a doubt," this is also from A-LM Spanish. Here I remind the teacher to assist the student with practical language and usage that is part of everyday language, such as *moi, je* (me, I…).

5. **Language Acquisition Is Akin To An Inverted Pyramid—Or to the Movement of Information From Short-Term to Long-Term Memory**

One begins *entering a datum,* one piece at a time, and thereupon builds on that single entry. Consider, for example, that word *table* referred to above, *der Tisch.* From that one concrete object, the classroom teacher is able to use that word to deliver information about various locations in the vicinity of the table with any number of visual cues. A few prepositions, *under* or *behind* or *in front of* are easily distinguishable to the students who are given manipulatives to work with. From this object, the students comprehend whole phrases and sentences, such as, *Ist der Brief unter dem Tisch?* (Is the letter under the table?) This is a simplification, but it is directly related to the next principle, that of teacher awareness of his/her language usage.

6. **Teacher Input Is Vital and Must Be Self-Monitored**

The language teacher engaging the students with CI-based activities develops and maintains a specific lexicon during that part of the session when new vocabulary is introduced, for example. Using the picture wall, the teacher presents images that neither sound alike nor belong to the same set of items that historically have been put together into already-known semantic fields. Hence, the German words *Schreibtisch* (desk) and *Schraubenzieher* (screwdriver) cannot be taught during the same time because of their initial "sh" sound. Worse would be teaching pictures of a kitchen and a cake (*Küche, Kuchen)* because of the similar sounds in these terms . Nor should one teach *knife* and *spoon* in Spanish class, thereby imploding the notion that setting the table with the different utensils is a "good way" to formulate context for the student. It isn't. The Spanish *cuchara* and *cuchillo* (spoon, knife) sound too alike to students, and are "generically related. I found this to be true as well for many non-native Spanish teachers themselves during many workshops. They related to me that they had to do a memory word-search of a nanosecond to distinguish between the two items when asked to perform the act of simultaneously translating. They offered their experience with vocabulary voluntarily and coaching, even giving the reason of *sound alike* for their hesitation in translation. We must present vocabulary items that are *de-contextualized before they are contextualized.* One word (*knife*) may be taught during session #1, and the related word (*spoon*) during session #6, without any loss of comprehension. Instead, the student will effortlessly acknowledge the difference between the two words, just as the student of German will not have an issue with *Kuchen* and *Küche* when

they are taught on separate occasions . And of course this means that verb-learning activities need to be reconsidered because of CI. If the student is involved during the first weeks in *My Family*, then it is fairly certain that two forms ("I have" and "He or she is") would be the major verb forms heard, repeated, and learned. Yes, a minimalist kind of environment.

7. **Non-Inhibitory Techniques Are to Be Used During the Process**

When students are motivated by successfully demonstrating their new skill in understanding the new language, they find it easy to accept the teacher's directives as a matter of course. This is because CI strategies, even those described for later-stage reading as option selection activities by Lee and VanPatten (2003), provide students a high percentage chance of being correct as they respond. From pointing correctly to a photo on the picture wall to nodding or shaking one's head, to writing a telephone number on the wallboard, or lining up in the room in order of being asked for a sibling's birthday *(Hast du einen Bruder? Wann hat er Geburtstag, im Januar? Im Februar? Im August?* Do you have a brother? When is his birthday?). In each instance, the student is engaged in activities that are easily accomplished successfully. For the most part, that is because know the correct answer to this CI technique because their response (the nod, the smile) is from their life experience, and not that of *Dick and Jane*.

8. **Learners (Regardless of Age) Learn By *Doing***

See the examples immediately above. *Doing* means active participation. Watch a first grade classroom to see what occurs as the pupils follow their teacher's directives and comments. The learner-active classroom is particularly important for each beginning language learner to see how he or she is rewarded by being the object of good questioning and good problem-solving techniques.

9. **Students Do Not Have to Speak In Order to Attest to Having Comprehended**

How often do we nod our heads in agreement during the day? If we demonstrate our opinion in this manner, why can't a student raise his/her left hand for *I understand*? Pointing at any object or moving one's body in a certain direction is what one might do well to consider as appropriate body talk in response to a listening comprehension activity.

10. **As Students Begin to Speak, Do Not Correct Errors *As Usual*. Instead, Paraphrase Their Mistakes With Corrected Usage That Becomes a Re-Cast or Re-Statement of the Initial Utterance. That Is What CI Is For.**

And do not be surprised or chagrined that the student continues to make that same error. The truth of the matter is that he or she has not heard that set of sounds a sufficient number of times. Two or three times are not sufficient. Try 35-40 times—see *auf dem Tisch* (above). You, the self-monitoring CI language machine, become especially adept at re-introducing lots of vocabulary all the time, through either the now multi-dozen item picture wall or the many concrete objects you have all over the room for touching and describing. Think of CI as teacher talk

in the language. The students need to hear the vocabulary or phrases as the teacher uses them, over and over and over and over.

11. **Be Mindful of 7 +/-2 Aspects of Short-Term Memory, Its Consequences and Later Development (Miller, 1956)**

Ever wonder why your credit card numbers are broken into 4 chunks? Memory is the answer, or our lack of handling long strings of ciphers adroitly. (That's why, along with frequency usage, we do not remember our public utility account number in locales where the digits number 14 or so .) Although later studies suggested that *Miller's Law* (Miller, 1956) how narrow the entryway is into short-term storage (7 +/- 2 items) can and does vary, beginning language learners attending to input-driven lessons need to know that their first months in the middle or senior high classroom is not a listing of *important* chapter words that should be recognized. Take a textbook and look at the demands they impose on the student for retention in the short-term. Then, think of those poor grades earned by students on end-of-chapter vocabulary quizzes. Miller was more right than wrong when it comes to the language learner's short-term memory.

12. **Simultaneous Production and Comprehension Training Result in a Decrease in Comprehension**

Students do not learn or uptake information (Carey & Lockhart, 1973; Lee & VanPatten, 2003) as well when forced to produce newly-acquired information. The sounds of new words—when the teacher says the word 3-4 times, and tells students to *répétez, s'il vous plaît,* to find that 20 minutes or 2 days later (not to mention two weeks thereafter), that word or phrase is long gone. The item never made it into *long-term memory*. P.S.: Cognates and word look-alikes are a wonderful—negative—case in point, actually. They produce poor pronunciation among early learners, especially when they have a print image (the word itself) placed before them. Try it for yourself, with *Wo ist das Buch?* Did you use the English *w* sound and thus invalidate the *v* sound required by German? Or the *ch* softness of *Buch*? Or *hay*. How did you pronounce it upon first seeing the word? Spanish teachers know this spelling to mean *there are*, and not the baled crop seen on the farm. And we don't pronounce the *h*.) Too early reading means more pronunciation, and more critical, reduced comprehension.

13. **Surface Structures of a Language Are Not Taught Formally During the Earliest Stages**

For that matter, this principle should include delayed reading, the alphabet, spelling, and reading. (The time for discussion and persuasion that grammar is essential varies according to student skills and motivation, and prior achievement and knowledge of other language's structures.) Generally, most contemporary textbooks introduce some 50-60 *major rules*. The rest we learn by active use of the language in a variety of interactions with (usually) sympathetic listeners willing to work with us. Try teaching *Doch!* or *Yo tampoco!* (or, for the learner of Hungarian that in my dotage I have become, *Nekem nincs,* or when to use *hívják* instead of *hívnak* .

Students who say *me too* usually provide an incorrect rejoinder in their earliest verbal responses to CI-based lessons–unless it's *moi, aussi* for French class.

Final Thoughts

To conclude this summary drawn from more than 40 years of teaching and thinking and learning, I would remind the reader first of an article by Wong-Fillmore on the role of teacher-talk (1985). She offers English Language Learner teachers the following points. They are in keeping with what we should do as CI-ers. We must, she wrote: separate L-1 from L-2 as we speak; use a communicative style of speaking; expect interaction; eschew *foreigner talk* ("Me speak French now."); develop routines as cues for students; repeat, repeat, repeat; and, finally, tailor the new language to meet the students' needs. CI is all this. But how to deliver CI?

In *Alice in Wonderland*, the Cheshire cat reminds us that if we do not know where we are going, how we get there is of little consequence. If we know how to create activities utilizing comprehensible input as our pole star, the road to student success is clear. Activities that we employ are classroom tested by all language professionals. Daily. A few that I would mention are these: word banks, synonyms, antonyms, cloze procedures, crosswords, analogies, contraction, word jumbles, word search, rhymes, missing letters, multi-meaning word practice, and optional choice selection. We *can* create better-prepared students for world language classes. The fundamental aspect of comprehensible input is the way to do so.

Notes

1. This article is dedicated to the memory of James A. Reeds (1921-2012) and to Harris Winitz . They started me on my path to listening comprehension and comprehensible input in Kansas City. My thoughts are also written to express my gratitude to my students at Southwest HS there (1973-1987); they were my *co-learners* as I began to apply CI techniques in their German and Spanish classroom. I gratefully acknowledge the interests and questions of my WL/ESL methods students at two universities (the University of Kansas and the University of South Florida), for whose sake I attempted to articulate my thoughts and research on CI systematically. *Der tote Affe* (the dead monkey) refers to one of the language cartoons that Harris and Jim developed for those first German lessons in listening comprehension in 1971-1972 and also in our modest listening comprehension text series, *Natural Language Learning* (1975). The phrase became our shorthand code for our later psycholinguistics studies, even as some colleagues scoffed at the notion that sustained comprehensible input could be meaningful or successful. I suspect they considered our ideas—or us?—more *psycho* than *linguistic.*
2. These thoughts incidentally illustrate how comprehensible input became part of second language acquisition (SLA) research history that includes Winitz, Reeds, Asher (1966, 1969, 1972), Postovsky (1974, 1977), Krashen (1985), as well as products such as Rosetta Stone (in its earlier versions, predated by Winitz and Reeds, 1975, or followed by contemporary TPR-Storytelling, Ray and Seely, 2004).
3. Immersion faculty, we know, teach students *content* in a language (the teachers' first language) through the medium of that language. Their students are youngsters who know nothing whatsoever about the world language. Understandably, the newly-contracted immersion

staff had not given considerable reflection to the consequences of using a foreign language as a vehicle for teaching *both language and content.* Indeed, prior to their arrival from Europe and South America, they had been elementary school teachers in their home countries, where they taught pupils whose language and cultural referents were the same as their own.

4. The word *tessék* is frequently used by speakers of Hungarian. Depending on the context, it assumes different meanings. It is often used when offering something to someone, be it a seat, or placing food on a guest's plate, for example. In this usage, it translates as, "Here you go." It can also mean "For you," and also "Go ahead," and when answering the phone, it means "Yes?" or "Pardon?" It is also used informally as "excuse me, can you repeat that" if formed as a question. For other examples, consult an online Hungarian lesson: *http:// en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Hungarian/Lesson_1*

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Increasing Oral Communication Among World Language Learners

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This article describes innovative instructional strategies and tools for world language teachers to help increase their students' oral communication skills. The strategies described address both increasing students' proficiency as well as their comfort and willingness to use the language by reducing anxiety, increasing motivation, and engaging students' interests. Strategies include using computer-mediated communication, the Orbital Experience, reading and writing strategies, audio journals, and the Babelium Project. It is suggested that teachers experiment with a variety of strategies and tools which work for different students and increase oral practice.

No matter the language typical high school world language classes in the United States share a common thread: they strive to follow the national standards established by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages. These five standards include communication, cultures, communities, connections, and comparisons. While all of the *Five C's* play a vital role in language acquisition, *communication* is the standard that receives the most focus in world language classroom. Communication can be interpersonal, interpretive, or presentational and incorporates speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Many consider the ultimate goal of studying a second language (L2) to be able to speak fluently. Despite this, speaking in the L2 seems to be the bane of many high school students' classroom experience. During my first formal teaching experience, I taught three sections of high school Spanish IV. Although the students could read longer texts, memorize vocabulary, effectively learn tricky grammar, and translate sentences, they could not—and would not—speak Spanish. This is not an isolated situation. I cannot count how many times I have told people of all ages that I am a Spanish teacher and they respond, "Oh, I took four years of Spanish in high school. I can't speak a word of it." It is apparent that many of the traditional strategies to teach high school students to speak a world language are not working. This article will focus on specific instructional strategies and tools in world language education to help increase oral communication among students.

The phrase *increasing oral communication* consists of two parts. The first is increasing oral proficiency, or how well the students are able to speak in the L2. This primarily occurs in the interpersonal and presentational modes of communication. The other aspect of increasing oral communication is helping the students feel more comfortable and willing to speak the L2. Affective factors play a huge role in students' willingness to actually speak the L2. Krashen (1982) proposed that "affective variables [act] to impede or facilitate the delivery of input to the language acquisition device" (p.30). These affective variables include anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. Motivated students with high self-confidence in a low-anxiety situation will be more successful processing comprehensible input, while the inverse will hinder language acquisition. Similarly, Chen and Chang (2009) found that students with higher anxiety also experienced a higher cognitive load, which limits the capacity of working memory. As a result, students with higher anxiety performed worse on an interpretive communication test than less anxious students. Phillips (1998) discovered an inverse relationship between anxiety

and performance on an interpersonal oral exam. Student questionnaires also revealed that students experiencing anxiety felt high levels of displeasure and even panic during the examination process. Accordingly, many of the strategies discussed in this article address not only how students' oral skills improved, but how effectively the strategies help students feel less anxious and enjoy using the language.

This article will present five nontraditional instructional strategies and tools designed to improve students' interpersonal and presentational oral communication ability in a L2. The first is the use of computer-mediated communication, which is gaining popularity as technology becomes more and more prevalent in the classroom. Next is the Orbital Experience, an easy-to-implement project which appeals to students' interests and promotes classroom community-building. Reading and writing to help build oral skills is another strategy. Audio journals, a new spin on traditional classroom journaling which helps facilitate student-teacher interactions while giving the students oral practice, are examined. Finally, the article discusses the Babelium Project, a free, online program that allows students to dub video clips of their favorite movies and television shows in the L2.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

A trend in all fields of education is the incorporation of technology in the classroom. Technology allows students and teachers access to more educational resources than ever before. Teachers today use the Internet to share photos and videos with their students, present notes on PowerPoints or Prezis rather than writing on the blackboard, and post assignments and grades on a class website. In the world language classroom, some teachers have also begun experimenting with computer-mediated communication (CMC). This technology allows students to communicate interpersonally via a computer rather than face to face. Supporters of CMC believe that using a computer will help reduce students' language anxiety and therefore increase their proficiency (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012).

Types of CMC

CMC comes in many forms. The most common form of CMC with which most Americans are probably familiar is asynchronous text-based CMC. Communication occurs via text, but the exchanges are typically not instantaneous. Examples include e-mail and posting on discussion boards. Synchronous text-based CMC is also quite common. In this form of communication, exchanges are instantaneous and more closely resemble a face-to-face conversation, such as instant messaging and texting. CMC can also be voice-based. Although it is uncommon, asynchronous voice-based CMC entails recording and posting a voice message which others can respond to by recording their own message. Synchronous voice-based CMC is much more typical. Exchanges are essentially like talking on a telephone, except a computer is used as the mode of communication. Finally, there is video-based CMC, which is usually synchronous. This is the type of CMC which most closely replicates face-to-face communication, as individuals speak to each other in real time while viewing a live-stream video of the other party.

Effect of CMC on Oral Communication

Technology provides students with a sense of anonymity. This anonymity may help students feel less anxious about communicating in the L2 because they are risking less of themselves. In theory, this reduced anxiety will help increase students' willingness to use the language and improve their oral proficiency.

CMC and affective factors. In an effort to discover whether use of CMC reduced affective factors associated with oral communication, Arnold (2007) designed an experiment comparing students' communication apprehension in various means of interpersonal communication. In this experiment, five sections of an intermediate German course at an American university participated in six communication activities throughout the semester. Two sections completed the communication activities using e-mail, two sections used an instant-message discussion forum, and one section completed the activities using face-to-face communication. The researchers measured students' communication apprehension in a pretest and posttest. While there was a reduction in communication apprehension levels in all groups, the study did not reveal any significant difference among the various forms of communication.

Baralt and Gurzynski-Weiss (2011) compared the state anxieties of students using synchronous text-based CMC versus face-to-face communication. In this experiment, a group of intermediate Spanish students completed two information-gap activities with a partner. One was performed using Apple iChat software while the other simply utilized a partition to separate the students. Researchers measured students' state anxiety once during each task and then immediately after each task using a language anxiety questionnaire. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between the participants' anxiety either during or after the task in face-to-face communication or CMC.

While neither of the previous two studies showed any difference between CMC and face-to-face communication's effect on affective factors, Arnold (2007) found that students' communication apprehension lowered after participating in several interpersonal communication activities in with either CMC or face-to-face throughout the semester. This repeated practice may have contributed to the decrease of students' communication apprehension.

CMC and oral proficiency. While some studies explore the effect of CMC on affective factors, others directly measure students' oral proficiency in the L2. Ko (2012) had beginning-level French students participate in multiple interpersonal oral communication activities with a partner throughout the semester. One group of students used synchronous voice-based CMC (headsets only), another group used video-based CMC (headsets and webcam), and a final group completed all activities face-to-face. Students took three oral exams throughout the semester: one to obtain a baseline score, a midterm, and a final. Ko found that over half of the students showed oral proficiency improvement, but this improvement was not significantly greater or lesser in any of the separate groups.

Lee (2007) also observed students using video-based CMC to see if the technology would improve students' oral proficiency in Spanish. Students participated in two videoconferences throughout the semester in which the students had to complete information-gap activities with an expert-level Spanish speaker (native speakers, Spanish professors, etc.). Lee concluded

that these videoconferences "did not directly transfer to the improvement of students' oral skills" (p. 644).

These studies do not show that use of CMC improves students' interpersonal oral performance any more than traditional face-to-face communication. At the same time, CMC is certainly not ineffective. Arnold (2007) showed that both CMC and face-to-face communication lowered students' communication apprehension, and over half of the students in the study by Ko (2012) demonstrated proficiency improvement regardless of modality. What seems to be important is not the means of communication practice, but the amount. The experiments that required more communication activities yielded more positive results. Teachers' number one priority should be providing students with many opportunities to practice communication skills.

Benefits of CMC

While CMC may not be any more effective at increasing students' oral communication proficiency, the nature of CMC does provide students with certain opportunities that are simply not available in a typical world language classroom setting. One such benefit is described by Blake (2009) in a study exploring synchronous text-based CMC. Blake found that students in a web-based distance learning classroom using synchronous text-based CMC produced more language on an oral proficiency exam than students in a traditional face-to-face class. Blake theorized that this resulted from the students in the web-based class having more opportunities to use the language interpersonally. In a normal classroom discussion, students speak one at a time, and interrupting is generally frowned upon. Also, many students do not wish to participate in classroom discussion unless they have everything they want to say fully formed in their mind. However, in an online chat forum, multiple participants can type comments simultaneously, allowing several students to share their thoughts at the same time. Additionally, students have the chance to read over their comments before hitting *send*, so they can feel more confident with their contribution and be more willing to participate. If teachers want to give their students more opportunities for interpersonal communication, incorporating this mode of CMC might be of great use to their students.

