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Manuscripts

Send to Dr. Betty Nielsen Green

Email: greenbe@daytonastate.edu

Deadline for submission is June 1, 2012

Reviews

Send to Dr. Marcela Van Olphen

Email**: marcela.vanolphen@saintleo.edu**

Deadline for submission is June 1, 2012

Advertising information may be requested

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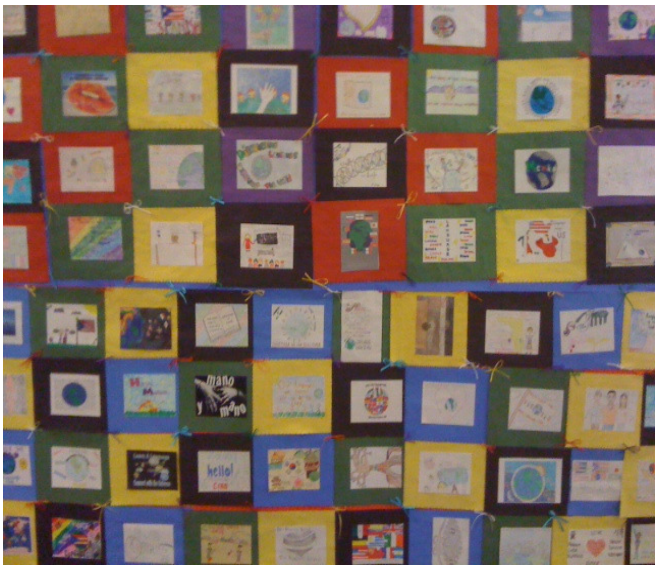

Cover Design

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ARTICLES

Editors Acknowledgement

My sincere thanks go out to the review board and the authors of the manuscript in this issue of the Florida Foreign Language Journal issue. The mission statement of Florida Foreign Language Journal clearly states that the Journal is the official academic organ of the Florida Foreign Language Association, and that its objective is to serve as a vehicle for expression by teachers, students and the greater general public who have an interest in furthering the instruction and knowledge of foreign languages This issue features a research article from **Barry Rowe**, a professor at Université Sainte-Anne, Halifax, Nova Scotia on his investigation French-Second-Language learners attitudes on change of attitude as they participated in global simulation activities. **Kaleigh Thompson**, a freshman from the School of Education at Jacksonville University where she did a study in an elementary school with two second grade students, one ESOL and the other a struggling native English speaker. Her study is exemplary in that she did this as a volunteer to advance her own skills in language learning and reading. Kudos to a young pre-professional educator! She was using all the skills learned in her classroom as she proceeded with her study. **Christina Preston Agiro**, who teaches at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, and **Claire Preston**, who teaches middle school Spanish at the Mount Mourne International Baccalaureate World School in Mooresville, North Carolina tell the FFLJ reader about the value of collective work aiming for mastery of learning. **Alla Kourova**, a visiting professor from Russia, now teaching Russian at The University of Central Florida is comparing Russian language education to the American system of teaching a foreign language, concentrating on current models and frameworks of language teaching. Avid readers of language studies will enjoy the discourse from another culture. **Les Potter**, a retired school principal, currently chair of the BS School of Education programs at Daytona State College, is discussing multicultural issues in the middle school. **John De Mado**, popular with FFLA conference attendees, offers a True Story about a happening at an international airport, some readers may recognize this story if they have attended an FFLA conference where John presented workshops. John is popular with foreign language teachers. Enjoy these readings and pass the journal along to your peers. I invite you to submit manuscripts on research and review-oriented articles in the area of foreign language education and technology, program articulation, ESOL, culture, film, travel, FLES, national certification, multicultural instruction, multilevel teaching, diversity, foreign language advocacy, international programs and initiatives. See the guidelines in this journal on submissions, or visit the website www.ffla.us for more information..

– Betty Green

President's Corner

Greetings World Languages Professionals,

The teaching profession is perpetually changing, and teachers work hard every day to keep up with these changes. Research, professional development and collaboration are key elements to support all of us on this "journey". In Florida, we are especially experiencing a paradigm shift in world languages education with the new Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS for WL) and mandated end of course exams in which student performance on these exams will be tied to teacher pay. So, the stakes are high, and we are all under a great deal of pressure to meet all these new demands.

But never fear, the Florida Foreign Language Journal (FFLJ) is here! The Journal is an invaluable resource for our profession. In this publication, colleagues share research, ideas, best practices and experiences that we can all use to help us grow professionally in our craft of world languages instruction.

Producing such a publication as the FFLJ is a daunting task that could not become reality without the dedication and commitment of many people: contributing authors, editors, associate editors, sponsors, etc. I would like to extend sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all our colleagues who have worked so hard to contribute to this professional "treasure".

The Florida Foreign Language Association encourages all of you who are reading this Journal to consider the following in order to help make our profession stronger and guide us all through the changes and demands that are ever-present in world languages education:

1. Contribute an article and share your research, experiences and expertise. Encourage your colleagues to do the same in order to support and strengthen our profession.

2. Share the FFLJ with colleagues and also with your superintendents, administrators, supervisors, School Board and community members in order to enlighten, educate, inform and involve them in our professional vision, goals and challenges.

The "world of languages" is changing, but together, we can only make it better. Explore, share, learn and grow with the Florida Foreign Language Journal. Also, I welcome you to become involved as a pro-active member for advocacy and professional development of world languages education through YOUR professional organization, the Florida Foreign Language Association.

Best wishes and kind regards,

Linda Markley
President, FFLA 2011

Mission Statement

The Florida Foreign Language Journal is the official academic organ of the Florida Foreign Language Association. Its objective is to serve as a vehicle for expression by teachers, students and the greater general public who have an interest in furthering the instruction and knowledge of foreign languages. The journal seeks articles, reviews, notes and comments concerning any aspect of foreign language acquisition. The era where educational funding is often limited, where foreign, immigrant, and migrant students seek instructional equity, and where a greater number of students are desirous of learning a foreign language, it seems imperative to have such a journal. The journal reaches out especially to those already teaching a foreign language as well as those who are preparing for such a career. The demands on teachers are overwhelming today. There is a plethora of methodological approaches, technical apparatuses, and multi-faceted textbooks available, amidst a variety of instructions with diverse milieus and attitudes toward foreign language instruction. Such an environment creates a daunting challenge to practitioners of foreign language instruction.

The goal of FFLJ is a modest one; it is to serve as a sounding board and a reference point for those who teach and learn foreign languages. It is hoped that the journal will help foreign language enthusiasts and professionals form a community that shares its concerns, discoveries, and successes of issue in the foreign language domain. It is further hoped that our voices will become more numerous and ring more loudly as we proceed through what promises to be a century of challenge and opportunity for foreign languages. Our emphasis will be fostering better learning conditions and results fro our students and teachers. FFLJ urges all readers and participants to become ardent advocates to further and safeguard foreign language practices.

Manuscript Guidelines

The editor and editorial board welcome research and review-oriented articles in the area of: foreign language education and technology, program articulation, ESOL, culture, film, travel, FLES, national certification, multicultural instruction, multilevel teaching, diversity, foreign language advocacy, international programs and initiatives, availability of career positions etc.

We encourage you to submit previously unpublished articles for publication in the second issue that will feature pedagogical concerns, strategies, and successes in the language classroom, as well as methodologies, teacher preparation, ESOL, National Board Certification, and/or culture and diversity.

A double-blind review process will be followed, in which submitted manuscripts are distributed by the editor to 2-3 reviewers with expertise in the areas addressed in each manuscript. Written comments by reviewers and a recommendation on acceptance are returned to the editor, who then will communicate the comments and decision on acceptance to each author.

Please follow the manuscript guidelines and send your submission by June 1, 2012

Requirements - Manuscripts must:

1. Appeal to the instructional, administrative, or research interests of foreign/second language educators at K-16 levels of instruction.
2. Be substantive and present new ideas or new applications of information related to current trends and teaching in the language field.
3. Be well written, clearly organized, and carefully proofed.
4. Include a complete reference list at the end.
5. Be formatted according to guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Ed. (2001). APA Style Resource.
6. Be no longer than 12-15 double-spaced pages in 12 pt. Times New Roman typeface, with 1½ inch margins, black text on white paper.
7. Be sent in triplicate (3 copies are necessary for review purposes).
8. Be submitted with no authors' names indicated (for review purposes).
9. Include a cover letter with the name, postal and e-mail addresses, and phone number of the first author (or other contact person) clearly noted.
10. Include an abstract of no more than 150 words.
11. Be sent with a biographical statement of 50 words or fewer for each author, including information on current job or title, institution, degrees held, professional experience, and any other relevant information.
12. Be sent in both hard copy and electronic formats. The electronic version must be saved as a Microsoft Word, .txt or .rtf document. Electronic versions may be submitted on a CD (PC compatible), or as an e-mail attachment.
13. Include any figures and tables in camera-ready format. Photographs, graphics, figures and tables must contribute to article content. Please be absolutely certain that all materials are complete with caption/credit information. Figures and Tables must be appropriately labeled in the article.
14. Not have been published previously and may not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Manuscripts submitted to FFLJ cannot be returned, so authors should keep a copy for themselves. Submissions will be acknowledged within one month of receipt.

