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Improving Proficiency through Learner-Centered Instruction

Umit Ferguson

As Liskin-Gasparro (1984) stated in the germinal text Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle*, proficiency is "the ability to function effectively in the target language in real-life contexts" (Pg.12). Those who teach for proficiency within a learner-centered context do not view learning outcomes as dependent upon what the teacher presents but perceive learning outcomes as an interactive result of what information is presented and how the students process that information.*

First, this article will present a short literature review. Next, it will present the author's reflections on learner-centered instruction and, finally it will discuss a case study.

Literature Review

The key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners where learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught, whereas in a curriculum based on the traditional ends means model, a fixed series of steps is followed. Thus, in the curriculum planning process proposed by Taba (1962), planning, implementation, and evaluation objectives, materials, and methodology are made before there is any encounter between teacher and learner. (Nunan, The learner-centered curriculum, page 2).

Learning- centered classrooms are those in which learners are actively involved in their own learning process (Nunan and Brindley 1986). A key aim of a learner-centered curriculum is to assist learners to use the target language for communicative purposes outside the classroom. It is also important to encourage students to make links between classroom learning and outside language use and to stimulate them to use the language as much as possible outside the classroom. Learner-centeredness in the learning process should contain domain awareness (learners identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies), involvement (learners make choices among a range of options), intervention (learners modify and adapt tasks), and creation (learners create their own tasks) or transcendence (learners become linguists or researchers) (Nunan, 1995).

A proficiency-oriented language curriculum is not one which sets out to teach learners linguistic or communicative competence, but it is organized around particular kinds of communicative tasks the learners need to master, and the skills and behaviors needed to accomplish them. The goal of proficiency-based curriculum is not to provide opportunities for the learners to acquire the target language, but to enable learners to develop the skills needed to use language for specific purposes (Richards, 1985).

The learners' classroom experiences include their overall goals and intentions, their interests, their background and previous experiences, and their view of how and what is going on in the class relates to their overall situation and out of classroom life. The teacher's view of what a learner is getting out of a lesson may be different from the learner's view. (Woods)

As a language teacher for 23 years, I have experienced a wide range of students who demonstrated different learning styles, interests and pacing needs. During those years I experienced that every student had his or her own way of receiving and digesting the knowledge they got from me. This experience taught me not to expect the same results and successes from every student. The challenging part of my job, of course, was in preparing suitable teaching plans, which would meet every student's needs.

By designing my teaching activities to take into consideration my students' different ways of understanding, their different learning styles, their different interests and learning pace, I was able to make a difference in their success. I had a hard time creating the connection between my students and myself until I began counseling them and learnt what was really on their minds.

One could argue that it is difficult to guess another's feelings and thoughts. By opening communications with them you begin to build not only an understanding of them but also a relationship with them. Being a teacher is being in relationship with your students. To build this relationship of understanding, you should communicate openly, be open to each other, and respect each other's feelings and opinions. For example, if your student tells you that he or she is frustrated when he or she does not understand something you teach, that does not mean that you don't teach her or him well and you should not take it personally. Your student's frustration shows that he or she needs your help to solve the problem. As your students don't know what to do and how to handle their frustration, as a leader you should give him or her some suggestions to solve his or her problem. I realized that counseling is the best way to understand what is really going on with your student and help you to decide what kind of suggestions and tools as learning strategies you can give your student to help him or her. Counseling will guide you like a light to reach your student and build a strong connection and trust between you and your student. Your student will feel that you are really ready to listen to him or her and to help him or her, and will not feel that he or she is alone with his or her long and challenging learning process. As soon as you build trust between yourself and your student, you can expect quick improvements.

I believe that communication is a bridge between you and your student. I also have experienced that encouragement allows your students to believe that everything is possible with patience, commitment and faith in their success.

Reflections on Teacher Centered Instruction versus Learner Centered Instruction

Our students at the Defense Language Instititute Foreign Language Center are coming from a behaviorist-oriented education system in which knowledge is gathered in a curriculum guide, in a textbook or, in a teaching plan. Then, the teacher puts that information into the heads of his or her students. Later, the teacher expects his or her students to remember the acquired knowledge and, often to apply it in imaginary, instead of in real life situations. The teacher rarely provides his or her students actual practice in solving problems they will face in life. In this type of teacher-centered and fronted instruction, most students acquire, understand, remember and apply passively- acquired learning. The students adapt themselves to this paradigm and start becoming passive receptors of partially understood information. They just believe in right answers to the questions, they wait for their teacher's instructions, for the correct stimulus or reaction with the learned response but without thinking, judging, or commenting. The teacher invites the students to expect an external reward and invites them to follow him or her to do as he or she does. The teacher determines the sequence of information leading to reformulated instructional outcomes. The teacher then wonders why the students are often apathetic, why they do not think for themselves, why they fail to use what they have been learning in one circumstance to solve problems in another circumstances, why they are extrinsically motivated rather than self activated, and why the best students can not often function independently and linguistically in the real world.