Bueno Alastuey (2011) proposed an interesting use of CMC. All the students in the experiment used synchronous voice-based CMC in interpersonal oral activities throughout the semester. However, half of the students interacted with a classmate as a partner, while the other half of the class had a communication partner of a different L1. Having a partner of a different L1 prevented the students from switching to their native language when they encountered communication issues in the L2. Bueno Alastuey found that at the end of the semester these students scored higher on their oral exams. The drawback of this tool is that its implementation in the classroom may be difficult with having to coordinate schedules and pairings with another classroom across the world. At the same time, using CMC with an interlocutor of a different L1 certainly provides students with a unique and beneficial opportunity not available in a typical classroom.

<div align="center">

The Orbital Experience

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While incorporating CMC into the world language classroom may offer students unique

communication opportunities, this technology may not be available in all schools. Although most schools have computer labs, not all schools may have access to the appropriate software, webcams, headsets, etc. Other strategies, however, are easier to include in lessons. The Orbital Experience (Gomez & Heckendorn, 2012), for example, is a simple project that appeals to the interests of students and provides students with presentational and interpersonal practice.

Description of the Orbital Experience

The Orbital Experience (Gomez & Heckendorn, 2012) is a project designed to increase students' motivation to use the L2 by allowing students to choose their own topic of study and encouraging a desire to learn more about their peers. In the Orbital Experience, students research a topic of interest such as music, sports, or travel. The students then write a short (one to two pages) paper in the L2 connecting their topic to five other subjects. Finally, the students present their findings in small groups in an informal setting. The setting can vary depending on what is available to the teacher, such as student lounges or the library, but what is important is that the presenter is not standing up in front of the class giving a speech like during a normal oral presentation. After each presentation, students can engage in interpersonal communication with each other by asking questions, sharing related information, or telling anecdotes.

Benefits of the Orbital Experience

Gomez and Heckendorn (2012) observed this activity in a high school Spanish classroom and recorded their observations as well as teacher and student reactions. Most students felt that it was easier to communicate in the Orbital Experience because the more relaxed setting reduced their anxiety. Additionally, students felt a desire not only to share their interests, but also to learn about their "peers' passions" (p. 107). Giving the students a chance to discover their common interests or learn interesting facts about their classmates helped build a sense of community in the classroom, which further contributed to the relaxed and anxiety-free environment.

Students' motivation to share their interests also helped students develop their oral communication skills. Because the students truly wanted to communicate, they were more willing to take risks. Researchers observed that the students naturally began to use communication strategies such as circumlocution, negotiation of meaning, and self-correction of errors (Gomez & Heckendorn, 2012). These communication strategies are key to effective communication in the L2.

Finally, the Orbital Experience is beneficial because it is so easy to include in the curriculum. Because the students are allowed to choose their own subject, this project could fit into a wide variety of themes or even stand on its own. The Orbital Experience can also work for different ability levels. Students only need to be able to express simple sentences about their topic and participate in discussion. The purpose is to exchange information with classmates; the finer points of grammar are not necessary. Additionally, the Orbital Experience does not require any special materials other than an informal setting for presentations. Even if the teacher does not have access to a special room, the classroom can be transformed by bringing in pillows and letting the students sit on the floor. The Orbital Experience is an easy way for teachers to provide students with presentational and interpersonal oral practice that the students will

actually want to participate in.

Reading and Writing

Often, world language teachers tend to teach the various domains of language—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—in isolation. Others believe that learning a second language should occur much like a child learns his L1—speaking first, then reading and writing later. Kim, Lowenstein, and Pearson (2001) challenged these ideas after observing how ESL students used reading and writing to improve their oral communication skills and used specific strategies including materiality, close inspection, discussion crutches, and rehearsal.

Materiality and Close Inspection

The first technique described by Kim et al. (2001) is materiality. This technique essentially means connecting the language to the real world. For beginning learners, this can be as simple as hearing a new word, writing it down, and drawing a picture next to it to help remember the meaning. Students may also find it helpful to label objects around the classroom. More advanced learners may encounter an unknown word in a longer text and discuss the meaning with the instructor. When the students used these techniques, the researchers noticed that this previously unknown vocabulary began to naturally appear in the students' speech.

Close inspection involves having the language "stand still" (Kim et al., 2001 p. 339) so that it can be carefully dissected by the student. This technique can be especially useful for pronunciation. When reading a text aloud, when the students find a word they cannot pronounce, they simply write their own phonetic spelling next to the word in the text. The next time they encounter that word in the text, they can simply refer back to their notes. Eventually, the students are able to produce that word orally with no written cues. Close inspection can also help students with grammar. The researchers observed many of the ESL students creating verb charts in which they indentified base words and phonemic tense markers. Writing out these forms helped the students realize the proper form of the verb to use in their speech.

Discussion Crutches

Kim et al. (2001) also observed the students utilizing discussion crutches on a frequent basis. Discussion crutches are essentially scripts that the students use in order to help them participate orally in class. Although discussion crutches are often used with presentational communication, they can also assist students with interpersonal communication. When the students knew they would be expected to contribute to class discussion, they would often write down exactly what they wanted to say and read it aloud. Without the written script, the students lacked the confidence to want to participate orally in class.

The benefit of discussion crutches is supported by Ko (2012). In this study measuring CMC's effect on oral proficiency, Ko observed that the individual learning strategies employed by the students had a greater effect on oral proficiency than the mode of communication. Many

students relied particularly heavily on the use of written texts. While the use of texts does not support the spontaneity of real-world conversations, the discussion crutches do help students feel more comfortable speaking and therefore encourage them to speak more, ultimately resulting in improved speaking skills.

Rehearsal

Practice is extremely important for development of oral language skills. The type of rehearsal typically associated with oral performance is overt rehearsal, meaning practicing a particular text/speech over and over, like rehearsing for a play. However, covert rehearsal can be equally beneficial for developing oral skills. Covert rehearsal is "the process of repeated practice of one or more language forms over an extended period of time" (Kim et al., 2001, p. 341). This can easily be accomplished in written form by journaling. The researchers observed that the more the students practiced using different language forms in their journals, the more that form would appear in their oral production. Not only does journaling allow the students to practice the language, but students are able to do so in a medium that encourages personal reflection of language use rather than being subject to public critique. This helps students who are struggling with language anxiety.

Benefits of Reading and Writing

Encouraging students to use reading and writing to help develop their oral communication skills has multiple benefits. First, these techniques help tie together all four domains of language learning. For teachers who are always struggling to maintain a good balance of all four, this can be extremely useful. Second, reading and writing strategies are beneficial to students who experience language anxiety or communication apprehension. The written aids of the materiality, close inspection, and discussion crutch techniques help give students the confidence boost they need to be able to participate orally. Additionally, covert rehearsal by journaling allows students to become comfortable with a new language form before having to take the risk of using it publicly and orally. Finally, these reading and writing strategies are great to help differentiate instruction for students of different ability levels. Even if most of the class is able to participate in a discussion without any notes, allowing the few struggling students a discussion crutch can help them participate and feel included in the class.

Audio Journals

Another tool to help students to improve their interpersonal oral communication in a L2 is through the use of journals. However, rather than traditional written journaling suggested by Kim et al. (2001), Ho (2003) and Gleason and Suvorov (2012) propose using audio journals in world language classrooms. Audio journals are a form of asynchronous voice-based CMC. They function similar to written journals: students record their thoughts regularly either about whatever they wish or in response to a prompt, the entries are kept on record so that the students may revisit them, and a third party (either the instructor or peers) respond to the entries in the form of comments, questions, or suggestions. The only difference is that the audio journals are oral and recorded either with a computer recording device or a tape recorder.

Student-Teacher Journals

One strategy for using journals is to make the journals private, with only the teacher reading and responding to journal entries. The advantage of this type of journal is that the students may feel freer to express concerns or personal feelings than if their peers were able to read the entries. As an English instructor at a Taiwanese university, Ho (2003) implemented audio journals in the classroom because the large size of the class did not allow for much one-on-one interaction and there were few opportunities to practice the language outside of class. These are common problems world language teachers face. Ho's students were to submit ten journal entries throughout the semester.

Ho (2003) found the impact on student learning was mixed. The students who turned in the most entries demonstrated a high level of motivation, but most of them were very shy and did not participate in class. Thus, these audio journals gave these students an opportunity to practice interpersonal oral communication and express their ideas and concerns to the instructor. Ho also noticed that many students chose to use their journals as an expansion of class discussion. Students who were unable to participate in the discussion either from lack of time or anxiety were still able to share their ideas with the instructor and express themselves in a more comfortable setting. At the same time, there were several students who did not submit any entries. These students cited reasons such as not having access to a recording device, not knowing what to say, and not believing that their language ability was strong enough to successfully complete the task.

Student-Classmate-Teacher Journals

While some audio journals only allow student-teacher interactions, other software makes voice entries left by students open to the entire class. Gleason and Suvorov (2012) describe using Wimba Voice technology in the classroom. Slightly more formal than traditional journaling, students used Wimba Voice to record weekly assignments and three presentations throughout the semester and post them on a class website. Classmates would view the presentations and leave their own recorded comments and feedback, allowing students to practice interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication.

Gleason and Suvorov (2012) found that some of the students thoroughly enjoyed using the technology because it promoted interaction among the classmates. Additionally, the recording software allowed students to re-record their entries and self-correct as they saw fit. However, other students disliked Wimba Voice and found it more difficult to communicate due to the lack of face time and the inability to use communication strategies such as negotiation of meaning. Ho concludes that Wimba Voice may work very well for some students but have little effect on others.

Benefits of Audio Journals

The most significant benefit of audio journals is that it appeals to many students who tend to shy away from the typical oral activities in a world language classroom. Students who feel discomfort at the prospect of using the L2 or sharing their opinion among peers may feel

more secure being able to record their contribution from the comfort of their own home. Recorded audio journals also have the advantage of having an *erase* button, so students do not have to worry about being perfect on their first try. Audio journals are also beneficial to teachers with large class sizes. Student-teacher journals provide students with a forum for one-on-one interaction with the instructor and a chance to ask questions which would otherwise go unanswered. Similarly, audio journals open to feedback from the entire class promote classmate interaction, which can be difficult to facilitate in a large class. Although not all students will be very receptive to the idea of audio journals, they may be a useful supplemental activity for those students who have difficulties participating in class.

The Babelium Project

While many of the strategies and tools presented in this article address how to provide students with more opportunities to speak, another issue many students face is simply how to produce the sounds and flow of a second language. An innovative way to help students practice their presentational oral skills is through the Babelium Project (www.babeliumproject.com). This program is available for free online and presents students with the chance to reproduce native speech.

Description of the Project

The Babelium Project provides students with the tools to create their own voice recordings and videos (Pereira, Sanz-Santamaría, Montero, & Gutiérrez, 2012). Typically, users dub their own voice over video clips of popular movies or TV shows. Because the speakers are dubbing a clip, they have to fit their recording within a designated time. This forces the performers to speak in a more native-like flow. Users can re-record the clip as many times as they want until they are satisfied before publishing the clip on the website. Once published, other users, many of whom are native speakers in the target language, critique and score the audio/video clips. The scores are based on intonation, accent, pronunciation, rhythm, spontaneity, and overall impression.

Benefits of the Babelium Project

Pereira et al. (2012) administered questionnaires to university students using the Babelium Project for an ESL course. In general, the students found the program very agreeable, sharing comments such as "interesting and enjoyable. It is out of the ordinary English class" (p. 280). The students liked the program not just because it is fun and different, but because it uses media they enjoy recreationally. The authors use the example of students dubbing clips from the popular movie *Twilight*. Students are able to act out the part of Bella or Jacob, so they can feel like they are actors in their favorite movie. The disadvantage for American students is that world language media is not as popular in the United States as American media is abroad. Therefore, it may be difficult for students to find authentic media they want to dub. At the same time, most popular American movies are available with Spanish audio. Though it detracts from the cultural appeal of using authentic materials, these dubbed films still provide students with native language exposure in a movie they enjoy.

Another benefit of the Babelium Project is that it encourages students to practice. From student surveys, Pereira et al. (2012) found that students believed that they should study at least three hours a week to pass a proficiency exam. However, of the 90 students questioned, over 80% reported studying less than two hours per week, and some less than one. While working on the Babelium Project, students reported that they worked on average 2.7 hours per week. This increase in practice is necessary for students to improve their proficiency.

Conclusion

There are a variety of new instructional strategies and tools world language teachers can implement in their classrooms to increase their students' oral communication. Computer-mediated communication appeals to many teachers as use of technology to facilitate learning becomes more prevalent in classrooms. Although CMC is not necessarily more effective than traditional face-to-face communication at increasing student proficiency or decreasing anxiety, the technology does open new possibilities, such as conversing with language partners of a different L1, that simply are not available in a traditional classroom.

The Orbital Experience allows students to talk about their own interests and learn about their peers in an informal setting. This activity is easy to implement in any curriculum and effective at increasing students' desire to communicate in the L2.

Reading and writing techniques are individual strategies that help students struggling with oral production of the language. They help teachers differentiate instruction while tying in multiple academic domains of language.

Audio journals allow students who do not orally participate in class either due to large class sizes or anxiety to get oral practice and communicate with the instructor and/or classmates. Students are able to express their thoughts in a comfortable setting and self-correct their recordings until they are satisfied with their work.

Finally, the Babelium Project is a free program online in which students create their own dubbed audio/video clips. Many students genuinely enjoy using the program, resulting in an increase in their oral practice.

Although the numerous studies presented in this article tested the effectiveness, benefits, and drawbacks of the proposed instructional methods, further research is needed to explore the applicability of these instructional methods in American K-12 world language classrooms. Many of the studies, including those of Gleason and Suvorov (2012), Blake (2009), Ho (2003), and Pereira et al (2012), took place among ESL students at the university level. While these studies do relate to language acquisition, it is possible that the results could greatly vary if the same instructional were applied in a K-12 world language class. After all, there are bound to be significant difference between an ESL class at a Taiwanese university and a Spanish I class in a Midwestern high school. Continuing research of these instructional methods in various levels of American world language classes would benefit K-12 teachers looking for innovative strategies to increase the oral communication of their students.

If there is one thing that is true about education, it is that every class is different. What works well for one group of students may fail miserably with the next. Teachers should not be afraid to try out a variety of these strategies with their students to see what best helps their students learn. What several of the studies researched for this article have revealed is that increased oral practice correlates with increased oral performance. Engaging students in oral communication on a regular basis both increases their proficiency and helps the students feel more comfortable using the language. No matter which strategy teachers decide to test in their classroom, the very act of exposing students to extra oral practice will likely produce positive results.

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New Approaches to Assimilating Spanish Pronouns

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One challenge for students of Spanish is learning indirect and direct object pronouns. Students have little difficulty learning that direct object pronouns generally answer whom or what while indirect object pronouns answer the questions to whom, for whom or from whom. However, students will later learning the rules governing these pronouns are complex and vary throughout out the Spanish-speaking world. The textbooks and reference manuals for Spanish ranging from beginning to advanced levels, are extremely vague about the multiple usages of these pronouns, in particular, with the redundant indirect object pronoun. This study will analyze some of the prevalent usages of this grammar as presented in common textbooks and later provide other usages that should be added to Spanish textbooks.

Introduction and Background of the Study

The rules governing personal object pronouns are complex and vary a great deal throughout the Spanish-speaking world; for this reason, one of the most difficult tasks for English-speaking students trying to learn Spanish grammar is to internalize clitic pronouns. Clitic pronouns, frequently called direct and indirect object pronouns, carry with them multiple meanings. As a result, they can be confusing to language students of Spanish.

Language learners usually have little difficulty understanding that direct object pronouns generally answer the questions what or whom while indirect objects answer to whom, for whom, or from whom. The textbook, *Curso de gramática avanzada del español*, succinctly explains that direct object pronouns answer, "¿Qué o quién recibe la acción del verbo?" [What or who receives the action of the verb?] while the indirect object pronouns answer, "¿A quién está destinado el objeto directo?," [To whom is the indirect object intended?] or "¿Quién es afectado positiva o negativamente por la acción *p?*" [Who is affected positively or negatively by the action?] (Jordan & Pererio-Ortero, 2006, p. 112). Hardly any definition for indirect or direct object pronouns can be satisfactory or complete because they have more usages than English and in many cases have no English equivalent. Yet, students probably will not grasp the idea that *lo(s), la(s)* are the accusative pronouns and *le(s)* are the dative pronouns unless they have studied languages such as Latin, German, or Russian which employ declensions. Beginning-level textbooks do not and should not present an abundance of the intricacies of object pronouns, which is appropriate for this level as students are already overwhelmed with verb tenses, irregular verbs and mood selection. However, after students have established a foundation for the language, they certainly should be exposed to more complex grammar in Spanish.

While doing research for this present paper, I discovered most colleges and universities, at least in the University System of Georgia, offer two courses of advanced grammar for third- and fourth-year language courses. In order to have a better idea of what these advanced gram-

mar for third-and fourth-year language courses. In order to have a better idea of what these advanced grammars present about object pronouns, popular texts used within the University System of Georgia will be perused as well as texts I have employed as both a student and instructor. The information and grammar illustrations introduced in these texts regarding object pronouns are informative while other times vague and confusing. None of the texts gave a comprehensive explanation of object pronouns. The goal in the present paper is to examine the phenomenon of *clitic* doubling, in particular, the conditions which doubling of dative *clitics,* or indirect object pronouns, is obligatory or optional. It is worth noting that it is not possible to discuss all factors of doubling indirect object pronouns; some in fact, are still unclear. To accomplish this task, the grammatical features surrounding object pronouns included in these texts will be examined closely and discussed in great detail.

Discussion

As the introduction of this paper stated, entry-level Spanish textbooks will present object pronouns in a way they mirror the English language. That is, *le* and *les* are the dative pronouns while *lo(s)* and *la(s)* refer to the accusative. Language learners have minimal difficulties to understanding these basic features of the pronouns.

Generally, texts first present the indirect object pronouns in constructions with the verb *gustar*. The authors of the textbooks point out that some Spanish verbs require a special construction in which the person affected is not the subject but the indirect object as demonstrated in the example: *Me encanta este libro* (I love this book.) In addition, a beginning text will introduce the concept of the double pronouns in which if two object pronouns beginning with the letter *l* appear together in a sentence, the indirect object pronoun *le* or *les* changes to *se*. A native speaker of English learning Spanish usually will find this grammatical construction rather awkward; however, if he remembers the basic rule this should not be a trying structure.

Another feature of these pronouns, included in introductory textbooks, is the way indirect object pronouns are employed with the *se* for unplanned or involuntary events. The *se unplanned events* structure occurs when the indirect object is commonly found with verbs that are used reflexively. The subject of the Spanish verb is usually inanimate in this construction, and the sentence conveys the idea of an accident or involuntary event as illustrated in the example: *Se me perdieron las llaves* (lost my keys/The keys lost themselves from me). This structure becomes unclear and vague when other structures are presented in more advanced texts that mirror the unplanned events structure as illustrated in the example, *Se me acerca* (He is approaching me.).