The editor of FFLJ reserves the right to make editorial changes in any manuscript accepted for publication to enhance clarity or style. The author will be consulted only if the editing has been substantial, though the author will be able to review the article prior to publication.

Please follow the manuscript guidelines and send your submission by June 15, 2012 to:

Dr. Betty Nielsen Green, Editor
Florida Foreign Language Journal
771 West River Oak Drive
Ormond Beach, FL 32174-4641

or email: greenbe@daytonastate.edu

Book Review Guidelines

- Materials must have been published within the last three years.
- Review should be a maximum of three double-spaced pages.
- Each review must include complete bibliographic information, a description of the book/material, the audience for whom it is designed, and how well it accomplishes its purposes
- A cover letter should provide the author's name, postal and e-mail addresses, telephone number, and a brief (25-word) bibliographical statement.
- Reviews should be submitted as an email attachment in Microsoft Word.
- Send review to Marcela Van Olphen e-mail Vanolphen@coedu.usf.edu

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS OF REVIEWS IS JUNE 15, 2012

Barry Rowe

Global Simulations and French-Second-Language (FSL) Learner Attitude Changes

This paper presents the preliminary finding of an ongoing research project designed to analyse the relationship between FSL student participation in global simulation activities and the respective changes in their attitudes regarding second language learning. Global simulations, a pedagogical approach to teaching foreign languages through role playing, were implemented in school districts attempting to improve registrations and learner attitudes. These simulations allow for teachers to reproduce "reality" within the confines of a classroom and permit student choices within learning opportunities. Flexibility in learner participation is believed to lead to more positive FSL learning attitudes.

Approximately 120 students from 5 different secondary schools participated in these activities and in this research project. Teachers reorganized their teaching for several weeks to incorporate this FSL teaching approach. Students completed surveys both before and after the global simulation activities. Results of the study would be of interest to personnel responsible for planning second or foreign language curricula and pedagogy.

Introduction:

French-as-a-Second (FSL) registrations and participation rates continue to decline in Canadian secondary schools. In 2002, it was noted that approximately 16% of eligible students in Atlantic Canada were registered in FSL courses. It appears that a negative attitude toward the study of FSL exists in many areas (APEF, 2002). School, school district and Ministry personnel continually seek explanations as to why secondary students would rather not continue their studies of Canada's second official language. Efforts are ongoing to understand this phenomenon and to improve students' attitudes toward FSL learning, and also increase overall FSL registration and participation rates. Student attitudes and specific learner characteristics are being analyzed as concerted attempts to more fully understand the problem. It is believed that students' choice and

"pedagogical flexibility" as well as learner readiness for self-directed learning have an impact on student attitude, motivation and participation.

Statement of the Problem:

FSL programs and courses present secondary school students with a unique environment wherein they pursue their literacy development in a language other than their maternal language. Recent studies have indicated a high level of student dissatisfaction and attrition. Additionally, FSL proficiency levels appear to be below targeted outcome levels (APEF, 2002). Global simulations, an approach to teaching FSL through role playing, have been identified as an effective second / foreign language teaching methodology (Charrière et Magnin, 1998; Levine, 2004; Yaiche, 1996). They allow teachers to reproduce "reality" within the confines of a classroom and FSL acquisition and student success in the target language are often enhanced. Students are guided to create various authentic situations and scenarios thereby bringing to life characters and events mirroring the real world. By assuming roles and responsibilities in their second language, the learning experience becomes real and experiential. Various strategies promote increased student participation and encourage student choice in learning activities. Students are often required to act out short skits, create fictional characters and dream of possible destinations and surroundings in the French language and culture. These types of activities are authentic and highly motivational for secondary school students.

It appears that implicit language acquisition is also enhanced through participation in these global simulation themes. Global simulations are often seen by secondary school

students as motivating and fun-filled activities in FSL classrooms. Debyser (1996) and Pacthod (1996) provide two published examples of the many pedagogical resources that exist. Debyser (1996) suggests organizing an apartment building and having students play roles of people who live in the complex. Students would role play the interactions in such a setting; neighbours cooperate, cohabitate and sometimes disagree. Students are provided ample opportunity to imitate and create "real" life. The Pacthod (1996) resource suggests the creation of a hotel in an authentic French setting where students would assume roles of either working and/or visiting the hotel. From the personnel required to effectively operate a hotel to those possible guests (couples, sports teams, business men, etc.) students must create authentic communicative dialogues in this setting. Both cited resources provide a wealth of ideas and suggestions for FSL teachers.

The determination as to whether this pedagogical approach can positively influence secondary students FSL participation rates would allow for more detailed program planning by school and school district personnel. Issues surrounding FSL participation rates continue to present conundrums to schools and school districts. This research project adds to our knowledge base in this area and attempts to clarify whether specific pedagogical interventions can positively impact FSL participation rates.

The Study:

An action research project was undertaken involving several schools interested in improving their FSL program offering and registration rates. Action research is a systematic inquiry which "allows teachers to study their own classrooms - for example, their *own* instructional methods, their *own* students, their *own* assessments – in order to

better understand them and be able to improve their quality or effectiveness" (Mertler, 2006, p.2). Additionally, Stringer (2006) posits that action research allows us "to examine the ordinary, everyday, taken-for-granted ways in which we organize and carry out our private, social, and professional activities" (p. 156). Within the context of FSL teaching, action research appears to an effective means to analyse new pedagogical approaches. Teachers personalize and adapt the approach to fit their local context or milieu; action research allows for this "personal touch".

Global simulations were introduced to a group of secondary teachers in a Ministry-funded professional development session. After this session, a group of teachers modified their FSL teaching approaches and incorporated global simulation activities into their daily FSL teaching for a period of several weeks. Approximately 120 students from 5 different secondary schools participated in this project. They were active learners in FSL classrooms where the teachers organized their teaching and learning activities with global simulations for a period of 6 to 10 weeks. Students were observed and their progress documented during this field test; they also completed researcher surveys dealing with their attitudes towards FSL learning both before and after the organized simulation activities. This ongoing research project began during the 2007-08 school year.

A researcher-written questionnaire was prepared and administered before and after the global simulation experience. The first section of the questionnaire included 15 questions requiring responses of 1 to 5 on a 5 item likert scale. These questions dealt with various aspects of bilingualism. The response possibilities for these questions were: 1

(strongly agree); 2 (agree); 3 (unsure); 4 (disagree) and 5 (strongly disagree). The second section of the questionnaire presented students with 5 open-ended questions regarding their opinions and commentaries about bilingualism and their FSL learning experiences to date. The last section of the questionnaire dealt specifically with the global simulation experience. Both sections 1 and 2 were administered before and after the simulation project. Section 3 was administered only at the end of the pedagogical intervention.

The Population

As referenced earlier, with these negative attitudes and declining enrolments, the Department of Education (Ministry – government level) initiated a professional development session for teachers willing to undertake and test a new pedagogical approach to teaching FSL. A province-wide invitation was extended to all five school districts and subsequently all FSL teachers. Fifteen teachers opted to participate. The participants in this research study are the students of five of these fifteen teachers who decided to proceed with a field test of the global simulations approach. In total 108 students from five different schools participated in the global simulations project. These students were considered self-directed and self-motivated for several reasons. First and foremost, these students had chosen to take FSL at the secondary school level – it was their choice to study French as a school subject. Brockett and Heimstra (1991) indicate that SDL is a process whereby learners assume primary control for their learning. The inherent choice to decide to enrol in FSL courses is clearly an example of where control for learning was exerted by the learners themselves. Additionally, the organization of

global simulations allows for much student choice and decision making within; autonomy and autonomous learning characterize this pedagogical approach.

The Results:

Many learning benefits were highlighted throughout the action research. There was an evident difference in student attitude, appreciation and understanding towards FSL learning as a result of their participation in the simulations. By taking ownership for and a more-concerted interest in their FSL learning experiences, it appears that students' attitudes toward FSL learning, and their implicit language competences were enhanced. Furthermore, it appears students' readiness levels for SDL positively influence their perceived attitudes toward FSL study. It also appears that students excel in their learning efforts as a result of having choice within the simulation themes, and in the pace and content of their learning.

For logistical reasons, the findings presented in this paper are the data collected from 38 of the 108 students, from 3 of the 5 schools. The remaining data (i.e., the remaining 2 schools and 70 students) are currently in the process of being collated and analysed and will be presented in the future.

Table 1 provides the Section a questionnaire response.

Table 1

Questionnaire Responses (Pre-test (PrT) and Post-test (PoT)

Statement	**PrT**	**PoT**
1. *I would like to become bilingual*	1.63	1.83
2. *In Canada, everyone should study French or English as a second language in high school*	2.10	2.05
3. *I would like to have the opportunity to Use my French more often*	1.98	2.02
4. *Learning French will have no bearings on my career plans*	3.73	3.83
5. *The ability to speak French would Improve my future job prospects*	1.88	2.07
6. *My friends feel that taking French in High School is important*	3.19	2.75
7. *Studying a second language improves a person's knowledge of his / her first*		

language	2.41	2.10
8. *Learning a second language is difficult*	2.43	2.66
9. *I enjoy learning French as a second language*	1.96	2.04
10. *I can speak some French*	1.94	2.03
11. *Core French is an important subject for me.*	2.29	1.91
12. *It was difficult for me to fit Core French into my timetable*	3.88	3.39
13. *I may take Core French again next year.*	2.41	2.10
14. *I would like to spend some time in a Francophone city or town.*	1.96	1.83
15. *I think it is possible for me to become bilingual.*	2.23	2.00

As can be noted from Table 1, the mean scores decreased for eight statements (2. 6, 7 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15). This indicates a positive change it students attitude regarding the ideas presented in these particular statements. Specifically, statements 11 through 15 isolated student attitudes toward the learning of French. It appears as though the global simulation experience had a positive impact on their opinions of French and their future plans for FSL study. This may be attributed to the fact that the organized activities were more interactive and fun than previous second language learning experiences. Students had some choice of activities and roles and took some "ownership" for their learning. It appears that this flexibility and these choices permitted them to reflect on their learning experiences and to reconsider the advantages and benefits of learning French-as-a-second-language.