In this teacher-centered instruction the teacher focuses on the act of teaching, objectives, methods, and evaluation, and not on the act of learning. The teacher thinks

that he/she has taught well, but he/she does not think whether the students have learned well or not. The teacher acts as if his/her students are not human beings with different personalities, interests, and preferences, blaming them when they refuse to react properly. The teacher sets the curriculum, makes the presentations, assigns readings and exercises, and designs the tests. The students listen, study, practice and exhibit specified behaviors. The teacher treats all students in the same way; when they do not all react in the same way, the teacher blames their failures on their differences.

Our job as language teachers at DLIFLC is challenging because we help the students who are accustomed to teacher-centered or fronted instruction to change the way they are used to learning, give them opportunities to choose their own preferences, help them to improve their level of proficiency and become independent, real-life problem solvers. When I speak of proficiency, I am not referring to knowledge of a language, which includes abstract, mental, and unobservable abilities. I am referring to performance or observable and measurable behaviors. As you know, competence refers to what we know about the rules of use and the rules of speaking a language, but proficiency refers to how well we can use such rules in communication for real-world tasks with reference to specific situations, settings, purposes, and activities.

As language teachers, we should set goals, which will relate to the teaching of specific language skills and other goals, which will relate to the development of learning skills. These goals will assist learner's identifying their own preferred ways of learning, developing skills needed to follow the curriculum, encouraging them to set their own objectives, and realistic goals and, developing learner's skills in self evaluation.

We can view our students as active processors of information who can develop new and creative ways of both defining the stimulus and selecting an appropriate response, who can set their goals, acquire and build information into cognitive structures, and apply new ideas to varied problems in multiple settings and situations (Gardner, 1991). Instead of thinking that there is only one correct answer and one single way to solve problems, we can give our students the opportunity to be active meaning makers who understand that there are multiple applications and ways to solve problems. If we can be facilitators instead of being prime actors in the learning process, students can actively create mental representations of external facts and personal patterns of understanding.

Learning is a process of active exploration, adaptation and meaning making. Learning involves constructing individual meaning. The student does the learning, so he/she is the active player in the learning process. The teacher is only a facilitator of the student's own learning. Of course, the new facts and information must be presented by the teacher, however, the learner himself or herself must be allowed and encouraged to play with the new knowledge, to make interconnections, see patterns, build understanding, and actively apply and test understanding in multiple situations just as we do in the proficiency level.

If we fail to promote our students active exploration of knowledge and idea-making, we will inhibit their deeper understanding. If we do not facilitate our students creating their own meanings, learning is not as meaningful. Learning really means to become independent decision makers for different real-life situations.

If we fail to provide opportunities to use new ideas in practical applications, we will force them to conclude that the learning process is essentially unrelated to the real world. If we don't facilitate our students in the acts of making their own meanings we will teach them that learning is not meaningful, and we won't be able to bring them to the level of proficiency, which really means learning to be independent decision makers for different real life situations.

Moving away from a Teacher-Centered Curriculum and Instruction: A Case Study

Background Information

My student was a successful Major with a lot of experience in taking over a flying class as an instructor, working in the personnel department for the Air Force and in solving problem situations. He came to DLIFLC to learn Turkish because he was appointed to a responsible position that would require language proficiency mostly in reading, listening, and speaking Turkish in Turkey.

In the course of class activities, counseling and interviewing him, I learned more information about him. He studied Spanish when he was a student in high school, but he did not like learning it. He found it difficult to learn a foreign language, because of a lot of ambiguities, guesses, and taking risks. His major was math and science. In college he studied economics and political science. He had a Masters in Economics. His education was based on studying about rational subjects and solving problems with the given options and solutions. It was easy for him to get the knowledge and go to a solution by using that given knowledge so he became a successful student. He did not have to study hard because he learned everything at school. He did not have any particular study habits or strategies. While learning Spanish at school, he could not correlate any of the information about Spanish grammar with the grammar in his native language because he did not have any idea about English grammar.

He started his second experience in learning another foreign language in DLIFLC because of career motivations, but after his second and third week at school he said that before he had never encountered a problem for which he could not find any practical solution. He said that he learned Spanish in high school, but his early experience in learning a foreign language did not help him at all. He explained that Turkish was a very different language which had a completely different word order than any other European language and which had a sentence structure by conjugating the suffixes one after the other. He felt frustrated because he had never felt failure and embarrassment in a class before. He was a perfectionist, so he felt embarrassed when he could not do well in class. Despite the fact that he was very successful at school and at work before, he felt trapped and stuck at learning Turkish, and he could not solve this problem. He did not know how to handle his failure and his frustration.

After the eighth week of language learning he was not making good progress, and he felt he was holding his classmates back with his endless questions in class. He was in a class where students had a variety of language learning abilities. He started to express his concern that he would not achieve the level of language he needed for his profession and for the proficiency test at the end of his school year, because he did not have the ability to learn languages. As his teacher, I felt a lot of increasing frustration in him and lack of motivation during the last month and I wanted to find a solution for his problem.