The last element of object pronouns found in beginning-level textbooks of Spanish is the use of the redundant indirect object pronoun frequently called dative doubling as seen in the example: *Le dije a Juan la respuesta* 'I told Juan the answer.' Students tend to be perplexed when introduced to the redundant object pronoun because they cannot find a parallel in English. One usually does not say in English, I told him Juan the answer. Textbooks are extremely vague about when it is necessary to include the redundant pronoun, as is the case of the text,

¡Dímelo tú! The authors of the text explain, "In Spanish, both the indirect object pronoun and the indirect object noun may be included in a sentence for emphasis or for clarity when using *le* or *les*" (Blommers, Nagales & Samaniego, 2008, p. 205). Another popular textbook, *Arriba*, states: "When the indirect object refers to a specific person or group of people and is included in the sentence, the corresponding indirect object pronoun is also included" (Bacon, Nilbert, & Zayas-Bazan, 2011, p. 304). Lawrence Poston comments on the vague explanation of indirect object pronouns, "Nowhere have I been able to find a full discussion of the redundant object pronoun in Modern Spanish. More specifically, rules for the concurrence of use and non-use are extremely vague, if stated at all" ((Poston, 1953, p. 266). Some prevailing features of object pronouns have been pointed out in introductory texts; now, the focus will turn to discussion of object pronouns in intermediate and advanced textbooks of Spanish.

Regarding intermediate and other upper-level texts for Spanish all of the aforementioned features of object pronouns are presented. One aspect of Spanish, unlike English, is how indirect object pronouns can denote possession when replacing possessive adjectives. Frequently advanced texts indicate the indirect object pronoun is employed "usually with parts of the body and articles of personal clothing and personal belongings" (Kite & Sandstedt, 2011, p. 426). In these cases, English uses the possessive such as *Me cortó el pelo* [He cut *my* hair.] Another structure advanced texts mentioned is when the direct object noun precedes the verb in Spanish. An advanced grammar textbook, *Repase y escriba: Curso avanzado de gramática y composición* gives a clear and concise explanation: A redundant direct object pronoun is used between the noun and the verb seen in the following example: *A sus padres no los he visto en mucho tiempo* (Canteli Dominicis 2007, p. 73). Additionally most advanced and intermediated texts point out how the neuter direct object pronoun *lo* is employed with verbs like *creer*, *decir* and *saber*. This neuter pronoun is frequently omitted in English parallels. An example is: *Este capítulo parece difícil, pero no lo es* [This chapter seems difficult but it is not so.]

Explanation for Using Object Pronouns

After closely examining a number of introductory and advanced Spanish textbooks, it was concluded that the advanced grammars also provide insignificant explanation of object pronouns. As alluded to before, the argument is not for an elaborate and in-depth illustration of object pronouns. Rather these texts should introduce clearer explanations with more examples as well as give more usages of object pronouns. According to the texts examined, they present on average seven key features of object pronouns: placement; the construction with the *gustar* verbs; the sometimes redundant indirect and direct object pronouns; and *se* for unplanned events. However, additional explanation of object pronouns is lacking in most Spanish grammars at the college level. These texts tend to describe the rules governing this redundancy with such adverbs as *usually*, *in many cases*, or *frequently*. According to Jordan and Pereiro-Ortro (2007, p 119-102), texts tend to provide examples in which, the redundant pronoun occurs in one sentence while being left out in a similar sentence such as: *La mamá siempre les hacía la comida a los niños* (The mother always would make the food for the children) versus *Hizo la comida a sus hijos* (He made the food for his children). The rules behind the doubling of dative pronouns have been partially clarified at best. To provide extensive explanation of when indi-

rect object pronouns are optional or obligatory, would be a difficult task. Nevertheless, a few rules of when it is common to include or leave out the redundant indirect object pronoun would be useful.

While carrying out research on the dative doubling, the well-known grammar, *A New Reference Grammar of Modern Spanish*, was perused. The authors explain: "When an indirect object follows a verb, a redundant pronoun is very frequently used to show that a verb is 'involved' by the verb…" while the "absence of the redundant pronoun …depersonalizes the indirect object and would be natural in official documents or business letters when a formal tone is required…" (Butts & Benjamin, 2004, p. 151). This explanation is misleading, in particular, when one decides if the verb is *involved*. The question is how does one determine if the indirect object is involved? One would surmise that Butts and Benjamin's explanation would produce confusion in the classroom when students attempt to decide if the indirect object is *involved*.

To simplify the rules governing the redundant indirect object pronouns, I will provide rules when the redundant indirect object pronoun is required and later discuss when it is optional.

When the Redundant Indirect Object Pronoun is Required

The doubling of the indirect object pronoun is usually presented first with verbs like *gustar, doler, faltar,* and *quedar.* According to Albert Bickford, indirect object with these verbs is semantically an experiencer. Bickford states, "Dative clitic doubling is obligatory when the indirect object has the semantic role of Experiencer (1985, p. 191) and suggests that this type occurs with a relatively small class of verbs including *gustar* (to like) and *faltar* (to lack). Karol Franklin (1993) gives a definition of the experience:

> The *experiencer* is the thinking being which experiences the thought or perception specified by certain verbs. In Spanish the experiencer "can" occur in what is typically the indirect object position. The agent and dative exchange roles in such constructions, thus the label "inversion." (p.173)

This inversion/experiencer can be demonstrated with the example: *A Paco le falta un botón*, (translated, Paco is missing a button, or literally, A button is missing from Paco.) Generally, these types of verbs will not create havoc in the classroom because the language learner essentially must remember that these verbs are always employed with an indirect object pronoun. Though one must keep in mind there will be exceptions for the dative doubling for these verbs. One can say, *Esto interesa a todo el mundo* (This interests everyone.) The reason why the dative pronoun could be omitted is "absence of the redundant pronoun …depersonalizes the indirect object and would be natural in official documents or business letters when a formal tone is required…" (Butts & Benjamin, 2004, p.151).

Another condition in which dative doubling would be obligatory is when the dative has the semantic role of possessor. Defined again by Karol Franklin, "The possessor is that entity to which the patient or direct object belongs" (Franklin, 1993, p.170). This construction occurs in Spanish as an alternative to the show possession as seen in the example, *Antes de almorzar, siempre le lava las manos a su hijo*, versus, *Siempre lava las manos de su hija.* (Before having lunch, she always washes her daughter's hands.)

Still another case in which the dative doubling would be non-optional is when the indirect object is a *beneficiary*. Bickford (1985) explains that dative doubling is obligatory when the "…indirect object is semantically a beneficiary…" (p.192). Franklin (1993) suggests that, "A beneficiary may be interpreted as the entity for whose benefit an action is done; that is it is the entity that is directly affected by the action but does not necessarily become the possessor…" (p.170). An example to illustrate the indirect object as a beneficiary is, *Les pintaban las paredes a los dueños todos los veranos* (They painted walls for the owners every summer.) In this sentence los *dueños* (the owners) benefit from having someone paint their walls.

Bickford (1985) discusses the indirect object as beneficiary and coins it as an *ethical dative*. In other words, the ethical datives are being directly affected by the action of the verb, which can have a negative effect, "…as is implied by the colloquial use of 'on' in the English gloss". (Bickford, 1985, p. 192). An example showing the *ethical dative* is taken from Mexican detective novelist, Paco Ignacio Taibo (2003, p. 97). He writes, "*Ayer me invitan a cenar unos cuates de una compañía gringa para darme empleo, me empedo a mitad de la cena y le vomito el traje a la se*ñ*ora*. (Yesterday some buddies of mine from an American company invite me to have dinner and offer me a job, I get sloshed and I vomit on a young woman.) Without a doubt, this sentence certainly demonstrates the negative effect of the ethical dative as well as how this form of the dative gives the English equivalent of *on*.

Poston (1953) points out some additional features that could be provided about the redundant indirect object pronouns. He explains, when the indirect object precedes the verb, the "…redundancy is the rule" (p. 267) such as the example, *A Elisa no le ha pasado nada* (Nothing has happened to Elisa.). In addition, when the indirect object follows the verb and is a stressed personal pronoun, indefinite pronoun, a possessive pronoun or demonstrative pronoun, redundancy is the rule (p. 267), illustrated in the following examples: *A ustedes les repito lo que dije antes* (I'm repeating what I said earlier), and *Mario no le tiene miedo a nada* (Mario is not scared of anything), *¿Qué le pasa a éste?* (What is happening to this guy?) As stated earlier, these rules, of course, are not etched in stone as all languages have a great deal of exceptions.

When Doubling of the Direct Object Can be Optional

The indirect object pronoun can be omitted if it is a "semantic recipient or addressee" (Bickford, 1985, p. 192). A recipient may be considered the entity which requires possession of the patient as a result of the specific action such as, *(Le) puse un techo nuevo a la casa* (I put a new roof on the house.) Here, the house can be considered the possessor of the roof, or *(Le) damos camisetas a nuestros hijos cada verano*, (We give t-shirts to our children

each summer.) Once again, hijos (children) become the possessor of camisetas (t-shirts.) An addressee is that entity to which a communication is directed. Some examples in which the indirect object carries the semantic value of recipient are the following: *El professor (les) dice palabras duras a sus estudiantes* (The professor says harsh words to his students), or *En las noches frías, Mario (les) contaban muchas historias aburridas a las muchachas* (On cold nights, Mario would tell many boring stories to the girls).

Findings

To summarize, dative doubling is obligatory when the indirect object is an experiencer, possessor or beneficiary, while it is optional when the indirect object has a semantic value of recipient or addressee.

Most of the results presented in this article have been based on the data presented by Bickford's 1985 research. Bickford states at the beginning of this article "…the basic conditions under which clitic doubling is obligatory, optional or impossible have been only partially clarified" (p. 189). However, Bickford does not account for any exceptions to his presented rules, for instance, when the redundant pronoun is omitted in cases when dative doubling would be considered obligatory. Franklin (1993) suggests otherwise.

In a research study conducted by Franklin (1993), she interviewed a number of native speakers of Spanish which yielded some interesting results with regard to clitic doubling, suggesting the inadequacy of relying on rules such as the ones presented by Bickford. Regarding the semantic role of the experiencer, for example, she found that there is a preference to omit the dative pronoun in certain situations. Her "data revealed almost unanimous acceptance of clitic omission, in inversion constructions" (Franklin, 1993, p. 174) such as with verbs denoting psychological states: *gustar*, *complacer* and *agradar*. The speakers the researcher interviewed noted a shift in emphasis when the clitic was omitted, although they had difficulty defining it.

According to Franklin (1993), "for many speakers, clitic omission changes the emphasis from the partitive interpretation of individuals within a group to the non-partitive interpretation of the group as a generic class…" (p. 174) An example that demonstrates this shift in meaning is, *El buen comer no (le) complace a nadie.* (Good food doesn't satisfy anyone.) In this example by leaving out the pronoun, the speaker is making reference to people in general and by including it, it is more individual and personal. "Thus, in constructions involving inversion and generic subjects, clitic omission may actually be preferable if the speaker's intention is that the dative be non-referential/non-specific" (Franklin, 1993, p. 175). Furthermore, Franklin accounted for interesting results in respect to the dative carrying a semantic meaning of possessor. She explains that "…for omission to occur, the sentence must appear as one of a series of actions, as shown in the following (Franklin, p. 176)

> *Curó las heridas al enfermo.* 'He healed the patient's wounds.'
> *Entró en la casa y curó las heridas al enfermo.* 'He entered the house and healed the patient's wounds.'
> *Quitó la ropa al enfermo.* 'She removed the patient's clothes.' (Franklin, 1993, p. 176)

Thus, if these sentences were not in a series, it would obligatory to include the pronouns.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study of object pronouns has highlighted weaknesses and strengths of the grammatical illustrations presented in textbooks and grammars of Spanish. As a non-native speaker of Spanish, I have discovered mastering or teaching object pronouns to be a cumbersome task. As noted earlier in this paper, the grammar illustrations, in particular in textbooks, are vague and misleading with regard to the redundant dative pronoun in Spanish. Without a doubt, there exists a great deal of grey areas with respect to object pronouns; as a result, this creates problems to internalize them.

I frequently compare these so-called grey areas of object pronouns to learning or teaching the subjunctive in Spanish. Perhaps the authors of textbooks do not go into more detail of object pronouns because they believe students at this stage in learning the language might be overly overwhelmed with the Spanish language, and as a result, may lose interest and confidence in the long run with excessive grammar explanations. Perhaps the authors do not feel knowledgeable enough to supplement more rules and conditions of dative doubling.

When explaining the redundant indirect object pronoun, it certainly would be more suitable to explain, for instance, why the redundant object pronoun is used than a vague explanation such as it is f*requently included*, or *sometimes omitted*. Undoubtedly, there are no simple rules adequate enough to account for all instances of obligatory or optional dative clitic doubling in Spanish. It could be that some dialects of Spanish always require doubling or strongly prefer clitic doubling. Thus, to generalize a clitic doubling rule for all dialects is oversimplifying this phenomenon. In addition to dialect differences, clitic doubling may also depend upon register, the level of education of the speaker, and other dialect features, although such factors are beyond the scope of this paper.

In light of the many questions that remain regarding dative clitic doubling, it is evident that a more comprehensive collection of data and more research remain for further study. Syntactic rules and explanations have yielded a wealth of interesting research, but dative clitic doubling in Spanish continues to be an elusive phenomenon.

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A Curious Passport:
The Impact of World Language Immersion Education on Adult Alumni

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This paper presents a research study conducted during the spring of 2013 that examined the self-reporting impact of a K-12 French Immersion (FI) program in the lives of three of its adult alumni. The study was guided by a set of qualitative interview questions in order to identify what the subjects feel have been the multicultural experiences and relationships they have had as a result of their immersion education. The participants were asked to reflect on how well they think their immersion education prepared them to be global citizens in a culturally-interconnected world, and what they see that role to mean in their own lives. Results of this qualitative study reveal themes such as increased opportunities to travel to francophone countries, friendships with native French speakers, and a general open-mindedness and curiosity regarding other cultures.

Introduction

At the end of fifth grade, I stood on a stage, grinning as I graduated from Maxwell Elementary Spanish Immersion School in Lexington, Kentucky. We had just performed a choral rendition of *De colores* for the audience, and our principal, a man originally from Colombia, was addressing the crowd in lightly-accented English. Sitting there, I could not have imagined the impact those first 5 years of formal education in an immersion program would have on my own life. It would not be until I studied abroad in Córdoba, Argentina in my third year of college as a Spanish major. Only then, having philosophical conversations with my Argentine friends, while waiting at a bus stop late one night, would I realize how much my experience in a Spanish immersion school had impacted my life, the decisions I had made, and the paths I had chosen.

My interest in immersion education certainly was piqued in my teenage years, when I began to wrestle with my somewhat disoriented cultural identity. Both of my parents are White, monolingual, middle-class, American Southerners, yet I could read and understand Spanish young adult novels and had grown up for many years in an Arab culture since our move to the Arabian Peninsula. I knew that my years in a Spanish immersion program had had a great role in first planting in me an intense curiosity about other cultures, peoples, and languages, which only grew over time. Not only did I want to learn *about* other cultures, but I also wanted to learn *from* people who claimed that culture as their own, just as my third grade math teacher from Chile had taught me about the *pueblo* and family in which she grew up.

As I entered college and decided to study Spanish and Secondary Education, I noticed that when I mentioned my experience in an elementary immersion program I would often receive blank stares or confused expressions. I quickly came to learn that these programs are very

rare in the United States. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics there were 448 immersion schools in 38 states, with only 41 of those being programs that extended into high school (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011, para. 9). I immediately became all the more interested in immersion education, and was curious to know more about the effects it had in the lives of other alumni.

When I initially began to explore the dearth of literature that exists on the topic of world language immersion education, I noticed that there was an emphasis on the cognitive and linguistic benefits of such programs. Many quantitative scientific studies have been conducted to determine the benefits of second language acquisition at a young age, and study on its role in brain development and in academic performance is extensive (Genesee, 2007, p. 7). However, it seemed that a large portion of what was often stated as a goal and benefit of immersion—multicultural understanding—was neglected when it came to research. In fact, in Howard and Sugarman's (2007) research they pose the question, "How can the development of cross-cultural competence in TWI students be measured?" (p. 11) as the second item on the list of the top ten items on the research agenda for two-way immersion (TWI). This pressing topic clearly applies to all types of immersion programs, and there is a great need to attempt to identify the cross-cultural effects in the lives of students.

In many of the program descriptions that I read, administrators and advocates of immersion mention in some form the multicultural benefits of said programs, which involve the "development of a greater degree of cross-cultural tolerance" (Caccavale, 2011, p. 3) in an "increasingly complex, multilingual global society" (Holliston, 2011, para. 5). In the "PERSPECTIVES: Philosophy and Mission Statement" section of the Foreign Languages Curriculum Review website for Holliston Public Schools (2011), the district in which the immersion program that subjects of this study attended, one of the objectives states that students will develop "cross-cultural competence and sensitivity, enabling them to view the world through multiple lenses and to develop an insider's perspective on other cultures" (para. 6). Furthermore, as I had the privilege of attending the ACTFL 2012 Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Philadelphia, PA and was able to attend various presentations on immersion education, I noticed that *intercultural competence* was listed by the presenting experts as one of the goals of immersion, but was not accompanied by research studies (Met, 2012, p. 7).

The link between language and culture is inseparable, and the road to becoming bilingual connects to biculturalism—or what would be best communicated as multiculturalism—in complex ways in the context of an immersion classroom. Expert researcher in immersion, Fortune (2003) reports that, "becoming bilingual opens the door to communication with more people in more places, and many parents want to provide their children with skills to interact competently in an increasingly interdependent world community" (p. 1). Some world language programs argue that, "deep cultural understanding is only attainable through the acquisition of advanced proficiency in a second language" (Holliston, 2011, para. 7). Bilingual skills attained through immersion education are constantly being connected to the competence necessary to become what one might call a *global citizen.* In an article featuring E.E. Waddell Language Academy, the immersion recipient of the 2012 ACTFL Melba D. Woodruff Award for Exem-

plary Elementary Foreign Language Education, Ynez Olshousen, the principal of this school, is quoted as saying:

> In six languages of instruction, we are ensuring that every one of our students
> is globally competitive…We are confident that our students will be equipped
> for their global future with strong academic skills, advanced proficiency in
> a second language, and the ability to thrive in a diverse and multicultural
> society. (Cutshall, 2013, p. 17)

Language is the key tool that is necessary to have interaction and relationships with others who speak it. Furthermore, by equipping a student with these tools that promote global competence, educators also set them on a path in which they are able to grow into responsible and conscientious global citizens, who are not only equipped but also actively mindful of their impact in a globally interconnected society. Are alumni of world language immersion using their bilingual skills in the context of an *interdependent world community*? What are their experiences and how do they see as their roles in a *diverse and multicultural society* (p. 17)?