Not all items, however, show a decrease in mean scores. Items 3, 9 and 10 indicate an increase – however, no real significant change. These items, specifically Item 10, were seeking students' opinions on language learning in general; the post test results are therefore not surprising. Secondary students are often unaware of their language abilities and capabilities. Additionally, both Item 9 and Item 10 attempt to glean students' self-impressions of their FSL learning efforts. FSL learners in secondary school contexts do not often use their new language skills to communicate in public settings. They often continue their practice within the confines of a classroom.

Other remaining questionnaire items indicating an increased mean score provide a conundrum for the researcher; these areas will be investigated in more detail in the future. Student comprehension of the items and the negativity surrounding FSL learning and

teaching seem to have contributed to students' responses. Societal pressures and commentary are often more powerful and influential on students than personnel from the teaching profession. Responses to Item 4 and Item 5 specifically could be attributed to the fact that future goals and careers have not yet been largely explored by these students. For many secondary students, this topic is often not discussed until the last year of school. In their present school life reality, career plans are not immediate concerns. The value of a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of a second language is not yet clearly understood or seen as a priority by these students.

In Section 2 of the questionnaire, students were asked to comment on five open-ended questions on their opinions and commentaries about bilingualism and their FSL learning experiences to date. One of the questions specifically asked for "general comments" regarding the global simulations activities. Several student responses are provided below:

- Fun! Good way to learn French words and phrases for travelling to French places
- This was a very good thought out activity. It was really fun to do and it brought the class together
- Great idea! Better than doing lots of written work.
- I liked doing the Hôtel activity
- I really enjoyed this activity and hope to do something else like this
- It was fun! Merci beaucoup!
- This was a great activity! Fun activity!
- This was a fun activity! I learned a little more French than usual.
- I liked the role playing.
- I think this should mandatory – it helps the speaking of the language.
- It was a nice break from doing notes all the time.
- I enjoyed participating and also influencing the class – it made French class more enjoyable!
- The activities were great! They were enjoyable and entertaining. I spoke more French than I did all year!

Student responses were very positive. It appears as though the global simulation classroom activities were positive experiences for them. Several students, for example, made reference to the types of activities that had existed previously in their FSL classes as a matter of comparison. They appeared to have enjoyed the simulation activities and therefore enjoyed the language learning experiences. They appeared to have communicated more in the target language and therefore were able to see pertinence in the second language study.

The last section of the questionnaire was specifically a post activity questionnaire. Table 2 provides the students mean score responses of these reflection statements.

Table 2

Reflection Statement Responses

Statement	**Mean Score**
I enjoyed this activity	1.85
I spoke more French than I usually do	2.19
I would not mind doing a similar "simulation" Activity as part of the French program	1.70
I think I participated well in this activity	1.75
I prefer this type of activity to some other types of activities in Core French	1.84

The results from this section show that mean scores are very positive in that all students tend to agree or strongly agree with these reflection statements. Responses to the third statement, in particular, suggest that the pedagogical modification is worthy of revision and further future efforts. The response provides a suggestion to repeat the global simulations with other future French-as-a-second-language learners. It would appear that further classroom experiences with global simulations would improve students' general attitudes toward FSL learning. They enjoy the inherent choices provided to them and value their new and enhanced language abilities.

Conclusion

It appears that students' choice of learning activities within the global simulations approach to FSL learning impacted their participation in and success within the language learning experiences. Global simulations appear to be of interest to secondary FSL learners – they value the choice and learning opportunities within this pedagogical intervention. These students chose to enrol in FSL courses. Their inherent self-direction regarding their academic choices appears to transfer to their FSL acquisition endeavours. Furthermore, learner attitudes regarding FSL learning appeared to have changed somewhat when students were given some choice and control of their learning activities. The global simulation experience allows for much student choice and autonomy. This "within learner" choice and flexibility, and their "invisible" traits of self-directed learning appear to combine for success. It seems as though they appreciated the flexibility of the pedagogical approach and were therefore more inclined to concentrate their efforts to acquire a new language.

These findings would be of interest to FSL (and other second / foreign language) teachers. Additionally, personnel responsible for the development and elaboration of school, district and province/state language programs would benefit from an awareness of the results of this research project. FSL learners appear to be more engaged and more interested in their learning as a result of these pedagogical modifications. Global simulations appear to pique the interest of FSL learners and they enjoy learning; they enjoy deciding, influencing and participating directly in the learning planning phases, and hence take ownership of the process. Furthermore, it seems that promoting learner choice, learner self-direction and pedagogical flexibility and authenticity all have a positive impact on FSL learning attitudes.

Further research in this area will involve continued classroom observations of students in global simulation activities. Also, it is anticipated that the Guglielmino LPA (Learning Preference Assessment) will be administered to similar groups of students and more detailed research into which variables (preferences and attitudes) can assist FSL learners. Semi-structured interviews with FSL learners, after LPA results have been analysed, would permit the possible identification of factors and characteristics that could further assist FSL personnel. A more expanded knowledge of participant readiness levels for self-directed learning would be beneficial for FSL teachers as they plan for future pedagogical modifications such as global simulations, or FSL instruction in general.

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Biographical Statement

Barry Rowe, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor and teaches at the Université Sainte-Anne at Halifax, NOVA SCOTIA, Canada B3H 3S1

** Earlier similar versions of this paper were presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics (CAAL) in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in May 2009 and also at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) in Atlanta, Georgia in March 2010.

Kaleigh Thompson

Strategies to Help Improve Grammar for Non-native and Native English Speakers

For this case study the researcher worked at Arlington Heights Elementary with two second grade students. One student was an English speaker of another language (ESOL) and the other a native speaker who also is a struggling reader. The objective of this case study was to find strategies to help the ESOL student with an area they struggled with while using the same techniques to help the struggling reader. The researcher decided to try to improve grammar, the area the students seemed to have the most problems. To work on the students' grammar, three ESOL methods were used to see if ESOL methods worked for both non-native and native English speakers. Throughout the process interesting ways to teach grammar were created to help both the ESOL student and the struggling reader.

1. Introduction

For many language learners one of the hardest concepts to grasp is grammar. A second language learner often tries to relate the English language to their native language which makes the process more difficult, especially when they have prior knowledge of their first language. Grammar rules do not have a one-to-one correlation between languages, making the learning process more difficult for ESOL students.

For English language learners, (ELL) they have developed many different ESOL methods that make learning English easier for the students, based on the way they process the language. There are several ESOL strategies, but seven main methods are used when working with ESOL students: Grammar Translation, Direct, Audio-Lingual, Natural Approach, Total Physical Response, Whole Language, and CALLA (Ariza, 2011).

For this case study, Grammar Translation, CALLA, and Whole Language were the three methods that were used. Based on the students in this case study, and the area they struggled with the most those three methods were most appropriate for the students' needs. Even though ESOL methods were created to help ESOL students, the researcher was interested in discovering whether or not the same methods would also help native speakers with their own language. Grammar is a problem not only for second language learners, but also a problem for native language learners. Using the ESOL methods was

another attempt to help students with something they tend to struggle with across the board.

In this case study, the first step was meeting and observing the students that the researcher would be working with. The next step was to collect a writing sample from each of the students. The writing samples were then analyzed and used to help determine the areas the students struggled the most. Following the writing samples, an interview was conducted with both the teacher and the students. The students were given a pre-test, then taught the three mini-lessons, and finally given a post test to determine the results of the study. Throughout the entire study, the question of whether or not ESOL methods would be useful for non-ESOL students was tested.

2. Literature Review

This case study focuses on using ESOL methods to help both ELL's and non-ELL's. In research done today about second language acquisition, there are many misconceptions about the way second language learners should be taught. According to Collier, a common misconception for an ESOL student is that in order to be successful academically, they have to learn English first. The reason that does not work is because of the way language is learned. It is a process with many different aspects.

In *Acquiring a Second Language for School,* a model of second language learning is shown with four major components: sociocultural processes, language development, academic development and cognitive development. All four of these components work interdependently; if one component is developed while another is neglected, it could negatively affect the student's success in the future. The strongest influence out of the four components is the sociocultural process: because if the sociocultural process is not being supported by the educator the student will not be able to develop in the other areas of language acquisition. Second language learners come from all different backgrounds and have experienced different things throughout their life, so for some students, that can be the biggest barrier to learning a second language (Collier, 1995). If the student feels

comfortable in their new culture then all other parts of development will be attained. In other cultures, education is very different, thus when a student comes into the classroom it may be very different than anything they've experienced before. This could affect the way the students adjust to the new school (Keith and Valentino, 2010).