Diagnosis

I observed him during class activities. From the first weeks he had a lot of trouble getting the big picture in reading and listening activities. He also had trouble in understanding and correlating the forms in Turkish with the forms in English because of his not being aware of the forms in his own language. When the curriculum followed the textbook closely and the teacher gave all the instructions he worked steadily and systematically. He readily performed the drills and exercises in the textbook and the workbook but he felt uncomfortable when he was asked to participate in open-ended questions, role-plays, summaries, or making up stories.

He became very upset when too many new words were introduced in an hour lesson. He mistranslated the sentences, because he assumed that every English word

would have a close equivalent in Turkish. He did not like any conversational risks in Turkish, because he was worried about making mistakes or of taking too much time to form the sentence in his mind perfectly before speaking.

He wrote each word on a flash card but he did not retain them after studying them because he did not use them in sentences and learn them in context. He memorized the words for short memory, but he thought that it was too much work to use them in sentences.

He was an analytical, visual, close and sequential learner. He broke the whole, the big picture, into component parts. He preferred to see the details and structure first, although he had no grammatical foundation in his own language. He wanted to learn why the sentence was formed in that way, instead of trying to get the information, what the meaning of the sentence was more than its form. He liked to get the information in a certain order in a predictable way to feel comfortable.

He concentrated on grammar details, because he wanted to be accurate. He did not feel worried about taking risks, for making mistakes when he was asked to guess the topic or the meaning or to use his own comments and ideas. He took notes, liked pattern categories, and organization of information. He focused on concrete facts in an organized step-by-step manner. He needed clarity, clearly-stated objectives and explicit instructions. He was a task- or a product-oriented person, so he got the job done in a certain way if it was assigned to him. He wanted to follow an externally provided order of processing (curriculum, textbook, or teacher) and preferred to do one thing at a time. He wanted to study rules, and then practiced applying them to examples, but after they had been explained clearly to him. That's why he liked having handouts about structures, and examples about them given by the teachers. He was not willing to take risks and learn from his errors because he wanted to be perfect with the help of his teachers' tight control on him. He was not able to handle spontaneity well, because he needed time to process new material and information. He avoided more free flowing communicative activities and compensatory strategies, such as summarizing and paraphrasing. He was a visual learner, so he wants to see words and sentences or instructions on the board. He was behind global type of learners, and did poorly on listening and speaking. He experienced anxiety at having to perform in front of his classmates, because of his efforts to be perfect.

In my interview with him I asked how his learning process was going, how he felt in class, if he had any other strategy to study efficiently or not, how I could help him, and so on. During the interview I tried to diagnose his problem by getting a lot of information and data from him. After our interview I saw that he did not understand English grammar that well, so he could not render learning Turkish, and he found Turkish difficult to learn. He said he did not put in sufficient time and effort to study efficiently, because he lost his motivation and he did not know what to do. He had no particular way of studying or strategy for better learning. He knew that he had to listen to a listening passage once all the way through, but he stopped at every word he did not know, so he missed the rest of the text. He focused on individual words, but did not focus on the words he knew.

He admitted he had to change that, but he had not done it yet. He said he forgot the new words after memorizing them because he did not use them in sentences. He thought that his weak area was speaking, but he did not practice Turkish outside class, although there was a Turkish community living in Monterey and there were Turkish officers in Navy School. He said he was aware that language learning involved taking risks and making mistakes, but he was unable to stretch or be flexible outside of his strong learning preferences.

Remedy

First of all, I tried to give him encouragement for his lack of self-confidence and hope that there was always a solution. It is never too late to change things or make them better. I told him we could bring him to the level he wanted to be, if he really

wanted to learn Turkish well, tried hard, and trusted the ways and strategies I would suggest. He said he wanted to try hard and learn it better. He did not give up, which was a good start to change things. As he had not found his best way to learn and study before we worked on choosing the strategies which would work for him. I wanted to use his analytic type of learning process to build up his motivation and to demonstrate to him that he really could do something, and that he could improve. For example, he liked grammar forms and writing example sentences with the new forms he had learned. I told him to write sentences with the new words he had learned and later I told him to write a paragraph by using those words.

He started to link and associates his vocabulary and structure with information he already knew. After a while, I asked him to translate a news item from English to Turkish at home, underline the new words and find their synonyms for his classmates. I asked him to present his article to his classmates and to be prepared to answer his classmates' questions. He felt more confident performing in front of others as he took his time at home to prepare a perfect work as he decreased the chances of making a mistake in front of the others. For listening, first, I told him to read an article from his textbook, anything he liked, and record his reading on a cassette tape. I asked him to listen to himself without looking at the text, his book closed. I wanted him to feel comfortable to listening to his voice, instead of listening to a native speaker and not understanding anything and feeling frustrated. I asked him to write what he listened to, summarizing the text. Later, I gave him some strategies on how to listen efficiently and how to get the broad meaning of the text. I told him not to stop at the words he did not know, but go on listening to the end and to try to guess the meaning with the help of the words he already knew.