Description of the Study

Research Question

The research question guiding this qualitative study was: What is the impact of a K-12 world language immersion education on the global perspectives and multicultural experiences of its adult alumni? The object of this qualitative study was to record and analyze the personal reflections of three adult alumni of a FI (French Immersion) program, in order to determine the impact their immersion education had on their lives, according to their own understanding.

Rationale

The primary researcher of this study determined that the answer to the research question stated above would be best met through a qualitative study, rather than the collection of quantitative data. Babbie (2007) explains in his book regarding research methods in the social sciences, "Field research is especially effective for studying subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviors and for examining social processes...The chief strength of this method lies in the depth of understanding it permits" (p. 307). This study involves the investigation of what Babbie calls "subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviors" (p. 307), because it attempts to determine an impact of immersion education on the perspectives and experiences of its alumni. Thus, the individuals themselves are the best source to share their personal experiences and reflect on them. Through the use of open-ended questions, the researcher was able to achieve great depth of understanding and insight as she analyzed the participants' responses and attempted to highlight social processes at work, or trends in their personal reflections.

Much of the research that is conducted on the topic of immersion education is often quantitative. This is one way to capture the results of immersion programs, which are often de-

scribed on program websites for parents who are considering placing their children in immersion. People like to hear hard facts and are swayed by numbers. However, researcher Pierce (2010) writes,

> In an article for the *Canadian Modern Language Review,* Tardif Claudette
> and Sandra Weber express a need for qualitative research in the field of
> language education in order to gather information about human behavior
> that is inaccessible to the more quantitative methods. (p. 8)

Information on the profound and deeply subjective topics such as the multicultural impact of one's world language education would certainly fall into this category. Another author explains that:

> Qualitative research takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject
> matter; qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting
> to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people
> bring to them. Qualitative research begins by accepting that there is a range of
> different ways of making sense of the world and is concerned with discovering
> the meanings seen by those who are being researched and with understanding
> their view of the world rather than that of the researchers. (Jones, 1995, p. 2)

With this in mind, the approach that I chose to take is an organic and natural one, in which the people being interviewed were asked to make meaning of their experiences. As Jones emphasizes, this method places great value in the perspective of the one who is being studied. While it may be difficult to eliminate influencing factors or to isolate variables that affect a person's experiences throughout his or her life, such is the nature of the human experience. Any further attempts to do so would be impossible and presumptuous and would indicate a lack of understanding of the complexity of the countless factors that influence the formation a life.

Review of the Literature

Description and History of World Language Immersion

The Center for Applied Linguistics describes world language immersion education as, "elementary, middle, and high schools that teach all or part of their curriculum through a second language" (CAL, 2011, para. 1). The difference between immersion education and traditional world language learning is that the goal of immersion is for the regular school curriculum to be taught through the medium of the target language, whatever that language may be (Caccavale, 2011, p. 1). Because of this, students enter an immersion program in kindergarten or first grade, and the first years in the classroom in which they experience hearing the target language spoken to them by their teachers are vital to their foundational understanding of the language. Fortune (2003) explains, "Students develop proficiency in the second language by hearing and using it to learn all of their school subjects rather than by studying the language itself" (p. 1). This method of instruction simulates the natural language-acquisition process that infants experience as they are immersed in their native language for a period of time before beginning to speak,

without first learning the formal grammatical rules or structures of the language.

Types of immersion programs. Such programs are referred to as total or partial immersion programs, and are primarily designed for students whose first language is English (CAL, 2011, para. 1). Another type of immersion program is two-way immersion (TWI), originally created for both native English and native Spanish speakers. The Center for Applied Linguistics (2011) describes total immersion as a program "in which all or almost all subjects taught in the lower grades (K-2) are taught in the foreign language; instruction in English usually increases in the upper grades (3-6) to 20%-50%, depending on the program" (para. 3). Partial immersion is described by the same source as a program "in which up to 50% of subjects are taught in the foreign language; in some programs, the material taught in the foreign language is reinforced in English" (para. 4).

Why might some schools develop world language programs that are founded on this model? The goal of immersion education is for students to "become proficient in the second language and develop increased cultural awareness" (Fortune, 2003, p. 1) while also attaining high academic achievement throughout their schooling. In many programs in the United States, the language of instruction (or the target language) is typically a,

> …world language spoken by large numbers of people, such as Spanish, French, or Cantonese. In some cases, it is a heritage language being revitalized, as in the Hawaiian and Yup'ik (an Alaska native language) immersion programs that serve indigenous communities. (Fortune, 2003, p. 1)

Goal of immersion. Fortune (2003) also states that the goal of immersion is "to provide educational experiences, beginning in kindergarten and ideally sustained through Grade 12, that support academic and linguistic development in two languages and that develop students' appreciation of their own and other cultures" (p. 1). Immersion programs in the United States are rare, and even within the number of programs that exist, the ones that only last through elementary school far outnumber those that continue through Grade 12. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, out of 448 immersion schools in the United States in 2011, only 41 extended into high school (CAL, 2011, para. 9). Thus, the *ideal* situation of the educational experience being "sustained through Grade 12" (Fortune, 2003, p. 1) is an extremely rare case. Also, it is interesting to note that in this concise definition provided by Fortune, she makes a distinct connection between linguistic development in two languages and the development of an appreciation for the respective cultures. This topic will be discussed more in-depth in this paper.

Immersion education is a young novelty in the United States, and quickly growing. Again, Fortune (2003) mentions that these programs were originally modeled "after the pioneering French Immersion programs developed in Canada in the 1960s" (p. 1). Francophone Canada led the way as it embraced bilingualism in times when the United States was seeking an increasingly monolingual nation. However, that American perspective shifted in the mid-1900s. Cazabon, Lamber, and Hall (1993) write:

> In the 1950's, the United States Government enacted the National Defense

Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet scoop of space exploration with Sputnik, the first manned satellite. The NDEA stressed the urgent need for American young people not only to catch up with the Soviets in science and technology, but also to develop bilingual/bicultural skills. The belief was that sophistication in languages and cultures would make the nation more effective in international research and commerce and, perhaps most important of all, would help change other peoples' perceptions of Americans; in many quarters of the world, Americans were seen as "ugly" (Lederer & Burdick, 1958) because of their ignorance and disdain of foreign cultures and languages. In that era, then, bilingual education was intended for mainstream Anglophone Americans. (p. 2)

Shortly thereafter, the first immersion programs were established, and the development of bilingual/bicultural skills became an increasingly greater priority to Americans who found themselves in an increasingly culturally interconnected global society.

Making Sense of Cross-Cultural Tolerance

As one considers the goals of immersion education that have to do with cross-cultural tolerance and a certain global citizenship, the question of what these terms really mean is bound to arise. In order to measure the outcomes of these goals and objectives and to determine whether or not they have been successfully met and to what degree, one must attempt to define these somewhat abstract concepts.

Cross-cultural tolerance (Caccavale, 2011, p. 3) implies a certain open-mindedness when it comes to people of other cultural backgrounds. An individual who possesses this trait would be comfortable with people who are culturally different, and he or she may have a curiosity or interest to learn more about different ways of life. This person would be drawn to cultural diversity and tend to celebrate differences, desiring to see more and more from the perspectives of others, and in doing so, to expand his or her own global perspectives.

Intercultural competence, which is mentioned by immersion expert Met (2012) as a benefit of world language immersion education is a concept that touches not only on appreciation for other cultures, but also emphasizes the skills to interact with and amongst people of various cultural backgrounds (p. 7). This implies that there are learned skills, or tools, necessary to obtain in order for one to be competent at crossing cultures and to thrive in a global society.

The tools one must have to do this well combined with a sense of identity and belonging as a valuable piece of a global society leads to the idea of global citizenship. Wise (2008) discusses this concept of global citizenship, and says:

One theme to consider… is to think of the skill sets necessary to make one's way in this world. We need to pay attention to the experience of various peoples, from the global elite of business and tourist class who crisscross the globe, to

third culture kids and global nomads, to diasporic and immigrant populations. (p. 149)

He goes on to clarify that these examples of global mobility or immigration do not guarantee an understanding of being a part of a global and multicultural world. In other words, "diasporic in and of itself doesn't necessarily give one appropriate agency or insight into global processes (Ong, 1999), though it potentially provides important perspective and a set of cultural tools and skills (code switching, syncretism, hybridity)" (p. 149). Apart from the tools necessary to thrive in this global community, one must also understand what it means to be a citizen of said community.

In Brecher, Childs, and Cutler's (1993) work, citizenship is generally defined as expressing "membership and the quality of participation in a political community. Its conditions can be specified by law, but its reality is a matter of politics and the rigors of experience" (p. 39). In order for one to experience membership in a global community, one must be equipped with the tools to communicate with other members of that community—mainly, language and cultural understanding. To various degrees, a student of immersion is being transformed into a more and more competent and sensitive global citizen, through a more rigorous experience of language and cultural learning than is typically in public education in America.

This is an abstract concept, and it is nearly impossible to determine an exact definition of what it means to be a citizen of a global community who is fully equipped for model citizenship. However, one may presume that if a global community consists of individuals from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the skill to be able to speak another language will open doors for communications and bridge gaps between citizens in the global community. Thus, bilingualism and biliteracy may be counted as crucial skills that will lead to an increase in global citizenship in the individual that has them—greater, that is, than if they were *not* bilingual or biliterate in any way. Caldwell (2007) writes:

> As globalization continues to dismantle economic boundaries and, in turn,
> change the demographic composition of the United States, the federal
> government has resolved to encourage the development of a more cross-
> culturally educated person…In effect U.S. citizenship in the 21st century
> demands global awareness, respect for diversity, and…proficiency in a
> second language. (p. 464)

For the federal government, for educators, and for everyone it is difficult to deny the need and importance today for Americans to grow in cross-cultural understanding and obtain the skills to be more active and effective global citizens.

Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Bilingualism and biliteracy are cornerstone goals in immersion education (Met, 2013, p. 10). Bilingualism has to do with one's fluency in speaking and understanding the spoken language. This is developed quickly in the early years of immersion, yet can be difficult to meas-

ure. Pierce (2010) writes, "Even for individuals who have studied the language for many years, vernacular speech is often difficult without having spent many years in a Francophone environment" (p. 62). Bilingualism can be manifest on a spectrum of abilities, and most individuals who are products of immersion all the way through high school would be considered functionally bilingual.

Biliteracy, a slightly more elusive accomplishment, relates to the comprehension of texts written in the language, and an ability to communicate oneself through writing. Immersion experts often say that becoming bilingual is the easy part, but that reaching biliteracy requires a diligent adherence to a curriculum involving many diverse texts in the target language. This becomes more difficult to develop in students in the upper grades because the programs almost always shift to partial immersion programs, which leads to less instruction time during the day in the target language, as well as the fact that constantly challenging and increasing the students' reading level is hard.

According to Baker (2011), language is inextricably linked to culture. He writes, "Language use cannot be divorced from the context in which it is used, nor from the effects of the interactions of different combinations of people in a conversation" (p. 4). Thus, there is much to be learned about the culture of a language not only through the structures and details of the vocabulary and formal rules of communication, but more importantly through the interaction with a native speaker.

Baker also gives an explanation that runs contrary to the traditional understanding of individuals who are bilingual.

> Bilinguals become more or less bicultural or multicultural. It is possible for someone to have a high proficiency in two languages but be relatively monocultural. … Bicultural competence tends to relate to knowledge of language cultures; feelings and attitudes towards those two cultures; behaving in culturally appropriate ways; awareness and empathy; and having the confidence to express biculturalism. (p. 4)

Part of this research study's focus was to determine how bicultural alumni become or associate with their identity. Because Pierce (2010) concluded in her study, "An individual's level of bilingualism thus seems to depend largely on the depth of their vocabulary and their personal experiences" (p. 62), this study may also likely reveal varying levels of ability and fluency in subjects. It is typically assumed that those who are bilingual speak both languages equally fluently, and the same amount. However, Grosjean (2008) explains:

> According to the holistic view, then, the bilingual is a fully competent speaker-hearer; he or she has developed competencies...to the extent required by his or her needs and those of the environment. The bilingual uses the two languages— separately or together—for different purposes, in different domains of life, with

different people. Because the needs and uses of the two languages are usually quite different, the bilingual is rarely equally or completely fluent in the two languages. (p. 14)

This study will operate under the assumption that most, if not all, graduates of world language immersion programs, no matter how long ago they graduated, continue to retain some degree of bilingual and biliterate skills that distinguish them from many completely monolingual Americans.

Multicultural Benefits

Although it can be difficult to find research-based evidence that reinforces the multicultural benefits of world language immersion (which is one of the reasons that I chose to conduct this study on this particular topic), several studies have been conducted that address multicultural perspectives in immersion alumni, and have highlighted the importance of this aspect of immersion. In fact, Pierce (2010) takes it one step further by writing, "We see now in the profession that cross-cultural understanding is much more important than the instrumental use of two different languages for daily affairs" (p. 44). She goes on to explain that the goals of French Immersion have changed over time, and that the emphasis of late on cross-cultural understanding reflects a high value of multiculturalism in America (p. 44).

Programs like the one highlighted in this study aim to promote multicultural awareness by "maximizing the children's exposure to Francophone cultures in the classroom" (Pierce, 2010, p. 45). In personal interviews with former students and teachers, terms such as *open-mindedness* and *cross-cultural sensitivity* arise frequently, which causes Pierce to suggest that students are "influenced on a deep, personal level, and that curiosity about other cultures becomes a part of their identities" (p. 45). In other words, multiculturalism becomes a way of life and a comfortable way of learning.

Genesee and Gándara (1999) consider several theories that link bilingual education to intergroup prejudice and discrimination, one being contact theory, which holds that, "contact between members of different groups leads to increased liking and respect for members of the out-group, including presumably reductions in stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination" (p. 667). These authors go on to say that the opportunities for this type of contact to occur with desirable effects are infinite and diverse and that "dual-language programs present a particularly interesting case for examining the contact hypothesis because they provide sustained opportunities for direct intergroup contact" (p. 667). Simply having the bilingual skills to communicate with those who speak another language opens up doors to increased contact with such people, and can lead to genuine friendships.

Another theory that Genesee and Gándara (1999) address is multicultural education, which is "a reform movement" and a philosophy of education "that includes multiple cultural perspectives. It clearly endorses and seeks to promote intergroup understanding, reduced prejudice, and effective cross-cultural relations" (p. 670). Multicultural education is a tremendous

driving force behind the cross-cultural goals of immersion programs, and essentially seeks to eradicate ethnocentrism.

> Several researchers have found this to be effective. Pierce (2010) states that,Many immersion graduates display more positive attitudes toward learning about other languages and ways of life… [and] travel to other countries and represent the United States diplomatically, and… display compassion and acceptance when interacting with people of different heritages within the United States. (p. 49)

In a Canadian study ("Survey of 1998," 2002), in response to a question of "have you talked to francophones from Canada in the last four months?," 42.4% of graduates from a FI program answered *Yes*. In response to the question, "Have you talked to francophones from outside Canada in the last four months?," 37.1% of graduates answered *Yes* (p. 21). This appears to indicate that more than a third of graduates may be able to use their French conversationally to connect with others from a linguistically and culturally different background.

There can be numerous other results of an immersion education with a multicultural focus in the life of an alumnus. Graber (2008) shares data on the graduates of a French Immersion program in Minnesota, students who were graduating from college at the time. She states that many of the students are multilingual, having studied, in addition to French, Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Latin, and Spanish. Some other immersion students pursued majors and career goals in Spanish, Japanese, French/psychology, French/child psychology, economics, teaching careers in languages, ESL (English as a Second Language) education in francophone countries, and Japanese translation. Furthermore, many students at the time had already studied and lived outside the U.S. (para. 4). Several parents of these graduates said immersion was a good choice for their family because it "enabled my child to embrace a larger world view of life" (para. 7). The former students themselves highlighted the multicultural impact that their immersion experience had had on their lives saying it helped them to, "Make ... friends from various cultures, have a sense of familiarity and ease with French, study other languages, approach language study in a different way, cultivate a passion for languages, travel/live in French speaking countries," and "view the world, other cultures, and other languages in a greater depth" (para. 10). Upon self-reflection students were able to compile a dearth of evidence to show how the multicultural goals of immersion had been met in their lives. These results can inform the present study as well.

Method

Hypotheses

A qualitative research design was used in this study. Based on examination of published research and my personal observations of the immersion education experience in general, I made the following hypotheses for the present study.

A qualitative research design was used in this study. Based on examination of published research and my personal observations of the immersion education experience in general, I made the following hypotheses for the present study.

1. Individuals will have, for the most part, sought out further study of the language, since they already have a firm foundation of linguistic knowledge and ability. This could manifest itself in the course of study they choose in post-secondary education, whether a major or a minor, or simply taking French classes in some capacity.
2. Having had an immersion education will lead alumni to a sense of open-mindedness when it comes to being willing to learn about and accept other cultures, perspectives, and ways of doing things.
3. Alumni from this program have had global travel experiences and relationships, particularly in francophone countries and with people from French-speaking backgrounds. (I expected that these opportunities will have been initiated in programs in their school, which may lead to further relationships and independent travel.)
4. There may be a bit of a crisis of linguistic identity as an alumnus/alumna seeks to find his/her place in the academic world as a student who has more knowledge and experience than a typical world language student, but who is also coming from a unique and rare education experience involving the French language.
5. While some alumni will use French daily in their professional or personal lives, many will use French occasionally in professional or personal travels or on the rare occasion that they have a chance to have a conversation in French with a native speaker.
6. Some alumni may diverge from the general trend, and will not have continued in studying or using the target language of their immersion program at all. (I expect that as adults these individuals may feel regret for not having continued their study/use of the language when they were young.)
7. Some alumni will not consider themselves to be bilingual or biliterate, because they may feel that their skills in French speaking and reading have deteriorated due to lack of sufficient use over time, and are thus unqualified to be labeled as such.

Participants

Three participants were invited by the researcher to participate in the present study. Jack (pseudonym), 1992 graduate, Helen (pseudonym), 2001 graduate, and Jennifer (pseudonym), 1992 graduate. All graduated from a public school FI program in Holliston, MA.

Program

FI Program Coordinator, Therese Caccavale (2011) explained to the researcher that this program had begun in the fall of 1979, with a kindergarten class of 27. (Two of the students in this entering class were subjects in this present study, while the other subject graduated later.)

All three participants were students in the immersion program from kindergarten until 11th grade. This immersion group represented 10% of the entire kindergarten class at this school. Since then, the program has grown and now the classes K-12 have double sections of French Immersion, with a total system-wide FI population of approximately 575 students in 2011. Total Immersion (see "Description and History of World Language Immersion" above) is implemented in Kindergarten through Grade 2. "Partial Immersion (50% daily classroom instruction) is offered in Grades 3-5. Daily French Immersion instruction (one 42-minute class per day in the target language, integrated with some content areas) is offered in Grades 6-8" (p. 1). In high school, students follow a specific program of study, including a

> …virtual residence in Paris in Grade 9, a tour of French regions and the study of literary works written by authors who lived in those regions in Grade 10, the study of French history and literature including a unit on Existentialism in Grade 11, and the Advanced Placement French Language Course in their senior year. (p. 1)

Procedure

Following Approval from The University of Tennessee's Office of Research and Engagement Institutional Review Board, qualitative data were collected from the participants using an interview format (Appendix A). Digitally-taped data were later qualitatively analyzed by the researcher in an effort to identify commonalities and themes.