Since the demographics in the U.S. have been changing drastically, it is crucial that teachers understand how language acquisition works and what the best practices are to use with ESOL students. The first thing educators have to understand is that learning a language is a life-long process, and second language learners will have a harder time if their language skills had not developed enough in their first language. If the ELL had developed a strong foundation in his/her first language, then relating to aspects of a first language will be possible, making it much easier to learn a second language.

Another thing educators must realize is that learning a second language only in a school setting is much more difficult than learning a language when one is submerged in it all the time. Research has shown that when, in the classroom, students are engaged in very interactive, problem-solving activities and discovery-learning techniques help them pick up on the language better. It also helps if students are able to collaborate with other students while working. By working with other students, the second language learner is able to hear the language spoken more and see it written at a higher level (Collier, 1995).

What was intriguing about this evidence was that everything that has positively affected second language acquisition could also have a very positive effect on students that are simply learning their first language. When given the opportunity to work with both a second language learner and a student that is still learning the first language and also struggling with reading, the researcher decided to see if the methods proven effective for second language learning would work for both students.

In *Why TESOL?,* there are many different methods for working with ESOL students. Previously mentioned, they are as follows: grammar translation, direct, audio-lingual, natural approach, total physical response, whole language and CALLA (Ariza, 2011). Many of these methods use discovery learning and problem-solving techniques, proving that Collier and Thomas' research is accurate.

Grammar translation follows the more traditional way of teaching, where the teacher is the authority helping the students to read literature and providing correction when necessary. It is recommended that the students be able to use a dictionary as well.

The direct method allows the students to be active participants. This method tries to help them learn the language in a very natural way, focusing heavily on the student's social English. This is also a great method to use for small groups (Ariza, 2011).
The audio-lingual method focuses on memorizing dialogues and listening to audio while working in a language lab. Grammar is learned indirectly, and skills are learned in the order of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Skits are recommended for this method, it keeps the students engaged and excited.

The natural approach uses games and problem-solving activities: students are free to make errors and corrections are made by modeling. Teachers need to provide very exciting activities, and students should participate in a very communicative way. It should also be a low-anxiety atmosphere (Ariza, 2011).

Total physical response combines action and speech in a stress-free environment. Physical action is how the language is taught, and students show comprehension by their movements and actions, while the whole language method teaches language from whole to part so students can experiment with taking risks in the new language. Moreover, CALLA promotes academic language rather than social language, and is broken down into three strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and social affective (Ariza, 2011).

Students experience different stages of language acquisition. These different methods are appropriate during different stages. They also keep students engaged and learning, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. The similarity between first and second language learners is that no matter what language they are learning, both go through stages of development. Therefore, methods for second language learning could not negatively affect students who are still learning their first language.

3. Data Collection

The data for this action research case study was collected in four ways: observation, interviews, writing samples and pre-test/post test.

When first visiting the classroom, students were observed, both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. These observations gave insight to their proficiency in both academic and social English. After the observations, the students were interviewed. The ELL was asked questions similar to the following: How long have you been at Arlington Heights Elementary? Have you ever lived anywhere else? Have your parents ever lived somewhere else? Do you speak English at home? etc. These questions allowed the researcher to get background information on the students. It also helped with discovering more information about the students social English and oral skills. The teacher was also interviewed, and was asked questions about the students and how their academic English was in class.

After the interviews were complete, both students were asked to write three or four sentences about what they like to do outside of school. What they produced was used as the writing sample collected as data. The writing samples helped demonstrate in what areas the students struggled most.

Upon establishing the area where the students had a difficult time, mini-lessons were planned. Before teaching any of the mini-lessons, all students were given a pre-test. The pre-test was simple: it consisted of three sentences that had misused verbs, nouns and adjectives. Some of the sentences also had no punctuation and no capitalization. The students were instructed to correct anything they thought was wrong with the sentences (see page 7). There was also a short five sentence paragraph that the students were instructed to read aloud. The final part was simply to make sure that they didn't struggle excessively with fluency or pronunciation.

Once the students had been tested, the three mini-lessons were taught. Incorporated into each mini-lesson were three questions: a beginning, intermediate and advanced question. The first mini-lesson was a simple way to start the process; it focused on punctuation editing in different kinds of sentences. The grammar translation method

was used. There was instruction on different kinds of sentences, then a game where students had to match the correct punctuation to the sentences. At the end of the lesson they were given a paragraph with spaces where the punctuation should be, and asked to fill in the correct punctuation.

For the second mini-lesson, the CALLA method was used. The students were trying to determine the correct meaning of words with multiple meanings. Students were shown pictures that demonstrated the different meanings of the word. The pictures and words were then discussed, and the students discovered the meanings based on the pictures. Once they understood the different meanings of the words they were given sentences to match with the pictures, making sure the word used in the sentence had the same meaning as the picture. By the end of the lesson, they were determining meaning of words in context.

In the third and final lesson, the whole language method was used. The students had to edit sentences for correct use of nouns, verbs, personal pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. In the beginning, the students had the different parts of speech explained to them until they understood it. Then, by using cut-out sentences with misused parts of speech they had to determine what was wrong with the sentences. Once they determined what was wrong with these sentences, they were able to correct them by using cut-outs of all the corrected words, and then placing them over the misused words in the sentences. Throughout most of the activities the students were able to work together. The activities were very hands-on and enjoyable for the students. Since research shows that grammar is best learned with creative, hands-on activities those were the kinds of activities incorporated into the lessons (Schleppegrell, 2007). After the mini-lessons were taught the students were given a post test. The post test was the same as the pre-test (see page 7).

4. Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed in different ways by using a SOLOM (Student Oral Language Observation Matrix) chart, the English Benchmark Assessment and then the scores from the pre and post tests.

The SOLOM chart helped the researcher to analyze both the interviews and the students' behaviors in the classroom. The SOLOM chart was the main way the students' weakest area was determined. The chart is broken down into five main categories: comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar (Mora, 2011). Under each category is a rubric numbered one to five. Based on the students' level, the researcher would check which score they were in the chart.

Using the chart gave a clear idea of where the student had the most problems. For comprehension, the student was given a four, meaning they understand nearly everything at normal speech, although occasional repetition may be necessary (Mora, 2011). For fluency, the student again received a four, meaning speech in conversation and classroom discussion is generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression (Mora, 2011). For vocabulary, the student received another four. This means students occasionally used inappropriate terms and/or had to rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies (Mora, 2011). For pronunciation, the student received a four, meaning the student is always intelligible, though one is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate patterns (Mora, 2011). The last area, grammar, was where the student scored lower with a three. The score of three meant that the student made frequent errors in grammar and word order, which occasionally obscured meaning (Mora, 2011).

During the interviews and observations, the researcher was filling in the chart. Upon interviewing the students, it was determined that their social English was appropriate for their grade level. After analyzing the writing sample, it was determined that they struggled with grammar. One interesting finding was the fact that the parents do not speak English at home, such as the father does speak some English but the mother

speaks none. Thus, what the student was learning in school was not being affirmed and continued at home (Collier, 1995).

The writing samples collected from both students confirmed that grammar was the area that needed the most help (Refer to part 3, Data Collection). The ELL numbered the four sentences, but did not use capitalization. The struggling reader did not make four separate sentences; rather, the sentences were separated by the word 'and'. In addition, there were mistakes with parts of speech, misused verbs and adjectives. There were also misspelled words, but it was decided not to put too much focus on these mistakes due to their lack in severity. Another thing the ELL did: when the student could not figure out how to spell a word, the student would revert back to his/her first language, Spanish, and then wrote it in Spanish. This showed that the student had a strong enough foundation in his/her first language, but was not confident enough in the second language. Therefore, this proves background knowledge and native language play a role in second language acquisition (Harper, 1994).

The method of analysis used for the writing samples was the English Benchmark Assessment. When the writing samples were scored, they both received a score of one, on a scale from zero to three. This meant that at least one legible, comprehensible, English word, may not be related to the stimulus; it may include a phrase, but not a relevant clause, and spelling errors may make the response difficult to understand (Ventriglia, 2005).

The pre-test questions were as follows:

1. the girl went running

2. The little boy like to flew kites.

3. the dig bited the lady.

In the pre-test, the ELL was able to fix a few mistakes in the three sentences, but not very many (see page 7,) while the struggling reader did not fix any mistakes (see page 7). In the post test, both students showed great improvements (see page 7). The final analysis of all of the data collected showed positive results.