I encouraged him to listen to Turkish CNN or Turkish TV, although it seemed to be very difficult for him to understand, just to get used to getting an idea about the topic. As he liked grammar forms a lot and he felt in safe with them, I used this to his advantage. I gave him a diary and asked him to write about his day or weekend, using the forms that he had learned so far. He enjoyed writing about his life. I also asked him to read the texts and get the idea about the topic first, and then analyze the forms in the text later.

I asked him to look at the word endings and write down the rule when that ending was used and continue until he got through the text and compared his conclusions about the grammar points with the textbook. I wanted him to see if he learned the form or if he still needed more practice for his self-control. I also suggested creating dialogues out of the reading texts, and finding someone, either his teacher or an advanced student to help him to correct his dialogue. Later, I asked him to act out his dialogue with one of his classmates by adding lots of gesturing and body movement for fun.

He was a dependant learner, so I tried to help him to become an independent learner. For more speaking practice at home, I suggested he look at a previous chapter or a known reading, or listening to text or a role play. I told him to turn the text over and turn on his tape recorder. I told him to start speaking and speak for at least 2 minutes without stopping. I suggested he force himself to speak longer each day. I advised him to find some Turkish filling words, which would help him when he needed some time to think while speaking fluently. Vocabulary learning was a big challenge for him. I suggested for him to use the same flash cards for new words, but I told him to write a sentence by using the new word on the other side of his flash card. I also suggested reading the sentence and acting it out in any way he liked. I told him that the more dramas and actions he added to it, the more he would remember it later. Whenever he studied words from his flash cards, he would see the word in a sentence, and remembered the action he did for it, so this would help him to retain the words.

He was worried about not understanding the information in class well, so I suggested previewing lessons for the next day. Although he was an adult and knew what his responsibilities were as a student, he needed the teacher's control and leadership. I checked his assignments and asked what he did for practice everyday. I never used discouraging comments about his work while correcting his mistakes on his assignments.

I gave him encouraging words about his work and I made him believe in himself and his improvement.

I followed his progress and checked his learning performance, and continued to council him when he needed it.

After working closely with this student during the school year, he passed all of his exams and he gained the confidence that he could communicate with anyone he needed to, both at his work place and in the local Turkish community.

After having experiences in teaching a foreign language, English in my country and my native language here in DLIFLC, I believe that language teachers should think less about lecturing and more about the learning process for different individuals who have different learning styles and who use the language they learn in different real life situations. Language learning is life itself, and proficiency is adapting the information given into the daily life situations.

I would like to finish with a saying; "What you sow, you reap". We teachers have a huge opportunity to work with whatever is given to us and bring forth growth with our patience, knowledge, experience, and vision. Our job can be very challenging but challenge is good for our own growth.

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The Articulatory Positions for the Korean Vowels

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In the first week of the 63-week Korean Basic Course at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), one of the difficulties new students encounter is sound discrimination. When the first eight vowels are introduced, the students struggle with difficult foreign sounds and instructors employ various teaching methods in order to teach students correct vowel articulation. This article will highlight some of the difficulties students experience in learning sound discrimination of the vowels and provide the required articulatory positions of vocal organs to produce them.

Are Korean Vowels Identical to their Corresponding English Vowels in Pronunciation?

Many foreign language learners, especially second-language learners, tend to rely on their native languages in an attempt to easily facilitate their target language acquisition. Students at DLIFLC are not exceptions, at least in their first few weeks. They transcribe Korean vowels into their corresponding English alphabets, which is detrimental to their learning process. Instructors employ various teaching methods in order to help students learn the articulation of the Korean sounds, one of which provides English transcripts under the Korean vowels. The following are some of the Korean vowels with the English transcripts excerpted from a supplemental material:

ㅏ	ㅓ	ㅗ	ㅜ	ㅡ	ㅣ
ah	uh	oh	woo	u	i

In the above example, the English letter, "u," is assigned under both "ㅓ" and "ㅡ," which are phonemes in the Korean language. Compare the following:

a.	dəˡlda	덜다	"to subtract"
	dü²lda	들다	"to lift, to cost"
b.	dərəjuda	덜어주다	"to take out for someone"
	dürəjuda	들어주다	"to comply with"
c.	gənsahada	건사하다	"to manage"
	günsahada	근사하다	"to be approximate"

The above examples illustrate that the two vowel sounds contrast. Moreover, the English vowel sound "u" is different from both "ㅓ" and "ㅡ" and the former is [+ rounded][3] and [+tense][4] while the latter, both [-rounded] and [-tense]. Consequently, the position of articulation in the vocal organs for "u" differs from those of "ㅓ" and "ㅡ." Referring to the English transcripts on the previous page, the first three vowels are rendered phonetically in English with an "h" and by placing an "h" following each of these vowels, the pronunciations of these vowels are significantly affected. Obviously, "a" differs from "ah" with regard to pronunciation. Ladefoged (1975) analyzes "h" as "from an articulatory point of view it is simply the voiceless counterpart of the following vowel." In many environments, it is a consonant even when it precedes vowels: "hot," "honey," "comprehend."