Interview Protocol

Interview questions were designed to use language found in the published research of world language immersion programs in order to attempt to measure what the programs themselves aim to accomplish.

Data Collection

Invitation to participate in the study. The research participants were three consenting adults who attended a K-12 French Immersion public school-based program in Holliston, MA. The researcher contacted each participant via email in advance to seek his or her written permission to be interviewed at a later date. The researcher had no previous connection or relationship with the participants. They were contacts given by the director of the immersion program to the researcher as suggested participants in this type of study. The interviews were subsequently conducted via phone in the personal residence of the investigator, recorded on a Sony digital voice recorder, and then transcribed by the principal investigator.

Interviews. Appendix A is the Interview Protocol, created by the researcher, which was used in the present study. Each participant was interviewed only once and the phone interviews lasted approximately one hour.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data from the taped interviews, the investigator conducted a cross-analysis of reoccurring themes in all three interviews, using coding (Guetzkow, 1950, p. 47). This was accomplished by considering each question one at a time, inspecting all the three answers, and highlighting similar or reoccurring words and ideas. Positive tones were highlighted in green and negative-toned comments were highlighted in red when applicable. The researcher then paraphrased in a few words each of the themes that had been highlighted and recorded them in red ink below the answer to the question. The themes were then all compiled in a master list and combined when necessary. The researcher noted how many participants had stated similar themes.

Results and Discussion

Interviews

Interview data asked of the study's participants from the six questions on the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) were closely examined by the researcher.

Themes. Five reoccurring themes were identified as commonalities in the interview data analyzed for this study.

Travel opportunities. All of the participants mentioned travel to other countries various times. Jack described his travel experiences to France during his time in the FI program as an exchange student with a French family that he grew close to over 6-7 years as a way that the FI program impacted his cross-cultural relationships and experiences. Helen also did a student exchange trip to Paris in high school. All of the participants had traveled to Canada and had used their French skills as best they could in francophone regions.

All of the participants expressed a great desire to travel and to intentionally travel to places they are able to use their French, and where it would be less intimidating to go for that reason. Helen in particular highlighted a hunger to travel and making travel a priority as one of the ways the program has impacted her life. The opportunities she had to travel in high school and the focus on other cultures in the FI curriculum whet her appetite to continue learning about other places and peoples. She eventually lived abroad in France for a year in college, and has traveled the world extensively. Although some of these trips were not directly organized by the FI program, the participants clarified that participation in the program and having abilities to speak another language motivated them to travel and brought up opportunities to do so in the FI program community, where such experiences were encouraged.

Friends within the FI program. All of the participants responded to Question 2, "To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures?" This particular question examined the FI impact on their relationships, by focusing a great deal on friendships within the French

Immersion program, amongst their fellow immersion classmates. Two of them related the relationships amongst classmates to some type of familial relationship. "So you are more than just classmates because you are with the same kids every year so they become more like your family" (Helen). They all also emphasized the persistence of those friendship bonds and their value of those friends to this day. Helen is getting married soon, and her maid of honor will be her best friend who also grew up in her FI class. This was a surprising find, as I thought the question would lead to sharing about cross-cultural relationships or relationships with French-speakers outside of the program. However, it is clear that relationships in the FI program, although not so much multicultural, are crucial in these individuals' minds as they consider the impact that the program had on their relationships in general.

Interestingly enough, two participants, especially Jennifer, said that this tight-knit group characteristic of the program was also one of the negative aspects of it, because if one did not get along with others, there was no escape for the next several years. Jennifer also spoke about her daughter's current experience, saying,

> It has been interesting seeing my daughter experience it now and its effect on her friendships and relationships. It hasn't always been easy, and she has had buddies in her class, but they have two classes that get mixed each year and so friends get separated. (Jennifer).

Jack and Jennifer never had to deal with this issue, since they were part of the first class in the immersion program, which only consisted of one group of students.

Cross-cultural relationships. Travel opportunities due to or inspired by the FI program in the lives of 2 of the participants in particular led to deep cross-cultural friendships. Jack traveled to France to stay with a family, and they came to the U.S. to stay with his family many summers in a row when he was young. He says,

> And we did that for about 6 or 7 summers, so I got to know that family, you know I lived with them all those years over the summer, and I got to know them extremely well, as well as their friends. And all that was directly because I was in the French Immersion program, the program itself didn't facilitate it, but it was because I knew the language and we were able to take a student in, and it just worked out from there. (Jack)

Helen also stayed with a host family in France when she lived abroad, for part of her time there. She also met a French Canadian man while traveling through Canada and they are soon to be married. He and his family are fluent French-speakers, so she said it has been good to be able to speak to them in French and that it has brought them all closer together. This is a strong example of how her FI education may have had some part in impacting her life and resulting in a cross-cultural marriage.

Open-mindedness. In answer to Questions 3, "As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally interconnected world?" and 4, "One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens.* Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?" the bulk of the answers consisted of suggesting that open-mindedness and being open to other cultures was both a crucial part of the subjects' role as bilingual and biliterate Americans and also a fruit in themselves that shows their program was able to help equip them to be just that. Two participants specifically mentioned that they felt they were more aware and accepting of cultural differences, were exposed to bigger world perspectives and are open to talking about other cultures. One of these individuals referred to being less ethnocentric as a part of his role as a bilingual and biliterate American. Helen used the term, "I'm not always full American" to describe how she feels that she compares to others who might not have had the multicultural influence of FI in their lives, saying, "I hear people say, "this is the way I was raised and I would never do anything else" and I think I'm very open to the ways other cultures do things." Jack included in his understanding of his role a hope that he was a good ambassador for FI and said, "Hopefully, I am able to convince other people that learning about other cultures is worthwhile." He currently works with individuals from countries all over the world on a daily basis and believes his immersion experience has helped him to understand people and respect them as individuals.

Self-perceptions. In answer to Question 4, Jack implies that global citizenship involves being open to learning about other cultures, while Helen focuses her answer on travel experiences and cross-cultural relationships and highlights these. Jennifer, the one participant who did not see herself as being bilingual or biliterate[1], even though she uses a bit of French daily in her teaching job, and says she can understand French fairly well and respond very slowly, said she felt a connection to all things that have to do with French, and has always wanted to learn more about it. This reveals a personal return to the one language/culture she was exposed to a great deal in her FI program.

Limitations of the Study

In every study and especially in one of a qualitative nature, one must consider factors that cannot be controlled.

One might expect to see patterns of a great deal of multicultural experiences that may be fit for a high social class, because of the wealth in the region where the program is located.

Additionally, all participants were recommended to the principal investigator via an administrator, so there could be some bias in the nature of whom she thought to recommend for the study. For example, 2 of the 3 participants work in the school, which is perhaps why it was easy to think of them and contact them.

It is also difficult to separate the experience that they have had from what their parents would have modeled for them even if they had not been in FI. Jack acknowledged this several times, saying he does not know what his life would have been like otherwise, and wondering how much of his cross-cultural experiences sprung from the initiative taken by his parents.

how much of his cross-cultural experiences sprung from the initiative taken by his parents. Pierce, (2010) reinforces this, saying, "the people who tend to seek out these specialized public programs already have a foundation of cultural capital, and thus the FI programs will only reinforce what they have passed down to their children" (p. 78).

It was also discovered very late into the study that one of the individuals left the immersion program after her 11th grade year. Thus, she did not technically complete the immersion program all the way through Grade 12. However, the data were considered valid for the purposes of this study since she still had most of the immersion experience, and by the time she would have gotten to her final year, instruction in French would have been significantly reduced anyways. Her slightly early departure from the program could have influenced her choices later on in college regarding further study of the language.

Finally, the researcher's personal experience and anecdotal reflections on her own matriculation from an immersion program could have affected the way that she interpreted the data, by having a positive connotation in her own mind regarding these topics. While the researcher attempted to analyze the qualitative data objectively, there could have been some personal bias that affected the way in which the results were portrayed. The researcher also clearly worded the questions in the interview based on the focus of the study, which was guided by her own experiences and curiosity. Thus, the questions in Appendix A may have been affected by the personal bias of the researcher.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by the research when it comes to the affects of immersion programs, and, in general, with my original hypotheses. All participants recalled their FI experience with fondness and many were generous in their attributing much of their multicultural experiences and wider global perspectives to immersion and the opportunities it provided. The opportunities that were most highlighted as leading to cross-cultural exposure and relationships were travel to francophone regions and countries, as well as the relationships that sprang from their travels. Subjects used almost exact language that was found in the literature, such as *less ethnocentric*, *open to other cultures*, *accepting of other cultures*, and *sensitive to other cultures* to describe the impact their immersion education has had on their global perspectives to shape how they now see their role as being global citizens.

The findings of this study imply that this French Immersion program had profound and lasting multicultural impact on the lives of at least 2 out of 3 subjects, especially as they were able to continue pursuing their use of French. In light of the educational emphasis on global readiness across the United States, particularly those linked to the Common Core State Standards, immersion programs ought to be regarded for their significant holistic impact on the lives of students when it come to global perspectives. They ought to be consequently implemented as educators seek to develop future global citizens.

This research fills a gap in the current literature, in which there previously were no studies that had been conducted to evaluate and analyze the impact of immersion programs in the lives of alumni, particularly as it affects their global experiences and perspectives. This study provides what was lacking in the literature by giving new insights into the experiences of three alumni of a French immersion program.

In the future, hearing from a larger group of alumni from a variety of FI language programs, including some who attended the FI a long time ago, and some who are recent graduates, would provide a more comprehensive understanding on this topic and greater insight into this research question.

If I were to do the study over, I might ask different questions that would try more specifically to measure some of what I now know to be the multicultural fruit in the life of an immersion alumnus/alumna. The negative aspect of doing this however would be that it would be less open-ended. For example, I might ask, " How many countries have you traveled to?" "Have you had friends who are native speakers of the target language?"

I would also revise the Interview Protocol questions. Some were a bit ambiguous for all participants to answer. In retrospect, the questions could have been simpler. However, I wanted to purposefully use the same qualitative, open-ended language that I found was being used by researchers who described these programs. Cultural impact, however, is a multi-faceted concept and part of a complex identity of individuals and their life experiences.

Note

1. Pierce also writes,

    Based on my subjects' responses, I determined that aside from the pragmatic view of bilingualism, 'being bilingual' is also a personal state of mind that reflects identity formation because it is linked to the individual's self-perception and confidence. Since bilingualism cannot be measured, individuals can choose to make the trait of being bilingual a part of their identity if they perceive themselves in that way. (p. 66)

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Appendix A
Interview Protocol

I. Rapport Building
    A. Pseudonym Chosen By Participants
        1. I will explain what a pseudonym is and why it will be used.
        2. What would you like your pseudonym to be?
    B. Background Information
        1. Who helped you decide whether or not to attend a language immersion program?
        2. Does anyone in your family speak the target language of your program?

II. Guide Questions
    A. Please describe the extent to which you have used, spoken, or studied the target language of your immersion program in your life, starting from the year you graduated from the French Immersion program, until now.
    B. To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures)?
    C. As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally interconnected world?
    D. One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens.* Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?
    E. What are your concluding thoughts on any positive and negative effects of immersion education in your own life?
    F. Please share any other comments that you may have concerning what we have talked about in this interview.

The Author

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Preferences of International Students for First-Year Writing Courses:
ESL or Mainstream Classrooms

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This qualitative research study investigated the preferences of NNES international students as to their placement in either an ESL/NNES or a mainstream classroom for a mandatory First-Year Writing course. It also explored whether ESL courses served the needs of these international students for whom they are intended. Additionally, it examined the assessment criteria and whether students were satisfied with them. The findings reported that even though the NNES international students were not given a choice between taking FYW in ESL or in mainstream classrooms at their home institution, they all believed that the ESL classroom served their needs and expectations. They also considered it to be an important and beneficial course for first-year students. Finally, although the assessment criteria in American universities may differ from the assessment criteria in writing courses that international students took in the past, ESL composition assessments at The University of Tennessee were considered to be fair and reliable by the four participants in the research study.

Introduction

The Institute of International Education (2014) reports data from the National Center for Educational Statistics stating that the number of international students in the academic year 2012-2013 reached an all-time high of 819,644 students who are now enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities in different majors and academic levels. Non-native English-speaking (NNES) undergraduate students are usually required to register in Writing for Academic Purposes (WAP) courses for the first year to prepare them for future academic courses. According to Leki (2007), academic writing in U.S universities and colleges is considered an important means to measure the students' progress in academia. Therefore, the masses of NNES students in composition programs in universities across the U.S. should be seriously considered by teachers and researchers due to the fact these second language (L2) writers may not share the same ideas and backgrounds with mainstream writers. Much research conducted by non-native English speaker scholars has documented the hardship for international students to write in English even after several years of extensive effort to learn to grasp this skill (Leki, 2007; Spack, 1997).

In the investigation of the similarities and differences between NNES and Native English Speaking (NES) students in integrated classrooms, the author found several studies which suggest methods of teaching L2 writing in mainstream classrooms (Clark, 1986; Oster, 1986; Scull, 1982; Spack, 1994). Others went further by identifying ESL writing as a separate practice from NES writing (Leki, 1992; and McKay, 1981; Silva, 1994;). Silva (1992, 1993,1994) and Raimes (1985) argued that although NES and NNES methods shared some major similarities (e.g., planning, writing, and revising), when writing practice was closely examined, the differences were much greater and more important. For example, Silva (1993) found, after review-

ing 72 articles comparing first language (L1) to L2 writing that the writing process in the two settings is different, and ESL writing seemed to be limited because it made use of fewer words with more errors. Specifically, Silva (2007) and Spack (1997) argued that many NES students encountered difficulties in handling genres, conventions, and irrelevant subjects in L1 composition.

Hsieh's (2007) case study examined an international student's identity struggles in an American mainstream classroom. The study focused on a Chinese girl who rarely spoke in class. Using formal and informal interviews and interview notes, research journals, and a personal autobiography, the researcher found that her silence had nothing to do with the student but was rather due to perceived power inequities between American and international students. As Hsieh described her, the Chinese girl became "the victim of this disempowering nature of American higher education settings" (p. 379).

Similarly, Kennedy (1993) argued that mainstream First Year Writing (FYW) composition classes created linguistic and cultural problems that hampered the learning process among NNES students in English writing classes. She purported that these problems existed because teachers focused primarily on native student speakers, whereas issues affecting non-native English-speaking students were hardly considered. These examples suggest that L1 and L2 concerns are remarkably divergent.

In contrast, other researchers, like Howard (1984) and Roy (1984), considered the commonalities between NNES and NES students as being positive and beneficial for both groups, and therefore, the authors argued against separation. On the other hand, in his empirical study, Ruecker (2011) concluded that international and resident NNES students had mixed feelings: they felt that joining mainstream FYW classes would help them to learn from American students, whereas NNES classrooms would be better for learning about language issues. Understanding the differences and similarities between native speakers and non-native English-speaking writers (international and basic) from a previous discussion, Silva (1994) suggested creating several FYW placements in order to serve different needs and perceptions among international students. Similarly, Braine (1996) proposed that the international student should have the option to decide whether to enroll in a L2 classroom or in a class composed of native speakers.

Braine (1996) examined ESL learners' preferences in taking FYW courses, either with mainstream students or with other ESL students. He also investigated the reasons behind high withdrawal rates from mainstream composition classrooms by NNES students. By examining data collected through graded, written final exams, questionnaires, and interviews, the results showed that students in NNES courses were more likely to pass the tests than NNES students in mainstream courses. Moreover, the withdrawal rate among the international students in mainstream classes was five times higher than the withdrawal rate in NNES classrooms, and three times higher than withdrawals among students who were native speakers. Finally, ESL students preferred L2 classrooms to mainstream classrooms, because they felt more comfortable and less anxious in the NNES environment. Braine also raised the importance of offering international first year students the option to choose between the two classroom environments.

Assessment policies among English teachers tend to be personal and distinctive, due to factors such as evaluation criteria, lenience, experiences, and personal backgrounds (Santos, 1988; Weigle, 1999). According to Huang (2008), the influence of these factors requires a reexamination of the reliability and fairness of ESL writing assessment.

The Importance of the Study

FYW courses are designed to teach skills that first-year students will need in their undergraduate studies; these include critical thinking, academic reading, and analytical writing. By creating separate classrooms for international students and native speakers, teachers can begin to address the special needs and backgrounds of international students through classroom discussion and group conferences. These distinctive classes could also help students find well-trained English writing instructors who may better understand the intrinsic differences between these two populations of students. Although native and international FYW courses cover similar assignments using the same materials, NNES/ international classes include special topics that might not be discussed in L1 writing courses, such as grammar errors, culture variance, and audience expectations.

Recent studies of L2 learners and their classroom preferences and performance have often been inadequate in scope and not consistent in their results. Costino and Hyon (2007) and Braine (1996) were among the first researchers to point out this problem. For example, Braine (1996), whose research focused on immigrants in international FYW programs, concluded that the majority of L2 students preferred NNES to mainstream classrooms. In fact, Goen, Porter, Swanson, and Van Dommelen (2002) found that U.S. residents often rejected L2 classrooms because of the negative connotation of the English as a Second Language (ESL) label. But even Costino and Hyon (2007), who focused on student preferences, identity labels, and residency status, did not consider how well a program meets student needs and student perceptions of their situation. Moreover, no one has studied levels of student satisfaction with assessment criteria in ESL classrooms.

Therefore, to further the discussion, this study will examine NNES/ESL international student preferences for either ESL or mainstream classrooms. In addition, it will investigate the students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of taking a FYW course. Moreover, this study will probe the written and verbal interactions and feedback among student peers and between students and their teachers. Finally, the study will conclude by highlighting students' experiences with evaluation, and their satisfaction with the grades they received during the semester in which they were enrolled in a FYW course.

Methodology
Research Questions

Following receipt of approval by the Institutional Review Board at his institution to conduct the present research study, the principal investigator interviewed NNES students at The University of Tennessee (who volunteered to be part of the study) in an effort to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the preferences of NNES/ESL international students in taking the writing course in their first year (of college)?
2. How do First-Year Writing courses fit the NNES/ESL international students' needs and expectations?
3. To what extent do international students in BBES/ESL courses feel satisfied with the overall assessment criteria?

Context

The FYW program at The University of Tennessee (UT) offers two English courses every semester for first-year university students. The mainstream sections are English Composition I (ENGL 101) and English Composition II (ENGL 102). The ESL sections are Academic English for Non-Native Speakers (ENGL 121), and Composition for Non-Native Speakers of English I (ENGL 131). Students who received high scores on the English Placement Exam (EPE) may choose whether to take FYW with either ESL/ international students or with mainstream (NNES) students. However, those who receive low scores on the exam are advised to take the composition course with ESL international students. Although the two placements are generally similar, according to curricular guidelines, the ESL sections are mainly devoted to developing English academic literacy, including reading, writing, and grammar. They also develop analytical and argumentative strategies to address particular audiences in a clear manner.