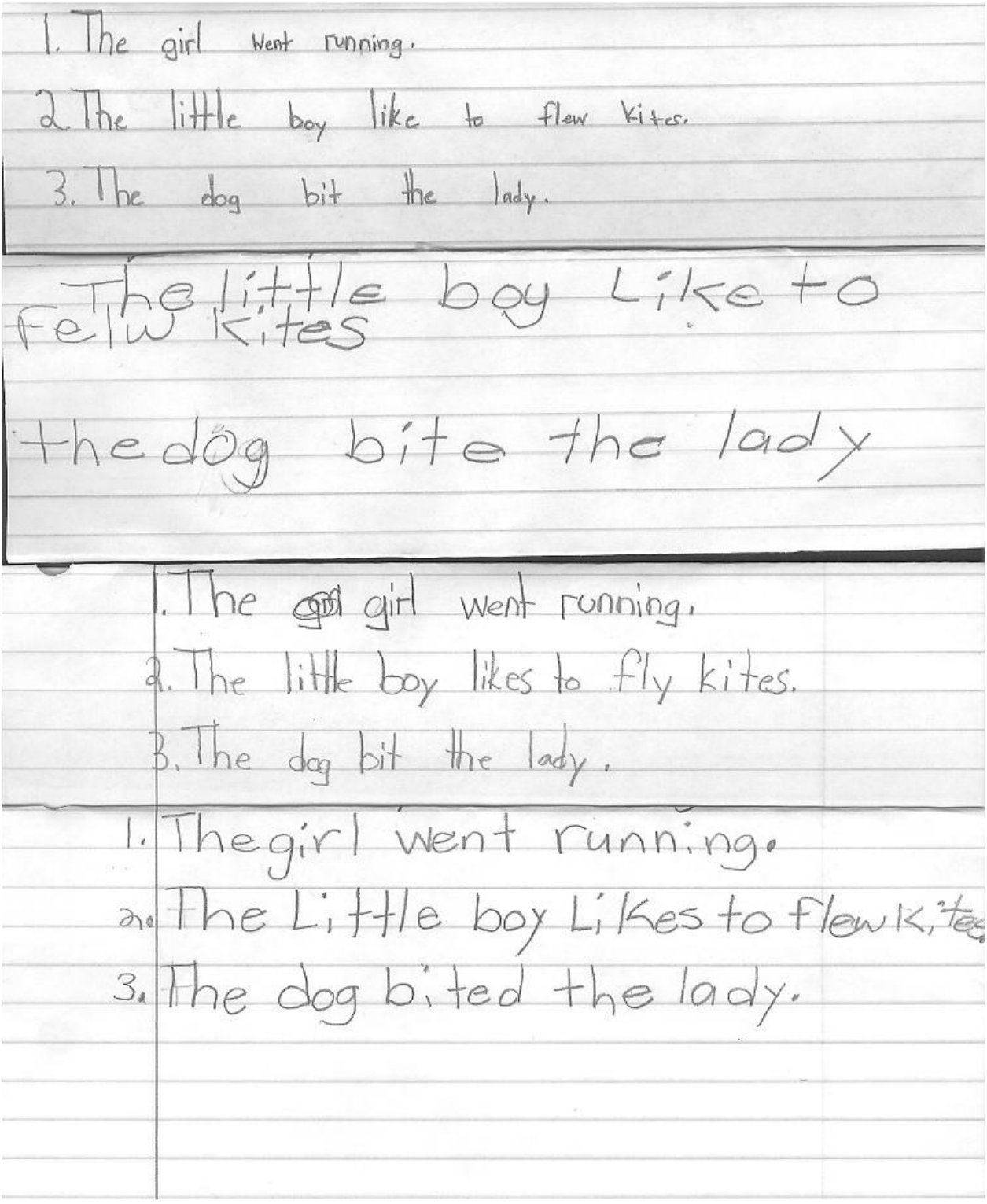
5. Results and Recommendations

Upon finishing the mini-lessons, the students were given their pre-test as a post test. Once they took the post test and it was analyzed, the results were notably different. The ELL made a perfect 100 on the post test, and the struggling reader made almost a perfect score with only a couple of mistakes. Thus, the results showed great improvement from both students. After analyzing all facts from the case study, the researcher felt that the goals of the study were accomplished and that all students could be positively affected by ESOL methods.

When activities are hands-on and problem solving, students respond positively, causing them to understand and remember what they have learned. Working in groups or with a partner is recommended, as students feel more confident and verbal, which showed positive results as well. Other recommendations include if an educator has an ELL in a mainstream classroom, he/she should try incorporating some ESOL methods into the classroom and analyze how the students respond to it. The results found in this study prove it can have positive results. Also, educators should incorporate beginning, intermediate and advanced questions into lessons throughout the school year, beginning the year with mostly beginning questions, and ending the year asking more advanced questions.

6. Conclusion

Overall this action research case study accomplished what was intended to. All was done from the perspective of a college freshman. A lot of insight and knowledge of the subject matter was gained during the semester. Expanding this case study to allow further research is highly desirable. Time restrictions in this study placed limitations on the details and progress that could be observed. In order to gain further insights, the study should be conducted over a longer period of time, possibly incorporating more students or multiple pairings.



Top two: Pre-test, ESOL student (top) Struggling reader (bottom)
Bottom two: Post test, ESOL student (top) Struggling reader (bottom)

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Biographical Statement

Kaleigh Thompson is a freshman at Jacksonville University in the Elementary Education Program. She is a Summa Cum Laude 2010, member of the National Honors Society and the Spanish National Honor Society. She received the Kinne Woodwind Quintet Scholarship and a full tuition scholarship from JU for playing in the woodwind quintet. She is a pre-intern at Arlington Hights Elementary School

Christa Preston Agiro, Claire Preston

Letting Them Have Their Say: Valuing the Collective Journey toward Language Mastery

The concept of collective intelligence (Galton, 1907, as cited in Surowiecki, 2004) tells us that if every person in a group wagers a guess (say, on the number of pieces of candy in a jar), the average of those guesses will be nearly accurate (the actual number of pieces of candy). The average of all voices is almost always more accurate than any one voice. Conducting this illustration helps students value hearing all voices in a group. If we refuse to listen to the way that every person views an issue (even if we disagree with someone else's perception), we are missing an important piece of the big-picture concept.

Collective intelligence operates when teachers facilitate group discovery learning. We make a lot of mistakes when we are learning a foreign language; in fact, we learn through mis-taking. We model the valuing of mistakes by disciplining ourselves not to say, "No," or, "That's wrong." If a student's answer is different than we had hoped, we say, "That's interesting," or, "What else do you think?" or, "Does anyone else want to add something to that?" If student answers are still tangential, we send them on scavenger hunts, either during class or for homework, which enables learning through discovery and triggers an increased chance of retention. Also, a scavenger hunt challenges students to high-level cognitive functions of evaluation. When students search for answers, they must evaluate which answers are more appropriate given the context of the question.

To convey the importance of students hearing the voices of others, students view optical illusions with two possible visual interpretations and are instructed to "state what you see first;" then, they are instructed to "help those around you see what they can't see." Then, on viewing the final illusion, students are questioned: "Which do you think the artist intends for you to see first?" to which the answer is usually "the one that I saw first." Then, the teacher questions students toward realizing the human tendency to assume the infallibility of our own perception. The only way that we learn to look for more than one side to an issue is to listen to others who see a perspective that we cannot perceive. We need each other to help us see what we can't see on our own.

When we enact passive allowance of students making fun of one another for venturing guesses, we are not valuing what others see; instead, we are silencing a variety of perspective. Each of our students has mastered different portions of the language content. If we ask them to mark words, phrases, or sentences that they understand, they can teach others what they know and how they remember it. Not only does the students' teaching of others considerably increase the retention, but the learners also have the opportunity to interact with and learn from new teachers. Another application of perspective-sharing is when a student does not know an answer, s/he is permitted to ask for a whispered answer from a classmate, providing that the called-upon student voice the final answer. Students can also take a life line, call on someone else, or take an audience vote. This way, teachers support a class atmosphere that welcomes error, and students often learn more from mistakes than from correct answers.

Democratic discussion also works well for facilitating this retention-rich student-centered discovery learning. When a teacher assigns a "text" to students, the learning is facilitated through discussion. (The text could be any discourse, including but not limited to: music, film, print, pictorial depiction, or interview.) We enforce at timed target language discussion on concepts in the "text," and we enforce democracy by teaching students to monitor themselves to ensure that they do not dominate, disappear, or interrupt. This enhances learning through discovery and teaching of others rather than through receiving a lecture; it also decentralizes a traditional instructor-focused power structure, distributing voice time equally among students, honoring their voices as co-teachers. Students participating in this discussion structure report learning more deeply and memorably, learning to respect one another's opinions and developing a desire to hear and appreciate all voices.

An adaptation of democratic discussion is PIN reading. We find a passage that helps students comprehend a complex concept, and each student needs to find something P-ositive, I-netersting, and N-egative in the text. We employ PIN methodology by providing students with a text that may explain, for instance, a grammar rule, how to tell time, or mnemonic devices for vocabulary memory. Then, each student shares what s/he found interesting. Students are teaching students, and each student is acknowledging that something in the text was interesting. Alternately, when we discuss art, deconstruct an interview, deduce the meaning of a text, write in the class blog, or narrate a muted film clip in our target language, we require a unique contribution from each student, and we enforce co-listening by having students state which of their classmates' comments they

liked most and why, facilitating the scaffolding of ideas. In a recent target language democratic discussion about the Dali painting, *The Persistence of Memory,* students used their limited vocabulary (and leaned heavily on their dual-language dictionaries) to describe colors and shapes, how the painting made them feel, and what they thought the painting meant. One student had just lost a family member, and after listening to others' observations of the clocks, some faded and some clear, she conjectured that possibly the clocks showed the times when people died. The vivid clocks were like people who died more recently, so the memories were more vivid; the faded ones were people who died a long time ago and the memories of them were faded. In that powerfully nurturing moment, students comprehended the value of collective stumbling toward meaning-making.