Students who rely on the English transcripts under the Korean vowels would transcribe the Korean words, [əməni] "어머니" "mother," [ənə] "언어" "language," and [hangang] "한강" "Han River" as [uhmuhni], [uhnuh], and [hahngahng] respectively, which are not even suitable English transcripts for Korean words, and therefore, "h" should not be ignored as an informal English transcription. Even without "h," "umuni," "unu," and "hangang" are not yet close to Korean pronunciations. When students read the English transcripts under the Korean vowels (and consonants), the instructors find it difficult to discern what they are reading, as the students depend on their English transcripts in order to exact in what they think is the proper pronunciation.

How Much Alike Is "Like"?

The Korean vowel "이" differs from the English counterpart, "i" in height, as illustrated in KIU (*The Korean Introductory Unit*) which introduces the vowel as "이 like ee in feet," which indicates that long vowels are normally higher than their shorter counterparts. If we compare the two English vowels, "heed" and "hid," it is easily noticeable that the former is longer and tensed and therefore higher than the latter. In other words, the English "i" is lower than "이". Only the long vowel "ee" is like "이v" except for its length, and in terms of articulatory positions in the vocal organs, it can be said to share the same high-front category. However, the position of "i" is lower and more centralized than "이." More on this will follow.

The "like"method attempts to extract Korean sounds from their English counterparts, but, in fact, it extracts English sounds for their Korean counterparts from English words like "으 like <u>oo</u> in "book" and "어 like <u>u</u> in "sun." In comparing the two vowels, 으 in "으레" (habitually) and "oo" in "book," the difference is readily perceptible, at least for the native Korean: the former is higher than the latter in articulation. In the acoustic analyses, "while Korean includes a high mid-back unrounded vowel /ɨ/[5],English does not"(Ji Eun Kim and David J. Shilva 2003). In English <u>u</u> in "sun" can be either [sən], [sʌn], or both depending on dialects. What if students transcribe and pronounce [ʌmʌmi] for [əməni] "mother"? Between L1 and L2 vowels, there are rarely exact phonetic similarities (Yang 1996). Again, in a narrow description, not even one Korean vowel sound has an exact English counterpart.

Myŏngdo's Korean maintains that "웨" and "외" as [we] are the same in pronunciation as does the KIU, which analyzes the two vowels as "웨 semi-vowel w + 에 mid-front ur"and "외 [we] semi-vowel w + 에 mid-front ur," and it rationalizes its analysis as follows:

> The distinction between (**word missing -gillett**) and 애 is being lost among the young generation in standard Korean. Those older than 40 years of age still maintain the distinction but those younger than 40 do not, particularly in casual speech.

KIU extracts two more English sounds by way of "like" (principle) : "애'" like <u>a</u> in "add"and "에" like <u>e</u> in "end." Its pronunciation guide describes, "왜" w + 애 and "웨" w + 에." and goes on to say ""외" and "웨" are pronounced the same." The semi-vowel, w, is excluded from the following discussion because both of the vowels share said vowel sound. Compare the following:

a. [meda] 메다 "to carry something on one's shoulder or back"
   [mæda] 매다 "to tie"

b. [ge] 게 "a crab"
   [gæ] 개 "a dog"

c. [beda] 베다 "to cut"
   [bæda] 배다 "to conceive"

The examples above illustrate that the two vowels are distinctive as different phonemes and even *Myŏngdo's Korean*, in contradiction to its analysis above, acknowledges that they are different vowels by placing "ㅔ" in the mid-front and "ㅐ" in the low-front positions respectively in its Korean Sound System. The Korean /e/ corresponds to a phonetic value lower than English /e/ and higher than English /ɛ/, while the Korean /ɛ/ is lower than the English /ɛ/ and higher than the English /æ/ (Ku 1998). Languages change, but because of a regional or generational dialect, a phoneme cannot be eliminated from a language nor merged with another one. If the low-front vowel "애," "æ" merged with the mid-front vowel,"에" "e," there would be no distinction between "네것" [negət] "your thing"(yours) and "내것," [nægət], "my thing" (mine) and only "네것" "yours" would remain for both "your" and "mine." Moreover foreign language institutes such as DLI do not teach generational dialects nor colloquialisms but exclusively teach standard dialects.