Participants

The targeted participants (see Table 1) were ESL international students from two FYW sections: ENGL 121 and ENGL 131. In response to a call for participants, four students volunteered to be interviewed for this study. During the interview, background information and EPE scores were gathered. These are briefly described in Table 1, which reports that Ali[1] (from Saudi Arabia) is the only participant from ENGL 121, while Lan and Ying (both from China), and Jana (from Germany) were from the ENGL 131 classroom. The students' majors included engineering, business, and food science. It is noteworthy that the 4 students were all undergraduate, first-year students and that this was their first semester at UT.

Table 1
Research Study Participants

FYW Course	Students*	Type	Native Country	Native Language	Period since US arrival	EPE Score
ENGL 121	Ali	Undergraduate	Saudi Arabia	Arabic	18 months	< 65
ENGL 131	Lan	Exchange	China	Chinese	3 months	>80
	Ying	Exchange	China	Chinese	3 months	> 80
	Jana	Undergraduate	Germany	German	3 months	> 80

*names are pseudonyms

Interviews

The researcher designed the open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A), informed by the study's research questions, in order to address a range of L2 student experiences in ESL international FYW courses. The interviews took place when the students had almost finished their first semester at UT. The questions were informed by the study's three research questions and specifically investigated: student preferences regarding FYW classrooms; the students' needs and expectations for the ESL composition course; and finally, the students' perceptions of the assessment criteria and their level of satisfaction with their FYW teachers' assessment.

To understand student preferences, the first set of questions addressed the students' inclinations toward taking a FYW course in either an ESL or a mainstream classroom. The second series of questions focused on how the ESL international course met the students' needs and perceptions. The final list of questions concerned the students' satisfaction with the assessment they received by their instructors.

Interview Analysis

The principal investigator interviewed all four students over a 3-day period in 2013 at the UT library. The interviewees agreed to allow the conversations to be recorded (for later qualitative analysis by the researcher). During the 15 to 30-minute interviews, the researcher regularly reminded the participants that their identities would be anonymous, so that they could speak candidly about the feelings they had during the semester and the course evaluation. The digital audio recording for each participant was manually transcribed by the researcher. After reading and rereading the transcriptions for each student, common patterns and themes were identified and will be reported in the Results section of this paper.

Through reading and discussing the transcripts, a coding pattern was developed guided by the research questions underlying this study. The results of the data analysis of the interviews were classified according to the following five main themes: (1) reasons for enrolling in an ESL classroom for the FYW course; (2) advantages of learning in an ESL classroom; (3) disadvantages of learning in an ESL classroom; (4) teacher and student interactions and feedback; and (5) overall assessment of the ESL classroom.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Interview Themes

The reasons for enrolling in the FYW course in an ESL classroom. The NNES/ESL students were aware that the FYW courses were mandatory for their undergraduate degrees; FYW is one of the courses that is offered to almost all first-year students from all departments and colleges at UT. However, two of the participants were not required to take a FYW course because, as exchange students, university policy exempts them from taking the course. This is seen in the comments by Ying and Lan:

Lan: Yeah. Because I am [an] exchange student, I heard about the writing [course] and I took it. Some of my friends did not choose the English class and they chose major classes [classes in their major].

Ying: This course [FYW] is optional. If I want to take it I can, but if I do not take it I can [be exempted]. I like [it] and I want to learn more about English writing. So I took [this] English class.

Indeed, all undergraduates at UT have to take the English Placement Exam (EPE) in order to determine which FYW course (i.e., the NNES or the mainstream course) better serves their needs and expectations. All of the respondents were aware of the mainstream courses, yet, they were placed in ESL international courses without being given the opportunity to choose between the two. Ali (pseudonym) and the other three participants were placed in ESL/international classrooms. When they were asked about the availability of being given the mainstream option, they reported the following.

Ali: No. No. Because you are non-native speaker, you must be in [a] non-speaking class, regardless of your grades on the examination. It's based on my historical academic experience. It is because I did not study in the United States in [an] English school. Because there are some international students who did not study in high school in America.

Jana: No, I think there is 121 and 131, and after that we take courses with native speakers.

Ying: They did give me the choice. The class is for people like me that the [sic] English is not [my] native language.

Lan: No. Because my roommates, they are from Tennessee, they are native and they had English class in [a] different section.

Although the participants in the present research study reported that they had no choice of FYW courses, half of the participants were eager to take the course with native speakers. They felt they either were able to learn "a little more" with native speakers, or that they would have an opportunity to learn from them and their culture(s). Jana, the German woman, and Ying, the Chinese exchange student, were in ENGL 131 with international students, and they were not satisfied with the ESL course. When asked why they would have preferred to have been in the mainstream FYW course they shared the following reasons.

Jana: Probably with the native speakers, because I feel like it will be a little More efficient for me.

Ying: American course. I think [that because] English is their first language, their English is much better. And our English is a second language. I know

more about the language and the English culture… I think American people help me to improve my English.

On the other hand, Ali and Lan were interested in taking the course with ESL/ international students. They preferred it because they felt that they still needed time to grasp academic writing in English, their second language. However, they expressed their desire to take a FYW course with American students in the future.

Advantages of a First-Year Writing course in an ESL classroom. In regard to the advantages of matriculating an ESL writing course, three students claimed that it helped them improve their written and spoken English skills by allowing them to focus on grammatical issues and verbal interactions between the international students. As a result, they felt that they would be able to successfully communicate with native and non-native people in their majors. The following comments capture how the participants reported how the ESL/NNES FYW course was essential and beneficial them.

Ali: My major is chemical engineering. This major requires teamwork, requires communication, and requires writing reports… This class will be beneficial and essential, because I want to communicate very well.

Lan: I think I am not at the same degree [level of English proficiency]as native English [speakers]. I may have problems in grammar and vocabulary … I like to take this course with international students, because we are not good at this and we still learn, and we need some time [to] master this.

Ying: The class is very helpful for me. She is teaching writing. Writing essay, summary, paragraph, how to use grammar correctly… I want to improve my spoken and written English.

Interestingly, Jana found that the only new and important topic in the whole course was MLA format. Throughout the interview she repeated, "This course did help me in my academic writing." Ying and Lan also valued learning to use MLA format and Lan reported that the FYW course introduced her to the Writing Center for further help in academic writing. She felt this that her visits there were "valuable" because this particular type of service was new to her and different from the Chinese learning system.

Finally, American culture interested one of the respondents who participated in the composition course with ESL/NNES students. Because this was her first semester at UT, her goal was to become familiar with American culture and traditions through extensive reading and writing. Ying stated this clearly by saying, "Actually, I want to learn about the English culture, American culture."

Disadvantages of a First-Year Writing course in an ESL classroom. Of the four student participants in the ESL FYW course, three out of four of them considered this course to be

boring. Several reasons were given. A common reason shared by most of the participants was the lack of verbal and written teamwork activities. For example, Ali compared this course with a previous experience that he had when he was enrolled in the English Language Institute (ELI).[2] He stated that he had learned better when he had a chance to work with other international students in classes at the ELI. Lan added that the native speakers in her major classes (food science) were active and interesting compared with those whom she encountered in the international FYW composition classroom. Finally, Jana asserted that the NNES classroom was boring because it was difficult to understand and communicate with other ESL students in the classroom.

> Ali: Okay, I want to compare an ELI class with this class. Until now [in] th[is] class, we have not had an assignment with other people, like a team work assignment. In the ELI I had [such assignments] and it was really good and beneficial when I interact with people from other cultures. And I had not the chance in this class [the international FYW course].

> Lan: Sometimes I notice that when I am in my major class, food science, there are all native speakers, and in class, the students are fun and they answer all the questions. But in writing class, we are [there] because we are ESL, and speaking is very difficult.

> Jana: The students [who] are not speaking very well might be good writers. Class discussion is not that interesting [because it] may be difficult to communicate with the students.

For Jana, the ESL writing course was not interesting enough, since it did not improve her academic English writing the way she had hoped it would. She also claimed that the English Placement Test was not effective at placing her in the right classroom, because she found out that the international students were not all at the same level of proficiency in ENGL 131. She felt this course was a waste of time, although she learned some important academic formats, like MLA.

> Jana: I feel [the] English exam was not really effective, because our class is so weird; it is not everyone [everyone is not] on the same level.

> Researcher: What about your academic writing improvement?

> Jana: I think it has not really improved. I feel the format has like MLA and other stuff, but my writing itself, it has not improved. All my teachers said my writings are [writing is] good and they said nothing about the improvement.

Finally, Ying, one of the exchange students, said she took this course to improve her academic writing for future success. Although her feelings toward the international FYW course were positive and her classroom experience was generally good, she admitted that the

reading and writing assignments were too difficult for her.

Teacher and student interaction and feedback. The principal investigator of the present study was also interested in how the personality and the feedback of the teacher addressed the international students' needs and perceptions and how the class may have improved their academic writing. Interestingly, the participants were in complete agreement about their teacher's kindness, patience, and helpfulness. The following comments from three of the interview participants clearly demonstrate that the FYW teacher was good listeners during the semester and that she treated everyone equally regardless of their English fluency, proficiency and accuracy.

Ali: [She is] kind and treating the students equally.

Lan: Yeah. She has a lot of patience and, you know, my English speed is so slow and she always wait for me to answer. She listen[s] to me. It was so great.

Jana: Yeah, I feel like she is trying to find a way for everyone, because there is some students -- three of us – [who] are really good in English, and then there are a couple [of students who can barely understand] they are not barely understanding anything. So I think she [the teacher] is trying to please everyone.

Sometimes ESL classes are not as difficult as classes for native speakers. Due to the fact that international students need time to master writing skills, the ESL FYW teachers in both classes (i.e., ENGL 121 and ENGL 131), were serious about and dedicated to their teaching. For example, one of the participants put it simply by saying:

Ali: I feel like I am being treated as a native speaker. There is no tolerating [the fact that I am not] because I am not a native speaker. I think she treats me like my chemistry and calculus teacher, which is like native speaker.

Ying: …[The] teacher is taking the matter seriously. I sometimes forget the quotation [marks], and the teacher reminded me by saying, "You have to quote it." [The teacher helped me to be] careful and be serious in everything.

Teacher feedback was emphasized among all the participants as a useful way to learn in the FYW course. For example, Lan valued the teacher's feedback more highly than the students' peer reviews, because she thought that international students did not have the ability to evaluate each others' papers. To describe the teacher's kindness and patience, Ying asserted that the teacher had given her the opportunity to rewrite an assignment in order to enhance her score.

Lan: I like her corrections. Sometimes I get some peer feedback, but I think international students [do not have] have not the ability to correct each other well. We still need teacher evaluation.

Ying: That's why my teacher asked me to rewrite a paper, because I am not native speaker.

However, Ying considered peer review to be an important part of her academic success. She explained that classmates' help was appreciated and valued.

Ying: We get together and work together. We write some journals together. We have a study group, and I sometimes have some problems and my friends help me. Sometimes I need somebody to give me feedback.

Overall assessment in the FYW classroom for ESL students. All of the participants stated that the international First Year Writing class was not demanding, except for Ying, who found the load of reading and writing assignments to be challenging. Moreover, the general grading system was considered fair and satisfactory for all of the interviewees. Nevertheless, none regretted taking this course with international students, excluding Jana, who was not interested in this class and called it "a waste of time." The others reported the following.

Ali: No, I [was] satisfied with the teacher's evaluation. It is fair and reflects the knowledge. My writing is improving.

Researcher: Do you recommend this course to a friend of yours? Why?

Jana: It depends. If they have time to waste. But if they want some working on more important things, I would say no.

Discussion and Recommendations

What the researcher strived to accomplish in this study was to:

- investigate the FYW preferences among ESL international students,
- examine the advantages and disadvantages of the international students' FYW course,
- consider the interaction and feedback of both the teacher and student peers,
- and investigate the overall teacher assessment criteria and whether it satisfied the ESL/international students who matriculated a First Year Writing course at UT.

In general, the researcher found that the four student participants did not necessarily understand the meaning of FYW labels such as *ESL course* and *mainstream classroom.* Apparently, these students did not understand the researcher's questions regarding their FYW preferences either an ESL course or a mainstream course. As indicated in the interviews, non-native English-speaking students were automatically placed in ESL composition courses at UT without justification for or explanation of the differences between the ESL and mainstream courses. Although some of the participants had a high score in the EPE and were interested in taking FYW with native speakers, they were not aware of the existence of an equivalent course, ENGL 101, taught specifically for native speakers.

Braine's (1996) article emphasized the need for students to know their options: ''Instead of being compelled to enroll in ESL or mainstream classes, the choice should be left to the students'' (p. 103). Teachers and administrators might choose utterly incongruous class placements for them (Goen, Porter, Swanson, & van Dommelen, 2002). In addition to administering the EPE to all international students, language instructors and ESL teachers should evaluate other academic records for the NNES students, so that they each student can be advised about their writing ability before the student makes a choice.

By comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the ESL composition course, it was evident that the class did help the students improve their academic writing. Therefore, the ESL class fulfilled the needs and expectations of the students. However some students expressed that the overall experience of the ESL classroom was "boring" and "not interesting." During the interviews, they referred to the lack of peer and group writing activities as an example of missed opportunities to learn from each other. One way to achieve social interaction in a writing classroom, however, is to support cooperative and social activities in which students can work together on some of the class assignments. According to Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, L2 interaction and peer collaboration can be effective in learning a language; learning is a socially-situated activity. In ESL writing settings, novice students can create knowledge by communicating and collaborating with expert students. Many empirical studies highlight the advantages of collaborative writing activities in the overall learning process (Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009).

The researcher noticed throughout the interviews that the students appreciated the teachers' feedback and corrections, even when it was harsh and severe. However, the NNES student participants sometimes undervalued peer review before submitting assignments, because they felt that international students did not have the skills to correct each other's papers. Similarly, Zhang (1995) found that in two American universities, ESL students overwhelmingly favored teachers' reviews over peer reviews. Nevertheless, teachers should prepare students to provide effective and meaningful peer feedback by, for example, observing video clips of students commenting on each others' papers (Zhu, 2001), and by giving students guidelines for correcting papers (Tsui & Ng, 2000). Peer review, according to Villamil and De Guerrero (1998), is an essential tool in the ESL classroom.

Finally, as reported by the researcher, based on his analysis of interviews with the four student participants in the present study discussing evaluation in the ESL First-year Writing classes, the international students appeared to be very satisfied with the assessment policy. They were aware that taking the same course with native speakers could be much more difficult and challenging. This satisfaction with the course and the teacher could be attributed to the teacher's extensive experience in teaching ESL students. She knew the needs of international students for proficiency in academic writing. As a side note, most of the participants expected to receive an *A* in this course and concluded their interviews by saying they would recommend the same course to friends who need to improve their writing ability.

Due to the fact that this qualitative research study was limited to single interview ses-

sions with only four participants at one university, the results of this study, although reporting what the researcher deems to be valuable information, cannot be generalized to a larger population. Therefore, the research would recommend a larger and more diverse participant pool, including students from a variety of post-secondary institutions, for researchers wishing to replicate the current study.

Notes

1. To protect the identities of the research participants, all were assigned pseudonyms for this research study.
2. The English Language Institute (ELI) provides a full-time intensive program for international students who wish to improve their English skills, and is under the Center for International Education umbrella at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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Appendix A
Interview Guide Questions

1. Please describe your overall FYW experience in ESL classroom.
   Follow up Questions:
   - Who are the students? (ESL students)
   - Who is the teacher? (ESL teacher)
   - Why are you taking FYW with ESL students?
   - Do you have major problem(s) in this course? Please explain?

2. The students' preferences:
   - Have you had a chance to choose FYW between ESL and mainstream class room?
   - How did you choose to enroll in FYW course?
   - If you had a choice, which one would you choose to enroll? Please explain why.

3. The students' needs and expectations:
   - What are the advantages of taking FYW with ESL classroom?
   - What are the things you do not like in FYW course? Explain why?
   - What are your expectations from FYW course?
   - How do you think the FYW ESL course helped you to improve your academic writing?
   - In the ESL FYW course, how do you think the teacher took care of you during the semester?
   - How do you find your ESL classroom? (Rejection, acceptance)
   - How would you describe the teacher's treatment? (Similarly or differently than ESL?)
   - How do you describe the interaction between you and ESL students?

4. Assessment satisfaction:
   - Please explain your level of satisfaction with the FYW assessment criteria in ESL course.
   - Describe you level of satisfaction with your performance. How would you evaluate yourself?
   - How do you think being ESL in FYW in ESL courses could impact the teacher's evaluation?
   - Explain whether or not you would recommend this course to a friend of yours.
   - If you could start over your first semester again, explain whether or not you would take the same writing course.

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The Effect of the Cooperative Learning Method Advocated by Multiple Intelligence Theory on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Achievement

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The present research study attempted to investigate the effects of the cooperative learning method, as advocated by the multiple intelligence theory on Iranian EFL learners' writing achievement. The study also considered the factor of gender as an individual difference variable on learners' writing performance. A total of 60 learners participated in the study, including an experimental group of 33 learners and a control group of 27 learners. Whereas the experimental participants received instruction following the authors' Cooperative Learning/ Multiple Intelligences model, the CLMI, the control group participants were exposed to a traditional method of teaching. A questionnaire based on Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, the writing section of the Preliminary English Test (Preliminary English Test, 2014), and Top Notch students' book (2011) were used as the instruments in this study. Statistical analyses of the data collected in this research reported that CLMI was successful in bringing about higher writing achievement when compared with the traditional instructional method. Additionally, the findings revealed that learners valued the variety of cooperative activities supported by Gardner's (1999) Multiple Intelligence Theory, the opportunities for small-group and whole-class communication, the clear focus on interactive writing tasks, and the authenticity of in-class instructional activities.

Introduction

The issue of learner-centered activities and tasks in the classroom has been considered as a preeminent topic of concern for a long time for those in charge of ensuring the best for educational systems. Amongst the most important skills in foreign language (FL) contexts, such as in Iran, are English writing skills, for writing skills, coupled with reading skills are needed for tertiary education and in future careers in Iran. This paper will be focus on empirical research conducted by the researchers which investigated the positive impact of an integrated Cooperative Learning (e.g., Isik & Tarim, 2009) instructional model, informed by Gardner's (1999) Multiple Intelligences Theory, known in this paper as the CLMI Model.

Purpose of the Study

Given the fact that little research has been conducted in the field of language learning in Iran, the present study was conducted by the authors and was guided by the following research questions:

1. Will CLMI be effective on Iranian EFL learners' writing achievement?
2. Will there be any significant differences between male and female CLMI groups' writing achievement?