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Biographical Statement

Claire Preston is a Foreign Language Teacher at Mount Mourne International Baccalaureate World School, Mooresville, NC

Christa Preston Agiro is an Assistant Professor of Integrated Language Arts, Wright State University Dayton, Ohio

Alla Kourova

The Role of Russian as a Foreign Language in America and Issues of Curriculum Design

Recent research into current models and frameworks of Russian as a Foreign Language demonstrates the direct and ongoing connection between the roles of this language in specific socio-cultural contexts and the issues of curriculum design. Therefore, many Russian language teachers and curriculum designers suggest that curricula should be developed in a way that reflects specific linguistic, social and cultural roles, which the Russian language has acquired in a new cultural environment. Subsequently, the need to utilize a culture-based educational approach and to reflect the cultural experiences of the learners in addition to the culture of the target language and other cultures is stressed.

A culture-based approach in language learning and teaching supports "learning in an environment that incorporates native language, culture and traditions" (Neally, 2008). It also equips the students with a voice to introduce their own cultural heritage. Those in favor of this approach justify their opinion about its benefits by the fact that culturally-based teaching is critical in shrinking the achievement gap (Nealy, 2008).

Even though a culture-based approach is becoming more popular in language education, the perception of this approach, which exists both among the teaching community and the community of learners in the context of Russian language teaching and learning in America, is still not clear. As teachers are the most influential stakeholders of the educational process and their perceptions are basic components in the formation of concepts and assumed positions in connection to their further actions, it is a question of how these perceptions influence the change in the design of the curricula. To explore this question a study was launched at the University of Central Florida at the Modern Language and Literature Department, at the University of Montana and at Moscow State University in Russia. It was aimed at investigating the perceptions of the Russian as foreign language teachers and their attitudes towards the role of the Russian

language in the unique linguistic, social and cultural context in America and its reflection in the curricula. The choice of teachers as subjects of the study originated from the understanding that the attitudes and perceptions of teachers as the most influential stakeholders in the education process provide great insights into curriculum design and its successful implementation.

The objectives of this study were:

(1) to identify the role of Russian as a foreign language in The United States and in the Russian language teaching practices as currently perceived by the university teachers

(2) to elicit information about the university teachers' attitudes about the relevance of the current curricula to an effective target language culture acquisition and to local culture promotion in the modern socio-cultural and linguistic context.

This research study used a qualitative approach in which focus group interviews and an open-ended questionnaire were administered to experienced native and non-native language teachers.

Focus group interview

Participants

The research population consisted of six teachers during the academic year 2010-2011. Some of the subjects speak Russian as a Native Language and some speak Russian as a Second or Foreign Language. These teachers have different experiences. Moreover these teachers are well known among their peers for their critical thinking skills, i.e. ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences, evaluate arguments and solve problems.

Procedure

At the first stage of the study, an open-ended pre-planned focus group interview was used. The interviewees, who met as a group of 6, were asked the same open-ended questions to facilitate the interviews and the analysis process. The interview started with some icebreaker questions, which were aimed at creating an atmosphere that would enhance free and open discussion. The list of questions included the following: (1) would you like to talk about Russian in America and its contemporary role? (2) how do you feel about Russian in the USA? (3) what, in your opinion, is the role of the Russian language in America? Do you feel that this role has both advantages and disadvantages? Then the focus group participants were asked to come up with 10 words (nouns, adjectives, verbs) that could be used to describe Russian in America. These words were written by the participants and discussed. The focus-group interview ended with questions aimed at identifying teachers' perceptions and attitudes (e.g. do your feel that the current linguistic situation in the USA influences teaching practices? Do you feel that the students have any anxiety with regard to Russian inside and outside the classroom?), and correlating these with the curricula they teach (e.g. is the linguistic situation, in your opinion, reflected in the curricula you were teaching? If not, how do you think the curriculum could be improved? Do you think that the curriculum will benefit if the methodologies for promoting the local culture are introduced?). The discussion of the teachers' expectations with regard to the Russian language in America concluded the session.

Interestingly, Russian in the USA is not viewed as a language of status or of the elite. Owing to the fact that Russian is taught in some public schools, the language is not monopolized by a certain class only. Russian as a foreign language is also not monopolized by a certain profession only. In fact, the scope of Russian is broadening since it is perceived as an effective bridge to gaining employment in Russia and former Soviet Republics, and possibly to starting a business there. In short, Russian is seen as a window to the more successful world of business, communication and commerce.

Russian is described as growing, improving, and gaining more status in the United States. In addition, it is viewed as helping individuals keep abreast of developments in science and technology. These assumptions reflect both the eventual effects on the linguistic transformation of the Russian language, as well as the changes in its functions, roles and policies, be they descriptive cross-cultural or intercultural (Ter-Minasova, 2000).

Questionnaire

Participants

The research population consisted of fifteen teachers from the University of Central Florida, the University of Montana and Moscow State University in Russia during the academic year 2010-2011. Some of the subjects speak Russian as a Native Language and some speak Russian as a Second or Foreign Language. These teachers have high educational qualifications (MA and PhD) and different experience histories ranging from 5 to 20 years of teaching Russian, including teaching at college level.

Procedure

At this stage of the study a five-section questionnaire (See: Appendix 1), designed to examine university teachers' perceptions of the Russian language in the United States with reference to classroom practices within a culture-based paradigm, was administered. Section 1 of the questionnaire was targeted at acquiring demographic information about the research population. Sections 2 through 5 proceeded as in Bloom's taxonomy from the level of knowledge to the levels of analysis and evaluation. The questionnaire examined three related domains:

1. teachers' understanding of the concept of culture-based language teaching;
2. teachers' views on the integration of a culture component in RFL curricula;
3. practical reasons why teachers choose, or avoid, implementing culture-based language teaching in the classroom.

Section 1 of the questionnaire contained some general, demographic and professional questions (e.g. gender, age, education, nationality, total number of Russian language teaching subjects).

Section 2 of the questionnaire consisted of 9 Likert-type items that aimed at clarifying teachers' understanding of Russian as a foreign language and its role in enhancing the acquisition of the target culture and in promoting the local culture.

Section 3 of the questionnaire addressed teachers' perceptions on implementing culture-based language teaching in the classroom. This section of the questionnaire was comprised of eight items. These items were designed to clarify the positions of the teachers on a number of cultural issues.

Section 4 of the questionnaire consisted of two subsections. The first subsection elicited the reasons that the teachers might accept for using a culture-based approach in the classroom. This subsection consisted of a list of eight reasons that were suggested to the teachers. The second subsection of section 4 required the respondents to choose the reasons that might apply if they preferred to avoid using a culture-based approach in the classroom.

Section 5 of the questionnaire probed the activities, which teachers implement in their classroom to integrate the culture of their students.

Discussion

The demographic questions of section 1 of the questionnaire, though traditionally relatively simple, were devised to profile the respondents and to obtain a better picture of the study population. As the study population at this stage was limited to 15 respondents, it did not allow any further analysis of sub-groups of those responding to the survey. The analysis of the demographic and professional questions in the survey showed that the sample matched the study population. The respondents of the survey were both native and non-native Russian speakers. Most respondents had substantial teaching experience both internationally and in America. Such a choice of sample was expected to provide confidence in the data from the survey.

The analysis of section 2 clarified the understanding of the conceptual framework of Russian as a foreign language. It also provided a clearer picture of the role of the Russian language in enhancing the acquisition of the target culture and in promoting the local culture. Item 1 of section 2 ("Russian as a Foreign Language is communicatively oriented") revealed that the majority of the study population either "strongly agree" (13% of the respondents) or "agree" (73%) with this statement. However, 13% of the teachers who participated in the study expressed doubts about the communicative character in the model of Russian as an international language.

Similarly the responses to the statement in Item 2 ("Russian as a foreign language focuses on target culture, local culture and other world cultures") showed majority agreement: 20% strongly agree and 53% agree.

The majority of the teachers who participated in the study (60%) agreed with Item 3 ("Russian as a foreign language is consistent with the communicative language learning paradigm") or expressed strong agreement (20%). Interestingly almost half of the respondents were undecided or disagreed (40%) with item 4 which reads: "Teachers who view Russian as a Foreign Language use student-centered approaches."

The biggest group of the research population (60%) agreed with item 5 ("If viewed as a foreign language Russian becomes an effective tool for conveying cultural messages as it facilitates target culture acquisition and promotes local culture") and item 6 ("Students' cultural identities should be reflected in the Russian curriculum to enable them to understand their own learning experiences better"). Some of the respondents felt undecided about the two items (one teacher about item 5 and 3 teachers about item 6). The teachers responded to item 7 ("Students' cultural identities should be reflected in the Russian curriculum in order to affirm the validity of their learning experiences") with strong agreement (20%) and agreement (80%). The majority of the teachers noted that they either "strongly agree" (40%) or "agree"(60%) with item 8 ("Students' cultural identities should be reflected in the Russian curriculum in order to enhance their learning experiences").

Item 9 ("It is crucial for my students to learn about the target culture while at the same time cross-referencing it to the framework of the local culture") was supported by the majority of the teachers (six teachers strongly agreed and seven teachers agreed). One teacher disagreed with the statement and one teacher noted that he was undecided and commented that it is perhaps highly desirable rather than crucial.

The analysis of the teachers' responses in section 3 demonstrated that they supported implementing a culture-based approach as it gives the students a sense of involvement and ownership. However, they felt undecided about the successful application of this approach in the Russian language class for the science students. They also commented on the need for using this approach together with other classroom approaches, methods, and materials that are influential in cultivating a positive classroom atmosphere.