Articulatory Positions for the Korean Vowels

Categorization of the Korean Vowels

As discussed earlier, most Korean vowels, if not all, are not identical to their corresponding English vowels nor even to the phonetic signs of the IPA. *Speaking Korean* describes the distinction as "… the position of the tongue for Korean vowels is slightly higher than those corresponding English ones" and provides examples:

> "ㅔ /e/ - the tense mid-front unrounded vowel /e/ is always short. It is slightly higher than /e/ in English "let.".." "ㅐ /ɛ/ the open (lax) low-front unrounded vowel /ɛ/ in Korean is particularly either short or long.

It is slightly higher than /e/ in English "action". The sound corresponding to /ɛ/ in English "action" does not exist." and then presents its vowel chart:

	Front	Central	Back
High:	ㅣ i ㅟ ü	ㅡ ŭ	ㅜ u
Mid:	ㅔ e ㅚ ö	ㅓ ə	ㅗ o
Low:	ㅐ ɛ	ㅏ a	

Figure 1. *Vowel Chart*

This chart does not specify:

a. The distinction between the Korean vowel "이" and its corresponding English vowel "i" in "hid." The latter should be placed lower than "이" a little centralized in the high-front position.
b. The distinction between "아" and "a," which are placed in the low-front and the low-central positions. The KIU describes the two vowels as ""아" like "a" in "father." *Speaking Korean* analyzes the distinction of the two vowels as "아 /a/ the low-central unrounded vowel, slightly higher than "a" in the English "arm.""
c. The difference between the high-front vowel and the high-back as the former is higher than the latter.

The Korean vowel chart of *Myŏngdo's Korean* is identical to that of the *Speaking Korean* except for the vertical slanting line for the front vowels which illustrates a biological phenomenon: as the front-vowels go down, the tongue also lowers its position towards the lower and central positions.

Thus the mid-front vowel is closer to the mid-central than the high-front vowel and the low-front vowel is closer to the low-central position than the mid-front vowel.

The following chart compensates for the shortcomings present in those of *Myŏngdo's Korean* and *Speaking Korean*:

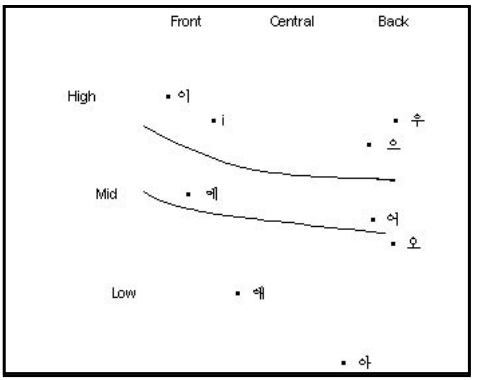

Figure 2. *Detailed Vowel Chart*

This chart illustrates that

a. Even though both "이" and "우" are high vowels, the high-front vowel "이" is higher than the high-back vowel "우."
b. "이" is higher than "i" in "hid" because the former is [+tense] like "ee" in "feet" and the latter, a lax vowel, which is normally lower and centralized.
c. The high-back vowel "우" is [+tense] and "으," [-tense] and therefore lower than the former and more centralized.
d. The distinction between "웨" and we (semi-vowel + 에) and "외" wæ (semi-vowel + 애) and the voicing of the former starts from the high-back position and ends at the mid-front position and that of the latter starts from the mid-back position and ends at the low-front position, which elucidates that "e" in "we" and "æ" in "wæ" are distinctive.

It is a common practice that foreign language textbooks like the ones cited above present the charts or descriptions of vowels and consonants which identify and categorize phonemes. Ji Eun Kim and David J. Silva (2003) propose "awareness of phonemic distinctions via listening and guided pronunciation exercises," but the categorization of phonemes alone cannot satisfy the "awareness of phonemic distinctions"

Articulation of the Korean Vowels

Vowels can be described in terms of three factors: (1) the height of the body of the tongue; (2) the front-back positions of the tongue; (3) the degree of lip rounding.

For details see Figure 3. The numbers on this figure indicate the positions in the sketch of the vocal organs where the vowels are articulated:

1. "이" Narrow the outgoing airstream by raising the front of the tongue all the way towards the hard palate and the alveolar ridge.
2. "에" Lower the front of the tongue half way down from the position of "이."
3. "애" Lower the front of the tongue all the way down from the position of "에."

4. "우" Narrow the airstream by raising the back of the tongue towards the soft palate with lip-rounding. The height of this vowel is approximately the same as that of the mid front vowel.
5. "으" This is a lax and unrounded version of "우," which is automatically centralized.
6. "어" Lower the back of the tongue half way from the position of "우."
7. "오" Lower the back of the tongue all the way down but it should not be centralized.
8. "아" Lower the back of the tongue all the way down until it is centralized.