Review of the Literature

Instructional Methods and Activities in the Language Learning Classroom

Many factors play a role in the improvement of learners' writing skills, one being the type of the instructional methods and activities used in the classroom context (Swain, Friehe, & Harrington, 2004; Wagner, 2010). In this regard, there is a need to consider the characteristics of the classroom structure and methods to see which one is the best for promoting the writing ability of the learners adjusted to their individual characteristics. A central concern of scholars interested in second/foreign language acquisition (S/FLA) has always been the factors most significantly contributing to success in S/FLA. Scholars in various camps of the discipline have laid emphasis on different pedagogical factors contributing to the process. The emergence of learner-centered methods and their employment in language learning has equipped teachers to better eliminate the obstacles associated with learning.

The Multiple Intelligences Theory. In this context, the Multiple Intelligences Theory (MI) as proposed by Gardner (1999) advocates a learner-centered teaching which is based on the identification of individual differences of learners (Kagan & Kagan, 1998). Learning context, which indicates the multiple intelligences of learners, can give them the opportunity to discover themselves and their capabilities.

Gardner (2009) advanced the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) arguing that people possess numerous intelligences, each of which can be independent of the others. Such intelligences could be meticulously scratched upon to see how they can be cautiously implemented within the educational curricula. Therefore, EFL learners, being aware of their own potential talents and intelligences, can hopefully be astute in exploring for themselves the learning strategies in the developmental stages of their learning span. Multiple intelligence (MI) theory displays basic human intelligence types (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal).

Multiple Intelligences classroom activities. In support of the previous statements, it is evident that learners possess certain capabilities that are not manifested in traditional education. Accordingly, by incorporating the implications of Gardner's intelligences in the classroom, learners would be able to uncover their strengths and interests in learning the foreign language.

Brainstorming. One such approach whose main techniques such as brainstorming, group formation, mix-pair-discuss, and so forth are appropriate for the MI theory is the cooperative learning (CL) method. It is argued that the techniques developed for CL can activate many intelligence aspects of learners.

Cooperative Learning. Slavin (1982) stated that CL refers to instructional methods in which learners of all levels of performance in small groups work together toward a common goal which encompasses the following instructional methods such as, Learner Team–Achievement Divisions (STAD), Team-Game-Tournaments (TGT), Team-Assisted Individualization (TAI), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), Jigsaw, Learning Together, and Group Investigation (GI). Slavin (1982) pointed to STAD, TGT, and Jigsaw as the

general methods which can be used in all subjects and in all grade levels and TAI, CIRC, and GI designed for particular subjects at particular grade levels.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1988), comparing CL with competitive and individualistic classroom structures is a good way to understand the essence of CL. In competitive situations, only the best learners are rewarded so that learners are forced to work against each other. In individualistic classrooms, learners work individually toward the goal without paying attention to other learners. The cooperative classroom, on the other hand, is characterized by positive interdependence of learners and it takes place when the success of one learner depends on the success of the peers. In other words, positive interdependence is the belief that learners sink or swim together.

Haller, Gallagher, Weldon, and Felder (2000) report that:

> Many recent studies indicate that CL provides a variety of educational merits over more traditional instructional models. The premise underlying CL is that learning is best achieved through interaction rather than through a one-way transmission process. In order to provide enhanced opportunity for interactive learning, learners are generally encouraged to work cooperatively both in and out of class. (p. 285)

Neo (2004) believed that teachers can use this approach to stimulate learners to acquire the knowledge as well as create interpersonal and team skills. Conventionally, classes always comprise successful learners and weak ones. The weak learners sit in isolation as they lose confidence in their ability to learn English. As a result, the use of group works is believed to help solve this problem. Group members can evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in English classrooms. Each learner has a different background and ability in English, which s/he can bring to the group.

Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000) pointed out that CL is one of the most broad and fertile areas of theory, research, and practice in education. Cooperative learning exists when learners work together to accomplish shared learning goals. Each learner can then achieve his or her learning goal if the other group members achieve theirs. In the past three decades, modern CL has become a widely used instructional procedure in pre-school through graduate school levels, in all subject areas, in all aspects of instruction and learning. Cooperative learning is an effective way of structuring classroom lessons that permits all the learners to participate in the learning process.

In a meta-analysis conducted by Johnson et al. (2000), the results of 164 studies investigating the CL methods showed that all methods have produced higher achievement than competitive and individualistic learning. These conclusions are reliable due to the diversity of the research on which they are based, ranging from controlled field experimental studies to evolutional case studies.

Regarding the aforementioned activities and tasks utilized, the CL approach can be considered as a way of applying MI principles into the instructional contexts. CL is a learner-centered approach and it reinforces class tasks according to Gardner's nine levels of intelligence (1999). Kagan and Kagan (1998) have stated that unstructured activities formed in CL can be integrated based on MI and investigated their efficacy on different learning experiences. The integration of cooperative learning approach advocated by the MI theory (CLMI) into the language classes can ease the access to learners' intelligences. With this combination, the language content can be meaningful for language learners. For instance, the learner who is week in the logical intelligence can be assigned as the leader of a group work necessitating the application of physical/ kinesthetic skills. Thus, learners whose diverse intelligences have developed would collate in the heterogeneous groups (cooperative learning groups). In this way, their needs of belonging and their needs of affirmation by peers would be accomplished. Then, they can force themselves to be more successful. Consequently, the integration of class tasks including all skill areas can help learners share their differences with each other.

Methodology

Subjects

A sample of 60 student studying English as a foreign language (EFL) who were enrolled at a language institute in Urmia city, took part in the present study. The sample population were selected out of total grand population of 78 students, based on their level of English proficiency as measured by the PET (Preliminary English Test, 2014). All the students in two classes (class 1 (control group) = 27, class 2 (experimental group) = 33) were asked to participate in the study and willingly gave their written to do so. The learners' written permissions were collected prior to the conducting the study. All students who participated in the present study were told that the PET was for purposes of the research study only and they accepted this at its face value. They were assured that the information collected would not impact their course grades, that they could withdraw at any time from the study and that their identities would not be made public. No participants withdrew from the study.

Class 1 was the control group and included intermediate participants. Class 2 was considered to be the experimental group and also included intermediate learners. The participants in each class were considered to constitute a nearly homogeneous group in terms of their level of English proficiency as measured by the Preliminary English Test (PET) (Preliminary English Test, 2014). The learners whose level of proficiency was not in the intermediate level were excluded from the study. They were between 15 and 29 years old. Each group consisted of both male and female learners, with 14 males and 13 females in the control group and 16 males and 17 females in the experimental group. The participants of this study had learned their English in an instructed setting. As language institute learners, they had 3 hours of English per week, focusing on all the language skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing, with a larger amount of time devoted to reading and writing skills as academic activities to be needed more in their future studies and careers. The textbook that was used in each class was the Top Notch 3 compiled by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher (2006).

Instrumentation

The following instruments were used in this study to elicit data on learners' writing performance.

Pre-test and post-tests. The Preliminary English Test (PET) which is a standardized test developed by Cambridge University (Preliminary English Test, 2014) was administered to the participants in order to determine their level of proficiency and ensure that they were of near homogeneity. Only the writing section was used since the purpose of the present study was to evaluate learners' level of writing proficiency and their gains after the treatment.

The pretest contained 3 writing parts and 7 questions. Five questions which concerned the same topic were used in Part One (i.e., sentence transformations). For each question, there was a complete sentence and a second sentence which had a missing word(s). The subjects were required to complete the second sentence in order to have the same meaning as the first sentence. In other words, this section required the ability of being able to express the same thing in different ways in English. In this section of the assessment, the subjects were asked to select the correct answer. For Part Two of the writing section, one piece including short messages was used and there were instructions given concerning what the subjects should write. This part of the assessment instrument, including short, written communicative message writing, required a text of 35-45 words which could potentially yield a total of 5 points. Part Three of the instrument consisted of a continuous writing format which provided two choices for writers: an informal letter or a story. This question required a 100-word writing composition which had a total of 15 potential points.

The PET (Preliminary English Test, 2014) was also administered at the end of the treatment to measure the learners' writing performance gain and included the same format and same type of questions.

Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Questionnaire. A questionnaire based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (1999) was used to evaluate learners' intelligences. The authors elected to use a questionnaire that measured only eight of Gardner's nine intelligences since it was readily available to them and also due to the fact that the existentialist intelligence (i.e., the ninth intelligence) was assumed not to be closely related to the writing skills of learners of the present study regarding its relation to philosophy. The questionnaire consists of 8 composite scales: linguistic (items 6, 10, 22, and 23), logical-mathematical (items 7, 13, 25, and 32), musical (items, 4, 12, 20, 31), spatial (items 2, 14, 21, and 28), bodily-kinesthetic (items 1, 16, 24, and 29), interpersonal (items 3, 9, 15, and 26), intrapersonal (items 7, 17, 18, and 30) and naturalistic (items 5, 11, 19, and 27). The total number of items in the questionnaire is 32.

The questionnaire followed a Likert type scale, on which the subjects were asked to respond using scores ranging from 1 to 5. On this instrument, 1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree*" 3 = *somewhat agree*, 4= *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. As a result of this inventory, the intelligence or intelligences that were more frequently chosen by the subjects, determined the dominant intelligence of the learners. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to identify the learners' most dominant intelligences as showed by the highest scores. Therefore, this questionnaire was employed to determine the learners' intelligence types at the beginning of the treatment to

identify their most dominant intelligences. This information was used to classify the cooperative learning teams in the experimental class.

Top Notch 3. For the treatment, the (Top Notch 3, Saslow & Ascher, 2006) was used. This textbook, which includes a variety of English language skills, is taught in the Jahad Daneshgahi Language Institute, which was the context of the present study. Specifically, there are writing activities in this book that are well suited to the purpose of this study. In other words, the book has a communication and task-based approach, encouraging the learners to use the language communicatively.

Treatment

In the present study, data were collected at the completion of eight class sessions of 60-minutes for all subjects. The CLMI Instructional Model was used in the experimental class, whereas the traditional teaching method was used in the control group. The control group students were asked to do the writing tasks which were not informed by the principles of intelligence theory. In other words, there was no specific attention to students' individual characteristics since they individually created the writings which were given to the teacher for possible corrections.

The Cooperative Learning Method Supported by Multiple Intelligence Theory (CLMI). In the experimental class, heterogeneous teams were organized based on the results of MI questionnaire and the PET (Preliminary English Test, 2014) pre-test. During the 8 instructional sessions of the research study, numerous tasks focusing on eight different intelligences were carried out to raise the learners' awareness about their intelligences and capabilities. Prior to the treatment, the teams received work guide booklets to read together which explained about the classroom procedures and the assessment and evaluation criteria. Afterward, the language courses focusing mainly on the development of learners' writing skills were instructed following the steps in the plans based on the goals and CLMI during 8 sessions. The class tasks, informed by the principles of MI theory, highlighting the individual differences and CL procedures (e.g., brainstorming, round robin, numbered heads, send-a-problem, formation, pair checks). The classes began with an attention-catching activity where a few questions were asked from the subjects about their ideas of the writing topics. The writing activities were prepared according to the MIs. In contrary to the traditional method, in cooperative learning tasks based on MI, the learners actively took part in heterogeneous teams.

The teacher, for example, discussed with the whole class a topic or a unit in textbook, for example, pollution. During the discussion, subtopics such as air pollution, land pollution, light pollution, noise pollution and water pollution were identified. Each team was able to select the topic of their interest. All students planned together, in concrete terms, about what they wanted to write and developed their writing questions related to the subtopics they had chosen. Examples of questions are:

What are the reasons for noise pollution?
What can the government do to eliminate the problem?
How can the society help to reduce noise pollution?

After the students had accomplished this, they were instructed to compose the writing pieces based on the type of CL activity chosen according to the team's identified multiple intelligence area.

The Traditional Teaching Method. For the subjects in the control population, the teacher used a traditional instructional method and wrote topics on the board. By mutual agreement by all students, one topic was selected. The subjects had to apply what they had learned in the first half time of the class. They had to write individually, without helping anyone; the teacher served as observer helped them improve their writing efforts. (The purpose of the course at the knowledge level was achieved.) And, finally the teacher corrected their writing papers and in addition to giving scores to each of them, in order to prevent making similar errors in the future, the teacher identified the learners' errors. In other words, after the completion of the writing tasks, the related problems were highlighted and solved and the phases of the prescribed problem-solving techniques were given, in details, by the instructor.

Results

In order to analyze the data to test the research questions guiding the present study, statistical procedures were carried out using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 21.

First, the scores of the pre-test and post-test were analyzed to ensure the assumptions of normality. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests show that the scores in both the pre-test ($p = 0.337$) and post-test ($p = 0.160$) are normally distributed.

At first, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to provide an answer to the first research question of the study. The major assumption of ANCOVA is homogeneity of variances; as a result, Levene's test was applied. Table 1 presents the results of the homogeneity of variances.

Table 1
Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances in Writing

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3.064	28	31	.001
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. a. Design: Intercept + groups + pretest + groups * pretest			

The homogeneity of variance assumption (F = 3.064, p = .001, p < α) was violated in which the p value for Levene's test (p = 0.001) was less than .05, and F observed was 3.064, with (28, 31) degrees of freedom. Therefore, an independent samples T-test was utilized to compare the mean differences of the pre-test and post-test in control and experimental groups.

Having ascertained the assumptions of independent samples T-test as a parametric test (i.e., the normality of data), the next step was to conduct the T-tests (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistics of Experimental and Control Groups

	Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Post-test	control	33	15.3939	4.19776	.73074
	experimental	27	22.1111	2.35884	.45396

As the mean and standard deviation scores in table 2 show, there are differences between the experimental (M = 22.11, SD = 2.35) and control (M = 15.39, SD = 4.19) group learners' performance in the post-test. However, in order to get more accurate and reliable results, an independent samples T-test was run, the results of which are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3
T-test Results of Group Differences in the Post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	6.06	.017	-7.40	58	.000	-6.71	.90	-8.53	-4.90
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.80	51.94	.000	-6.71	.86	-8.44	-4.99

The results show that the significance level of Levene's test is p = 0.01, which means that the variances for the two groups (experimental and control) are *not the same*. The results of independent samples T-test show statistically significant differences (t (51.94) = -7.808, p < 0.05) between the experimental and control groups in the post-test. The descriptive statistics, too, point to the same finding showing that learners in the experimental group (M = 22.11, SD = 2.35) outperform those in the comparison group (M = 15.39, SD = 4.19).

In order to examine the second research question which is concerned with the differences between the male and female learners' writing performances after the reception of treatment, an independent samples T-test was run. First, the results of descriptive statistics are shown.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Writing Performance across Gender

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
post-test	male	28	18.53	4.90262	.92651
	female	32	18.31	4.84893	.85718

As Table 4 shows, there are no mean differences between the male (M = 18.53, SD = 4.90) and female (M = 18.31, SD = 4.84) participants' performance in the post-test. The results of T-test are indicated in Table 5.

Table 5
T-test Results of Writing Performance across Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.104	.74	.17	58	.86	.2232	1.26	-2.30	2.74
	Equal variances not assumed			.17	56.77	.86	.2232	1.26	-2.30	2.75

The results show that the significance level of Levene's test is p = 0.74, which means that the variances for the two groups (male and female) are *the same*. The results of independent samples T-test show statistically non-significant differences (t (58) = 0.177, p > 0.05) between the male and female participants in the post-test.

Discussion and Recommendations

RQ1: Will CLMI be Effective on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Achievement?

The results of this study for the first research question, which was concerned with the effect of the cooperative learning method supported by multiple intelligence theory, suggest that CLMI method was statistically effective on the experimental group learners' writing performance when compared to the control group learners who were instructed by means of the traditional method. Thus, this finding implies that CLMI has been more helpful and efficient than the traditional method.

In order to evaluate and interpret this finding, the significance of interest, motivation, learner-centered instruction, provision of communication skills and other factors need to be considered. For an efficient language teaching course focused on academic skills development, methods are pretty important in activating the willingness on the behalf of learners. Consequently, it is essential to organize learner-centered classes and to provide classroom contexts that reinforce learning by experiencing. The CLMI method is a representative of these methods. In so doing, learners improve their writing ability by reading, thinking, discussing the topic in collaboration, acting, sharing ideas, and providing help to each other. Cooperative learning techniques were implemented according to the MI theory. Related to the cooperative learning, peer teaching was implemented so that learners provided support to each other. The tasks planned with the principles of CLMI led learners to be active in small heterogeneous groups, to develop a feeling of belonging to a team group, to accept responsibilities, to advocate each other, to respect others, and to interact in the long-run.

An explanation for the outperformance of the experimental group was due to the Vygotskian (1978) idea that humans are culturally and historically situated rather than being isolated individuals. Scaffolding in the present study which utilized the principles of the cooperative teaching was obtained not by the teacher help, but by peer help and feedback where more capable peers provided feedback and support to less proficient learners in the group. Moreover, it seems evident that their writing achievements have been impacted by learners' individual lives and interactional skills (Demirdioglu & Guneysu, 2000). It is believed that when different intelligence skills determine the classroom activities and when teachers adjust their class materials taking into account the different intelligence areas, their learners' attainments will have been advocated and they will turn into active participants (Nolen, 2003).

The first finding of the study is consistent with the findings of Jensen (1999). The results of Jensen's study revealed that learners in the learning context can positively contribute to each other's learning. But this is not employed in traditional classrooms. Another important

contribution of group work is that it gives learners an opportunity for academic achievement and social feedback. Consistent with this, it can be stated that CL group works supported by MI theory is one of the important stages of meaningful acquisition.

In another research study carried out by Greenhawk (1997), the results showed that education in accordance with MI theory enhanced the achievement. This result is supportive of the first result of the current study signifying that CLMI is more efficient than the traditional individualistic teaching method. Greenhawk (1997) examined the influence of education supported by the MI theory on test achievement in a state level context. The results indicated that the learners' achievement was strengthened in that year, they employed their knowledge in problem solving tasks with more confidence and they started to be more successful in group works. In addition to this, the findings of Eilers et al. (1998) confirmed the findings of the present study. Eilers et al. (1998) evaluated different teaching methods which could develop learners' individual characteristics. This study implemented MI theory-based tasks and CL method and came to the conclusion that CL method was effective in bringing about higher achievement scores.

RQ2: Will There be any Significant Differences Between Male and Female CLMI Groups' Writing Achievement?

For the second research question which investigated the difference between experimental learners' differences across their gender, the results showed no statistically significant differences. The results, therefore, were in line with a study conducted by Olson (2002) which did not show any significant effect for the gender of participants on their performance.

In compatible with the findings of the present study, it can be suggested that teachers use the CLMI activities in the classroom which motivate learners to learn a lot of material quickly and inspire them to share information with peers. The technique minimizes listening time, and makes learners responsible for their own learning. Given that each group needs its members to perform well in order for the whole group to succeed, this technique maximizes interaction and establishes an atmosphere of cooperation and respect for other learners. Taking these into consideration, teachers need to let the learners think through and discover the effective ways of teaching the portion of the task content to the peers.

Although the results of the study described in this article attest to the efficacy of the CLMI in having a positive impact on English writing skills (i.e., with the subjects participating in the present study), due to the inherent limitations and delimitations of the present study, the authors admit that the results of the present study cannot necessarily be generalized to a greater population. They therefore suggest that further empirical research is indeed needed on the topic.