Interestingly, Item 4 of section 3, which probed the success of a culture-based approach in case the teachers were familiar with the differences in students' backgrounds (e.g. urban/rural), did not find positive responses from the participants. Though 33% of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement in this item and 20% agreed, 20% of the teachers expressed their disagreement and 27% noted that they felt undecided. Almost half of the teachers (47%) were not sure if using a culture-based approach motivated students to learn the target language, though 33% strongly agreed and 20% agreed with this statement. However, the responses of the teachers to the statement in Item 6, which says that "a culture-based approach not only focuses on the native culture of the learners but it investigates world culture as well", revealed that the teachers showed mostly their agreement (47%) or strong agreement (47%). Only 6% of the respondents noted that they felt undecided. The majority of the participants (53%) expressed their doubts about the greater effectiveness of the culture-based approach with beginners (Item7) and supported the implementation of this educational approach with students of all levels of language proficiency (Item 8).

The analysis of the teachers' feedback in section 4 demonstrated that the teachers could not rely on the books as a source of their students' and their own cultural identities

and beliefs, as the books do not match them (0% for reason 5). All the teachers (100% for reason 3) share the reason that a culture-based approach creates a meaningful context and enhances negotiation of meaning. Though less important but also considered by the teachers are reasons (in descending scale): 4 – 86%, 8 – 86%, 1-80%, 2- 73%, 7 – 65%, 6 – 53%.

In case the aforementioned list might not have been comprehensive, the teachers were asked to provide additional reasons for their promotion of Russian as a foreign language and use of a culture-based approach in the classroom. The authors received feedback from four participants. One of the teachers mentioned the difference between the teaching contents of Russian for specific purpose or Russian for academic purpose. In her opinion, at a certain level, subject content is the primary motivation. Another teacher very reasonably noted that she thought a culture-based curriculum was good, but should not be the only approach used. A third respondent provided very impressive feedback on the reasons for using a culture-based approach. It is clear from the feedback that a culture-based approach could enable students to understand teachers better. It could also increase tolerance (not only of different ideas, but of different approaches as well). Therefore, a culture-based approach could be a useful instrument for enhancing the transition from the known to the unknown. One of the teachers who participated in the study noted that she did not have enough knowledge about a culture-based approach. She also wondered whether the suggested items were valid claims to make about it, but if they were valid, the teacher thought these factors would persuade her to try the approach.

See Table 1 below for more detailed information about the responses to the statements in subsection 1 of Section 2.

Table 1 Analysais of Questionnaire Section 4, Subsection 1

No.	Statement in the questionnaire	% of the respondents agreeing
1.	A culture-based approach promotes the communicative skills of the learners	80%

2.	A culture-based approach enhances the motivation of the learners	73%
3	A culture-based approach creates a meaningful context and enhances negotiation of meaning	100%
4	A culture-based approach provides my students with an opportunity to get to know more than one culture	86%
5	My students' and my own cultural identities and beliefs match those in the book	0%
6	It is not difficult for me to decide which aspects of the target language culture are different from the learners' own culture and need special attention	53%
7	Using a culture-based approach enables the teacher to better understand the learners and why they think and act the way they do	56%
8	Teaching a foreign language through a culture-based curriculum provides a familiar context for learners and thus facilitates their comprehension of the foreign language	86%

The analysis of subsection 2 of Section 4 of the survey showed that the reasons for avoiding a culture-based approach in the Russian as a foreign language classroom are perceived differently by teachers. Some of them are viewed as crucial, while others seem not to be very influential on teachers' decisions whether to apply or ignore this educational approach. It is obvious from the obtained results that one of the main reasons for teachers to avoid the culture-based approach is that the cultural values represented in the book are alien to their students (53%).

Sometimes the limited knowledge of the local culture on the part of the teachers prevents them from using an approach which is culture-based (33%). Interestingly, the statements of the survey like "My students are not knowledgeable enough about their own culture when they embark on learning a target language culture" and "My students prefer to learn about the culture of the target language rather than to discuss their own culture" were not marked by the teachers as factors which have a negative influence on teachers' decisions. Some of the respondents mentioned that it was not easy to think of a

class in which culture did not arise in one form or another. One of them contended that when using a culture-based curriculum, students should not be presented with aspects of other cultures that clash with their own, or items that they do not usually talk about in their culture.

See Table 2 below for more detailed information about the responses of the teachers to the statements in subsection 2.

Table 2 Analysais of Questionnaire Section 4, Subsection 2

N	Statement	% of respondents agreeing
1.	Texts and assignments in the book are not proper enough for a culture-based approach	20%
2.	Cultural values represented in the book are alien to my students	53%
3.	There is no acceptable balance between target and local culture materials in the book	26%
4.	I have limited knowledge of local culture	33%
5.	I have very little knowledge of the culture-based approach	0%
6.	My students are not knowledgeable enough about their own culture when they embark on learning a target language culture	0%
7.	I am not trained to follow a culture-based approach	0%
8.	A culture-based approach requires more preparation and work to design additional materials in comparison with other approaches	6%
9.	A culture-based approach creates psychological barriers for teachers	13%
10.	My students prefer to learn about the culture of the target language rather than to discuss their own culture	0%

The feedback the authors of the study obtained from the responses in Section 5 was of great value as it provided many real-life classroom situations, techniques, and methods of integrating culture into the classroom. For example, one of the participants of the study mentioned that she usually started her class, especially when she approached a new area of study, with some information or examples, which are familiar to her students.

She started by asking questions which generate topics and ideas. At the next stage the topic of the lesson often moved to something less familiar, but by using the students' own ideas and expectations as a starting point, lessons tended to start within the students' own cultural framework.

Another teacher mentioned that she usually started with the students' cultural knowledge as warming up classroom activities for speaking, writing and eliciting. She also mentioned sharing culture through stories and anecdotes as well as comparing and contrasting activities and activities based on supporting details.

The integration of the students' culture, in the opinion of another study participant, would be in some topics, such as marriage, death, celebrations, ceremonies, education and way of life. Students may be grouped into pairs or small groups for discussions, debates, comparison and contrast. When implementing the culture-based approach in the classroom this teacher would first start with a discussion of the familiar and what the students knew about their culture (brainstorming). Then she would check what the students knew about the other culture (what they have heard or read). Finally, she would ask the students to discuss the differences and similarities between the two cultures in many aspects related to the topic.

Some very interesting activities were suggested by one of the teachers, namely a compilation of local recipe cookbooks, use of local content and local mass media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, radio and TV programs in Russian), debates, discussions, written assignments based on contrast and comparison, preparation of cultural tips and cultural advice for visitors (body language, physical contact or proximity, clothing and physical appearance), and field trips (e.g. museums, heritage attractions such as forts, castles).

Regarding the general feedback on the questionnaire, the authors received some interesting comments that contained potential for further study. One of the participants of the study noted that culture-based teaching did not suit the objectives of her course. Academic language and rhetorical style do differ, of course, from culture to culture, but as the students are not particularly aware of academic English, it would not be very

fruitful to explore the differences between academic English and academic Russian, or the cultural underpinnings of these differences. If cultural and cross-cultural communication were to become content matter in this course, then it would have to replace the subject-oriented content matter, which for the credit courses might be hard to defend.

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Biographical Statement

Dr. Alla Kourova is an Assistant Professor Russian/TESOL at the College of Arts and Humanities, Modern Languages and Literatures,University of Central Florida, Orlando.

Les Potter

Multicultural Issues for the Florida Middle School Administrator

Until middle level educational leaders understand that cultural traits that conflict with macro culture values are differences that have proven strategies, many students who are culturally different and often labeled at-risk will continue to be at-risk in classrooms where to be culturally different is risky business (Taylor & Turk, 1993). As a former middle school principal in Florida, transforming the prevailing culture in school and classroom can be in itself risky. In Volusia County, for instance, there are students who attend public schools where 98 different languages are spoken at home and 1-20 students are identified as English Language Learner students. Most

administrators are not as familiar as they should be with the different cultures and often do not get involved with disturbing the norm. Many times administrators will not tackle the existing culture for fear of upsetting the majority. This includes the teachers, school and district administrators. If change is instituted, it usually comes from the district office or state department in a form of a mandate. Think of the different mandates that schools receive to "celebrate" some month/week of a different culture and then not thought of till next year. Warren Bennis argues, however that the administrator sometimes becomes ensnared in an "unconscious conspiracy," a dilemma of allegiance to the status quo and an allegiance to his/her genuine concerns (Parrish & Aquila, 1996), This is the equivalent of upsetting the established apple cart. The responsibility of assuring that middle schools are a place where ethnicity, gender, religion, cultural difference and social class are not reason to sort and sift children but to seek and serve them fall on school administrators, as does the responsibility to assure the community that all students are receiving an equitable and excellent education, regardless of their differences. Our student's differences should be embraced!

If the school administrator is afraid of upsetting a culture that espouses the notion that 'poor children and children of color, on average do not learn as will as middle class and affluent children" "Parrish & Aquila, 1996, p.229). Then we will continue to foster the political rhetoric of reform and remain stagnant in our restructuring efforts. We must remember that identity, difference power, and privilege are all connected (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Merely painting the surface of a flawed structure is not enough to merely hold it together. "If schools are to be transformed so that all are educated well…cultural ways of schooling must change" (Parrish & Aquila, 1996, p.299).