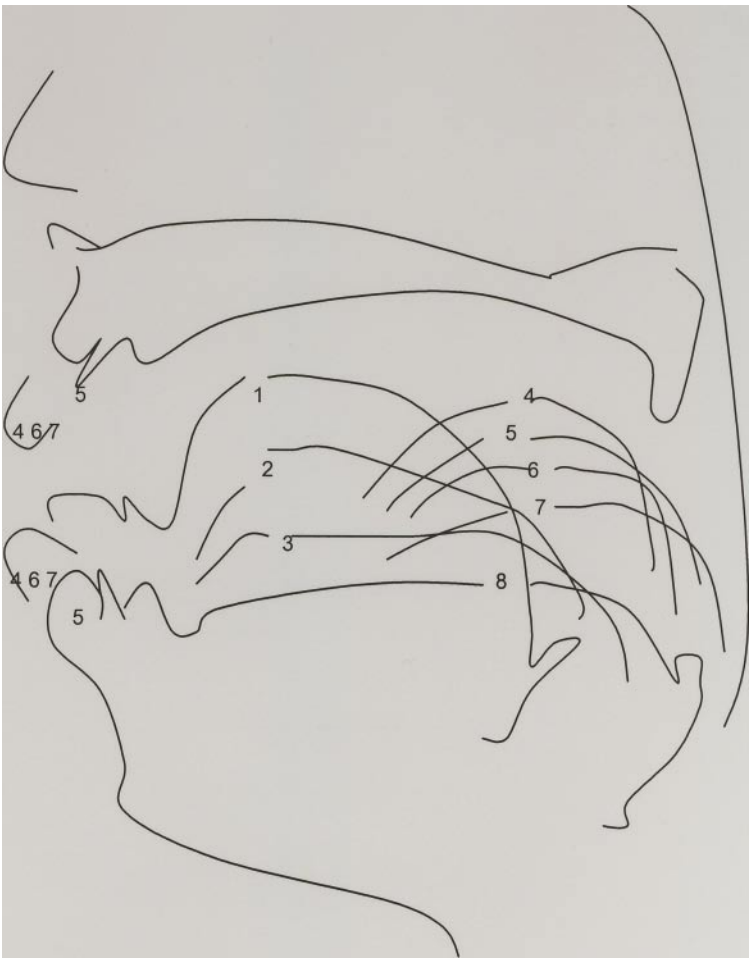

Figure 3. *Vocal Organs used in Vowel Ariculation*

The articulatory positions of the vowels in the charts are based on the biological function of the vocal organs. In order to lower the front of the tongue from the position of the high-front vowel, "이" to articulate the mid-front vowel, "에," the front of the tongue and the jaw simultaneously lower themselves because the two movements are inseparable. Again, in order to articulate the low-front vowel, the front of the tongue goes down from the mid-front tongue position and so does the jaw. This condition is present with the back vowels as well.

Application of the Charts and the Descriptions

In order to optimize the charts and the descriptions, the shapes (the curved lines) of the tongue positions in the charts should be presented on the Smartboard or on an over-head projector, so that students can visualize the shapes of the tongue and imitate them. It is more effective to project one or two at a time for better focus. When the shape of the tongue for "이" (#1), for example, is projected on the screen of the Smartboard, students easily realize how close the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate. It is more productive when accompanied by the shape for English, "i" in "milk," with which students can visualize the difference of the two vowels in height even though both of the vowel sounds are categorized as high-front vowels. The projection will confirm that the English transcription of Korean vowel sounds is inaccurate and not a practical alternative to eliciting correct vowel pronunciation.

The most formidable challenge students encounter in the course of learning the Korean vowel sounds system is the discrimination of mid vowels and low vowels. As there has been significant discussion on how to distinguish these vowel sounds (from each other), the underlying problem is that these two groups of vowel sounds are acoustically similar.

Ji Eun Kim and David J Silva (2003) conclude that students' awareness of the relevant phonemic distinctions is raised both, via listening exercises via guided pronunciation exercises. Up until this point, students would do listening and pronunciation exercises in the classrooms but only via the "Repeat after me" method. Even students who are in the final stages of their learning objectives are still unable differentiate the distinctions between these two groups of vowels. In fact, they have created their own terminology showcasing their inability to discriminate such sounds: "side O" and "bottom O" for "어" and "오"respectively because to students the acoustic value of the two vowels is simply "O" and when checking spellings, they ask, "Is it a side 'O' or a bottom 'O'?" When the two shapes of the tongue positions of the vowels are projected, students not only can compare the two vowels in height but also learn where and how the two vowels are produced. It becomes more effective when accompanied by instructors' model articulation for the vowels.

With the chart of the *articulatory* positions and the descriptions, students now clearly understand instructors" instructions, such as "Raise your tongue position" and "Lower the front of your tongue," etc., with which not only instructors can correct students" incorrect pronunciations but also students can correct themselves in terms of what, how, and where by utilizing the charts presented conveniently on the viewing screen.