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Non-Scripted Role-Play: A Better Practice For Thai EFL College Students' Speaking Skills

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This paper reports the results from a study investigating the effectiveness in using non-scripted role-play to improve speaking skills of Thai EFL college students. It shows that role-play of this type can especially enhance both high- and low- proficiency students' conversation skills. Frequently being engaged in non-scripted role-play conversations, students in the present studyimproved not only their overall oral performance but also conversational practices which typically appear in naturally-occurring conversations. The students' improvement was particularly evident in such practices as turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlap, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, repair, and the use of turn-holding devices. The results suggest that while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play, teachers should emphasize forms used to perform particular conversational functions, and try to enhance the production of these forms via more focused training to ensure more effective communication by students.

Introduction and Review of Related Literature

Recognized as a vital global language in the Thai education system, English has been the core subject taught in Thai schools for decades. According to Thailand's education reform in 2006, the English language was underlined as one component to improve in teaching and learning with the primary focus on communication skills ("Developing Language and Communication Skills," 2006). Subsequently, in 2012 the Thai government even established the English Speaking Year and set the goal of encouraging students to converse in English every Monday ("English Speaking Year 2012," 2011), hoping to reduce their fear of speaking English and make them more active language learners (Saiyasombut, 2012).

In fact, the Grammar-Translation Method, often adopted in traditional language classrooms, was usually blamed for the failure to produce Thai students with adequate English communication skills. Even at the graduate level, many students are still unable to speak English in real-life situations partly because they rarely had the opportunities to do so in class in which they were strongly taught vocabulary, grammar and structure without applying them in communication. Consequently, the students are not confident enough to communicate in the language in their real life (Hurford, &Lipka, 2010; Khuvasanond, Sildus & Punthumasen, 2007; Wiriyachitra, 2002). When studying an international program in Thailand or going to an English-speaking country for their further studies, Thai students having received such traditional English education reportedly experienced difficulties when communicating in English (Liu, 1993). To promote English for communication among tertiary students, The Ministry of Education ("Developing Language and Communication Skills," 2006) thus set to enhance the Thai university curriculum by promoting the communicative language teaching approach in the English classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the best-known teaching approaches whose goal is to develop learners' communicative competence in the target language. CLT requires classroom activities to engage the learners in such comprehensible and meaningful interaction that their limitations in grammatical competence can be disregarded as long as they can keep the conversation going and appropriately finish it. To develop such oral communication skills, role-play seems to be a popular choice among English language teachers (Freeman, 2001; Littlewood, 1992; Livingstone, 1983; Lucantoni, 2002; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1983; Spada, 2007).

Role-play activities used in CLT engage learners in learning by doing, which means the learners are allowed to practice using the language approximating real-life situations. The activities give them opportunity to practice the language, aspects of behavior, and the actual roles needed outside the classroom (Livingstone, 1983). Its effectiveness in developing learners' speaking skills has in fact been confirmed in several studies (Alwahibee, 2004; Chotirat, 2010; Ding & Liu, 2009; Kaur, 2011; Krish, 2001; Liu, 2010; Okada, 2010; Shen & Suwanthep, 2011).

Often, role-play used in a language classroom is of two types: scripted and non-scripted role-play (Freeman, 2001). Scripted role-play refers to the type of conversational exchange modeled from a dialogue in the textbook. The learners are put in pairs or groups and exchange roles by using the conversation model in the textbook. They have the opportunity to interpret the meaning in the dialogue while practicing pronunciation and being trained to use appropriate intonation, facial expressions and gestures. Non-scripted role-play, on the other hand, is role-play in which the learners are engaged in roles provided by the teacher without any prepared scripts. They need to understand their given roles and decide what to say in real *time* as the conversation develops (Savignon, 1983).

Scripted role-play is often chosen as a classroom activity among Thai teachers because it is easy to implement. Additionally, it seems to put less pressure on the low-proficiency students because they have time to prepare the script and rehearse. This group of students often finds this type of role-play easier to handle without any efforts to put their thoughts into words (Sinwongsuwat, 2012). In contrast, non-scripted role-play requires the students to perform a conversation immediately, with little preparation. Chotirat (2010), as well as Rodpradit and Sinwongsuwat (2012), argues that scripted role-play activities fail to prepare students to deal with problems in real-life communication. Often, students performing this type of role-play memorize the conversation word-by-word, without struggling to think and speak in their own words; problems mainly occur when they forget their parts and try to recall them, making their conversation appear unnatural. Accordingly, non-scripted role-plays seem to be a more appropriate choice in the classroom apart from a recorded, naturally-occurring English conversation model if our aim is to enhance the students' skills in unscripted, real-life conversation and ultimately eradicate their fear of speaking.

Purpose of the Study

To date, there have been only a few studies directly examining the outcome of using

non-scripted role-play activities to improve speaking skills among university students. This paper therefore aims at reporting the results from a study conducted by the authors who investigated the effectiveness of using this type of role-play with high- and low-English proficiency students at a university in Thailand. Arguing that non-scripted role-play can well enhance students' conversation skills, it additionally illustrates the conversational practices that can truly be improved through non-scripted role-play training.

Methodology

Research Questions

The following questions, which guided the present study are, in order:

1. Can non-scripted role-play really enhance the students' speaking skills?
2. What conversational practices can be enhanced through the role-play training?

Subjects

In the study, 35 participants attending the English for Communication course at the university were divided into two groups, according to their average scores obtained from compulsory English courses during their first year of study.

Procedures

These subjects had never been trained to perform non-scripted role-play in class. Before given conversation lessons with role-play training, however these students were paired-up for an oral pre-test in the form of non-scripted role-play, with high-proficiency students being matched with low-proficiency ones. Their tape-recorded role-play performance was first scored by the class's teacher, using the rubric adapted from Mohtar (2005), which was oriented to communicative language features including pronunciation, speaking fluency, grammatical accuracy, style of expression, appropriate choice of words, manner of expression, and ability to interact. Each item on the rubric was rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 5 (excellent), 4(very good), 3(good), 2(fair) to 1 (poor). The pre-test role-play performance was subsequently scored again by two other raters to establish inter-rater reliability using the same rubric.

During the training, the student participants were given lessons based on a commercial conversation textbook, whereby in the warm-up, they were engaged in a discussion on the theme of the lesson. In the presentation stage, the teacher introduced conversations featured in the textbook, helping them understand conversation content by focusing primarily on forms and meanings of vocabulary and expressions used. After the content was presented, the students were randomly asked related questions about the conversations to check their understanding. Subsequently, in the production stage, high- and low-proficiency students were paired up and given situation cards sharing the theme of the lesson for their non-scripted role-play performance. The students acted out their own roles in the situation to the class without having any model conversation ahead of time. Only the role-plays of the top 8 high- and the bottom 8 low-proficiency students were selected to be video-recorded, the data from which subsequently underwent close discourse (conversation) analysis by the researchers. After the completion of the

course, the students were engaged in the role-play post-test following the same procedures as in the pre-test.

Results

The results from our study of second-year non-English major students at Yala Rajbhat University in southern Thailand (Naksevee & Sinwongsuwat, 2013) confirmed that non-scripted role-play greatly helped both high- and low-proficiency students improve their speaking performance.

RQ 1: Can non-scripted role-play really enhance Thai students' speaking skills?

As shown in Table 1, the *t*-test results show that the participants' role-play post-test scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the level of 0.00. The high-proficiency students improved significantly at the 0.004 level, whereas the low-proficiency ones at the 0.038 level, with the *p* values being < 0.05 and 0.01 respectively.

Table 1

Participants' overall speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-play

Groups	Pre-test score		Post-test score		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	-t	Df	Sig
Low (n=4)	12.875	4.73	21.00	7.62	-3.569*	3	0.038
High (n=4)	15.0	4.93	25.25	4.99	-8.20**	3	0.004
Overall (n=8)	13.94	4.62	23.13	6.38	-7.248**	7	0.00

  * significant at the 0.05 level
** significant at the 0.01 level

Such significant differences between the overall test scores indicate that non-scripted role-play activities indeed helped to improve the overall speaking performance of both high- and low-proficiency students.

Regarding discrete items, although the results, shown in Table 2, reveal that the performance of the low-proficiency students did not significantly improve with respect to pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, style of expression and appropriate choice of words, these students noticeably improved their manner of expression (sig = 0.04) and ability to interact (sig = 0.02). Unlike the latter, the former set of speaking features apparently takes more time to master and requires more focused practice.

While showing significant degrees of improvement in the same aspects as the low-proficiency students, through non-scripted role-play training the high-proficiency ones also improved considerably in their speaking fluency (sig = 0.02), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

High-proficiency students' speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-plays

Items	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Paired-Sample t-Test		
	X	SD	X	SD	*-t*	df	Sig
Pronunciation	3.75	0.87	4.00	0.82	-0.77	3	0.50
Fluency	2.63	1.25	4.25	1.50	-4.33*	3	0.02
Grammatical accuracy	2.25	1.26	3.50	1.00	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.38	0.48	1.50	0.58	-0.40	3	0.72
Appropriate choice of words	1.75	0.50	3.00	0.82	-2.61	3	0.08
Manner of expression	1.75	0.96	4.25	0.96	-5.00*	3	0.02
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.75	0.50	-13.00**	3	0.00

 * significant at the 0.05 level
** significant at the 0.01 level

Based on the statistical results, it can therefore be affirmed that non-scripted role-play can clearly enhance Thai college students' speaking skills regardless of their proficiency levels. Through the training, described in the Procedures section of this paper, it can be seen that the students' ability to interact, their manner of expression, and fluency can improve. However, particular aspects of speaking performance, such as grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and style of expression, may be more resistant to improvement, thus requiring more focused training and awareness raising during classroom practice.

Pertinent to the discrete features of speaking performance that significantly improved in both groups as statistically shown, close analysis of practices in the videotaped conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play additionally underscores the capacity of non-scripted role-play to enhance the speaking skills of the Thai university students who participated in the present study. In fact, it was revealed that despite not being explicitly taught interactional functions of naturally-occurring language in conversational speech, the subjects were able to converse more naturally with several conversational practices being greatly improved.

RQ 2: What Conversational Practices Can be Enhanced Through Non-Scripted Role-Play Training?

The following features of naturally-occurring everyday conversation either emerged or showed improvement in the post-test conversation of both groups of students after the role-play

training: turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlap, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair and the use of turn holding devices.

The reader is directed to refer to Appendix A for referencing transcription conventions in the role-play conversations presented in this section of the paper.

Turn-taking and sequence-organizing. Role-play training allows both high- and low-proficiency students to improve their turn-taking and sequence-organizing in natural conversation. Concerning the turn-taking system, after the training, the students in the Post-Test were able to take turns at transition-relevance places without gaps or prefacing fillers such as *er*. Additionally, they evidently were able to construct more complicated turn-constructional units. As seen in the same excerpt, most of the turns produced by A become more grammatically complex, developing from phrases in the Pre-Test to simple and compound clauses, lines 3 and 5 respectively.

Pre-Test
1   A: hello
2   B: hi
3   A: e:r free? Tuesday after school?
4   B: e::r I want to meet you this evening (0.5) but I have to finish some homework.
5   A: e:r what you would like to do tonight?
6   B: OK. if I free time bye
7   A: bye.

Post-test
1   A: hello what are you doing?
2   B: I'm reading cartoon at home.
3   A: are you free time?
4   B: no, I'm not free time I have homework.
5   A: Oh, OK if tonight you free time I want to go eat at Swensen and see movie at
6   Colisium but I don't have my friend, do you want to go with me?
7   B: OK. let's go after my homework finish.
8   A: OK. bye

After the training, the students were also able to organize multi-unit turns and successfully bring sequences to a close. Shown in the Post-test, Student A smoothly delivered an actionably-complex, multi-unit turn, not only showing an acknowledgement of new information through "Oh, OK" in line 5, but also prefacing and making an invitation, in lines 5-6. Likewise, in the same excerpt, Student B was also able to respond to the invitation made by A, accepting it and successfully bringing the invitation sequence to a close. This is in stark contrast with the Pre-Test, where he was unable to pertinently answer his partner's pre-invitation in line 3. Before the training, A, on the other hand, failed to fix the problem but opted to initiate a different sequence with a new question in line 5, which both parties were again unable to bring to a preferred close given B's irrelevant, rushing-through response in line 6.

Overlaps. Role-play training also helps the students become more fluent in conversation as overlaps at the transition-relevance place are noticeably more frequent in post-training

conversation.

As shown in the Pre-Test, gaps between turns are frequent in lines 2, 5 and 7. The students apparently cannot offer prompt responses to the first pair-part of an adjacency-pair sequence, indicated by the pauses at lines 2 and 5.

Pre-Test
1   A: hello baby, what are you cry?
2   (0.1)
3   B: my cat is [ded]
4   A: oh really?
5   (0.3)
6   B: yes
7   (0.3)
8   A: you suggest to play game
9   B: yes I go ( )

In the Post-Test, both A and B produce more connecting, overlapping talk in lines 2-4 and 8-9, producing almost no gaps between turns.

Post-Test
1   A: hello=
2   B: hi. Welcome to the gift shop. What do you [want
3   A: [oh I interest the cat doll
4   from Philippines. What is cat doll made of?
5   B: It is made of wood
6   A: really?
7   B: (.) yes=
8   A: how much the price (.) [of the cat doll?
9   B: [it's price five (.) thousand (0.2) five thousand
10   A: oh it is very (.) expensive

Reciprocal greeting. As can be seen in the following excerpts, taken from the Pre- and Post-Tests respectively, while absent in the Pre-Test, a reciprocal, extended greeting can be found in line 5 in the post-test through "…and you, Nureeyah?"

Pre-Test
1   A: hello Miss Nureesan.=
2   B: =hello Miss Nureeyah.
3   A: e:r, how are you?
4   B: it's OK.

As seen in the Post-Test, after the inquiry greeting increment, "How are you?" in line 4, B returns the extended greeting with "…and you, Nureeyah?," which, according to Hopper (1992), is crucial for setting the direction for an emerging conversation.

Post-Test
[Telephone rings]
1   A: hello
2   B: hello excuse me I want to calling Nureesan.
3   A: yes Nureesan speaking.
4   B: hi Nureesan how are you?
5   A: I'm fine thank you and you, Nureeyah?
6   B: I'm so so.

Third-turn assessment. The role-play training also allows the students to improve their third-turn assessment, which is a common feature of naturally-occurring L1 conversation (Schegloff, 2007). As seen in the Pre-Test below, after B's response to the weather question, initiating small talk in line 1, A abruptly switches to a new sequence, inviting B to dinner, without commenting on the response in line 2.

Pre-Test
1   A: how on the weather today?
2   B: not OK. it is raining.
3   A: I want to invite to dinner on [weekench] OK?

However, the improvement of the students' third-turn assessment can be seen in the Post-Test, line 3, in which B comments on A's response in the third turn in line 1, drawing the weather sequence to a close.

Post-Test
1   B: how is ( ) today?
2   A: today is raining.
3   B: bad.
4   A: hi Nureesan can you (0.2) can you dinner with me?

Self-initiated self-repair. Through the non-scripted role-play training, the participants also resorted to self-initiated, self-repair to deal with conversational problems, which simulates the feature of naturally-occurring conversation, and were able to accomplish it within a single turn. Seen in the Pre-test, A is unable to fix the problem in the turn initiated in line 1 in one go. Notice that through B's turn in line 2 and the following pause in line 3, A's turn in line 4 gets treated by B as problematic, thus requiring a repair. A attempts the first repair but still fails to elicit B's uptake, thus making a second attempt in line 6, to which B successfully responds.
Pre-Test
1   A: I have ( ) to Bangkok.
2   B: e::r
3   (0.5)
4   A: what time?
5   B: (0.5)
6   A: ha::?what time to plan come?
7   B: turn to Bangkok and arrive twelve fifteen from platform six arrive e:r at e:r
8   Bangkok.

However, the improvement of A's self-initiated self-repair can be observed in Post-test in the turn at line 3. Without any script, A was able to formulate the question as to the time to arrive in Bangkok in only one turn with self-initiated, self-repair.

Post- Test
1   A: where platform?
2   B: platform sixteen
3   A: where e:r when arrive to Bangkok?
4   B: arrive at Bangkok fifty-fifty fifteen-fifty

Turn-holding fillers. The turn-holding fillers, particularly delay devices, such as *er,* can be found in most of the conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play, both in the Pre- and the Post-Tests. According to Park (2007), the use of these devices is essential for the completion of an ongoing turn. However, in the Post-Test (as shown below), it was noticeable that the students relied on them less, being more fluent in their turn delivery.

Pre-Test
1   A: hello (laughing)
2   B: koyak la ((.:speak!)) welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.
3   A: e::::r, are you::: are you a::r have resident room?
4   B: yes, I have. Do you want a single room or double room?
5   A: e:::r I want single room.

Post-Test
1   A: welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.
2   B: oh (0.5) I want to e:rr book a room
3   A: how do you want the room? single room or double room?
4   B: how much e:rr single room and double room?

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has attempted to determine whether and how speaking performance of Thai university students can be improved through the regular practice of non-scripted role-play. It has shown that both low- and high-proficiency participants in the present study exhibited significant improvement in their overall speaking performance as well as in the genuine features of naturally-occurring conversation. This improvement can be observed in such conversation practices as turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlaps, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair, and the use of turn-holding, delay devices. Although traditionally-taught conversation lessons have more focus on form and meaning, the students noticeably improved on language functions of genuine conversation through non-scripted role-play training.

When students with high and low proficiency levels were compared, it was revealed that the speaking performance of both groups was enhanced especially in terms of manner of expression and ability to interact. However, unlike the low-proficiency students, the high-proficient ones also showed improvement in fluency. Other linguistic features, such as pronun-

ciation, grammatical accuracy, styles of expression and appropriate choice of words, however, appeared to be more challenging for both groups to improve without more focused teaching.

Although the findings of this study have shed some light on the significance of speech training with non-scripted role-plays, some limitations yield suggestions for future research. It is therefore recommended that to maximize the outcome while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play to EFL students in similar contexts, teachers should focus on forms used to perform particular interactional functions such as initiating, maintaining and closing different types of sequences; fixing conversation problems; and trying to enhance the production of these forms via more focused training to elicit more meaningful and effective communication.

Appendix A

Transcription Conventions

[	Point of overlap onset
]	Point of overlap termination
=	(a) Turn continues below, at the next identical symbol
	(b) If inserted at the end of one speaker's adjacent turn indicates that there is no gap at all between the two turns
(3.2)	Interval between utterances (in seconds)
(.)	Very short untimed pause
e:r the:::	Lengthening of the preceding sound
__	Abrupt cutoff
( )	Empty parenthesis indicates that is being said, but no hearing
(guess)	Indicate the transcriber's doubt about a word
[gibee]	In the case of inaccurate pronunciation of an English word, an approximation of the sound is given in square brackets
Ja((.: yes))	Non-English words are italicized and followed by an English translation in double parentheses
	Marks features of special interest

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