Administrators must take the lead in implementing and supporting school wide programs that support multicultural diversity, create opportunities for teacher development, improve curricula, and establish new cultural discourse in pedagogy. Certainly, that is easier said than done when one's career is at stake. However, taking the lead as a school administrator is the key to change by empowering personnel; supporting individuals who have the initiative to propose change; researching and presenting

opportunities to create and facilitate change; educating yourself, staff parents and the community intellectually on the philosophies associated with that change; and finally, being confident and positive about the change.

School administrators need to provide faculties with as many positive experiences in multiculturalism as possible. It is important to remember that cultures to be represented should not be just the biggest group but ALL groups. One way to enhance the experience is getting school clubs and organizations to establish festivals celebrating a variety of cultures. Have parents and community members come in and share their cultures in classes. Administrators can encourage teachers to invite speakers from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences, foods, travel and languages to classes, functions, and assemblies. Schools can initiate an exchange program where students and teachers of different cultures can spend time in other schools. This can be done as simply as exchanging persons from an inner city school to a suburban or rural school. This is a good way to see others for day a day or more in their own schools and situations. This increases the appreciation of those unlike ourselves and can shatter any preconceived notions that may exist, the school band and chorus can be encouraged to address diversity in music and school plays, technology offers a variety of opportunities for national and international communication. This is a great way to explore other cultures from the ease of one's own classroom. Of course, selecting textbooks and other resources that reflect a variety of cultural experiences is helpful; however, it is of little value if the teacher cannot use them effectively in the classroom. Administrators must be in the classroom observing what is being taught by the teacher. Principals must lead staff development to ensure that the staff is familiar with and sensitive to different cultures. This isn't easy and may not be enjoyable but it must be done to make the staff development effective.

Administrators and staff must be made aware of the cultural differences that exist. For instance, we sometimes lump together Spanish speaking persons as Hispanic and believe that they are alike. But Cuban, Mexican and Puerto Rican people will tell you quickly that they are different with culture, language, and heritage. The same can be said for persons of an oriental background. Japanese, Chinese and Korean people are very different. One teacher in my former school in Volusia County asked a Vietnamese

student to work with a Cambodian immigrant new to the class. I am sure thinking that they are both oriental and they must have a commonality and they should have a natural connection since they are both from Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese student told the teacher she would but did not think the student would accept her help. A little while later the Cambodian student came to the teacher and angrily state that he would not work with the Vietnamese student. The teacher learned quickly that past problems between two nations located thousands of miles from Florida affected her classroom. Change, especially when it deal with cultural norms, can be difficult. "In current school culture, challenging existing ways is often viewed negatively" (Parrish & Aquila, 1996, p. 300). School administrators can begin to transform this culture proactively by the allocation of resources and staff necessary to correct this situation.

Staff development is one resource that can be controlled by a building administrator; it is a useful tool that is easy to use. Valerie Ooka Pang (1994) suggests that individuals who are most reluctant to change are the very individuals administrators want to use to be harbingers of change. These are the individuals in whom staff development monies should be invested. These same individuals will contribute to a very positive change in the school's cultural philosophy once they have gained sensitivity, understanding, and the tools to work with. Staff development can be a significant factor in an administrator's ability to create change. In this way an administrator can empower the faculty for change and improve multicultural/ELL awareness.

According to curriculum specialists in DeKalb County, Georgia, in their approach to multicultural pedagogy administrations should have teachers explore the following areas: (a) approaches to class work, (b) testing, (c) learning styles, and (d) communication styles (Taylor & Turk, 1993).

Teachers should also be aware of the reasons for the implementation of a culturally diverse curriculum/school culture. This fact needs to be expressed with clarity

and passion. In order to articulate this to a faculty, it is the leader, the school administrator, who must be convinced of the significance and impact multiculturalism has on our educational, economical, and global standing.

The United States is not the only country that is attempting to expand its educational discourse on comparative perspectives from around the world. According to Robert McNergney (1994):

> …when American educators are given the chance to view international classrooms and schools through their own and others' eyes as they can when studying cases of teaching and learning in settings outside the United States, education that is multicultural acquires new meaning. And with new meaning come fresh possibilities for teaching and learning. (p.297).

This pioneer o f educational nuance and a group of his colleagues from Virginia traveled to Singapore, India, South Africa, Denmark, and England to visit schools engaged in multicultural education. McNergney says these schools were developed strategies for enhancing mutual understanding among racial and ethnic groups. Their search for the philosophies that underline their multiculturalism is exactly what our administrators need to articulate as part of their mission statement for change. While visiting these areas, McNergney and his group created "videocases" of a variety of teaching and pupil/teaching interaction situations. These videocases can be used in professional settings to help teachers engage in "problem-solving behaviors, perception problems, value that drive actions, and empirical and theoretical knowledge of various classroom situations" (p. 297). These tapes give teachers a global perspective of multiculturalism and an opportunity to create a stimulation that will facilitate a tossed salad approach to the classroom instead of the old world view of the melting pot perspective (Taylor & Turk, 1993).

Middle school administrators need to be able to articulate that "multicultural education is the study of schooling aimed at providing all children with an equal opportunity to learn in a culturally affirming and caring environment" (McNergney, 1994, p. 291), and that race, class, and gender discrimination serve as barriers to a goal of excellence in educational achievement and global relations (1994). In addition,

administrators cultivating transformational leadership must understand that the outcome is really a change in the culture of schooling. For this to occur there must be an identification of the informal norms and covenants (traditional, rituals, values, bias, etc..) of the old schooling, and these must be transformed into a new discourse about how we view students and learning in school (Parrish & Aquila, 1996). A multiculturalism curriculum is a way to provide students with an opportunity to be the very best they can be. It is also a way for instructors to be actively involved in our changing global society and to change the "us and them" mentality. Today's administrator can contribute much to the effort to remedy institutionalized racism and its inevitable disenfranchisement.

Multiculturalism is a project of new culture information is often attacked by defenders of the status quo and is seen as a wink at political correctness, when in effect it is "an overdue response to the demographic realities of heterogeneous societies" (Pang, 1994, p. 297). Today's middle school administrator reaching for change and implementing multicultural pedagogy strategies towards this discourse of comparative perspectives should be applauded. They are doing the right thing!

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Biographical Statement

Les Potter is a former middle and high school principal in Florida. Most recently he was principal of Silver Sands Middle School in Port Orange, Volusia County, Florida for 10 years and he is finishing his 41st year in public education. He has published over 80 books, chapters and articles concerning issues in education. Les is currently the Chair of the College of Education for Daytona State College.

A TRUE STORY: THE AIRPORT INTERLUDE

The Chinese man presented himself to the employee in the Airport Information booth. He had just flown halfway around the world, anticipating an arrival in Cincinnati; or, at the very least, in Ohio. Instead, he found himself somewhere in Northern Kentucky.

Slowly looking up from his Louis Lamour paperback novel, the 'Airport Information' employee peered over his glasses at the beleaguered traveler and fired out the following perfunctory phrase in a most recognizable, indigenous Northern Kentucky accent… "Hep 'ya?"

Waiting as well at the booth for my chauffeur (*French for van driver*), I could not help but think to myself that the ensuing exchange between the Chinese national and the airport employee was going to be a 'classic' exchange!

It was…

Miraculously enough, the Chinese man understood the question posed by the indigenous Northern Kentucky type. This gave me cause to believe that perhaps there are audiocassettes floating about Beijing for practicing indigenous Northern Kentucky speech patterns.

As is the custom, the Chinese man, once acknowledged, graciously bowed to the Airport Information employee and said in his best English, *"I need mop…"*

The airport employee's eyes narrowed. Leaning forward, he said *"What the heck 'ya need a mop for?"*

Sensing that he might not have delivered his message, the Chinese man regrouped and tried to renegotiate his phrase. *"I need mop airport… I need mop airport…"*

Now, overtly irritated by what he found to be a complete waste of his time and talents, the indigenous Northern Kentucky type brusquely shot back *"Mop the airport? What the heck 'ya need to mop the airport for?"*

That's when I jumped into the exchange. *"He doesn't need a **mop**!"* I said with exasperation. *"He needs a **map**! Does he look like he mops airports for a living? Do you normally stock mops in your booth? Why would he fly all the way from China to mop your airport?"*

In retrospect, I should have given the 'Airport Information' employee a quick lesson in 'negotiation of meaning'. I should have said, *"What are the things that this man could possibly need? A mip? A mep? How about a mup? The only choices left are map and mop. And, given the context, why would someone come to an information booth for a mop?"*

This airport scene simply underscores what I have always known intuitively about people who are multilingual… They tend to make better listeners than monolinguals because they are willing to negotiate meaning and are well practiced at the art. Multilinguals maintain a subset of hard-earned skills that help them to seek comprehensible input by focusing on extra-linguistic cues, such as considering the general context, observing the particular body language, hand gestures, facial expressions and intuiting the message. These are all very important life and literacy skills for our students.

Biographical Statement

John De Mado has co-authored several language acquisition textbook programs. He also writes and performs Spanish and French raps designed to help students at various levels to acquire vocabulary and important idiomatic expressions. John is an educational consultant. www.demado-seminars.com

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