Conclusion

The Korean vowels are different from their English counterparts in height More specifically, the positions of the tongue for Korean vowels are generally higher than their corresponding English ones and therefore the English transcription of Korean vowels is apt to mislead students. If students are given English transcripts under the Korean vowels, not only do they read the English transcripts, but also, it tempts students, especially frustrated ones, to rely on the English transcripts as a crutch. It is a common practice that foreign language textbooks present the charts or the descriptions of articulatory positions of the vowels of their target languages but they merely provide the identification and the categorization of phonemes, which do not contribute to "awareness of phonemes" The three factors: the height of the tongue, the front-back positions of the tongue, and the degree of lip-rounding in the charts of the vocal organs and the descriptions demonstrate the places and manners of the vowel articulation, with which not only instructors are able to correct/adjust students' incorrect pronunciations but also students can correct their own flawed pronunciations as well.

Notes

[1] is a symbol of IPA (International Phonetic Alphabets), which will be used throughout this paper.
[2] "ü" is like an umlaut in "schün", "fun" in German, which is adapted here because English lacks its equivalent phoneme.
[3] is the Chomsky-Halle Feature System that indicates lip rounding for producing English, "u", "o", etc..
[4] is a tense vowel, which is produced with a deliberate, accurate, and maximally distinct gesture that involves considerable mascular effect; a lax vowel is produced rapidly and somewhat indistinctly.
[5] /ɨ/ and /ü/ are interchangeably used here.

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A Communicative Way of Teaching Structure: The Case of the pro-drop feature in Persian/Farsi

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This article addresses the issue of the pro-drop parameter, which specifies that languages vary with respect to whether they allow the deletion of pronouns in subject position. Persian / Farsi is a pro-drop language in which pronouns drop in subject position because it has a relatively rich agreement system. Nevertheless, an analysis of Persian discourse structure demonstrates that the distribution of null subjects vs lexical subjects is constrained not only by the inflectional system, but also by discursive factors as well as authenticity criteria. This article concludes with a set of interactive techniques for teaching Persian subject pronouns to speakers of English so that they can understand their form, meaning, and function.

Pro-drop Parameter

According to the Universal Grammar theory (Chomsky, 1981) the principles of Universal Grammar (UG) involve a set of properties with certain parameters. The pro-drop parameter is a parameter, which specifies that languages vary with respect to whether they allow the deletion of pronouns such as *I, you, he*, etc. in subject position. One group of languages, like Arabic Hebrew, Persian/Farsi, Spanish, Turkish, and Italian, Onondaga (an American Indian language of the Iroquoian family [cited in Baker, 1988]), allows the deletion of pronouns on grounds that their relatively rich agreement systems provide the *licensing conditions* and *identification conditions* (cited in Radford,1990, p. 201), which determine the distribution and interpretation of the understood or implicit pronouns. These languages are called pro-drop languages and exhibit the [+pro-drop] value of the parameter. Other languages such as English, French, or German, always require lexical subjects and represent the [- pro-drop] value of the parameter.

In the following table the sentence in English consists of an overt subject pronoun and a verb without an agreement inflection, while its counterpart in the pro-drop languages (except for Chinese and Japanese) contain a non-overt subject pronoun and an agreement inflection that indicates the person and number features unambiguously.

1-Non-pro-drop language	Pro-drop languages	
I speak *pro-speak	*pro sohbat mikon +am*	(Persian)
	pro habl-o	(Spanish)
	pro parl-o	(Italian)
	pro 'atakallam	(Arabic)
	pro konşuyor+um	(Turkish)
	pro shuo	(Chinese)
	pro hanashimasu	(Japanese)

A closer inspection of a wide-ranging survey of so-called pro-drop languages cross-linguistically reveals the fact that there is not a simple clear-cut distinction between languages that can always drop pronominal subjects e.g., Spanish and languages that never allow overt subject pronouns to be deleted e.g., English (Haegeman,1988).While in Persian and Spanish the null subject is relatively free and licensed by the rich agreement inflections, its distribution in Chinese and Japanese, (as cited in Haegeman, p.457), is highly constrained by discursive factors. In some other languages such as German and Scandinavian languages,(as cited in Haegeman, p.457) only null expletives are allowed. The issues related to cross-linguistic pro-drop typology lie outside the scope of this paper. Here our focus is on Persian which is a relatively free pro-drop language without any restrictions on tense and person.

In the published literature on parametric syntax the phonologically null pronominal subject has been designated as *pro* (small pro), which is not phonetically realized but has the same syntactic and semantic properties as overt pronouns and must be present in the syntactic configuration underlying the structure of the sentence. This null subject has the feature combination of [- anaphor, + pronominal. As a way of illustration, the missing subject such as, *man* ' I ' in an independent sentence as well as matrix and subordinate clauses in Persian may be represented informally as:

1. *pro xandid-am*
   pro laughed+1sg
   'I laughed.'
2. *pro goft-am* [*ke* *pro* *xandid-am*]
   pro said+1sing that pro laughed+1sg
   'I said that I laughed.'

In addition to personal pronouns, the expletive pronoun *in* 'this' is also deleted:

3*a*. *pro mohem ast* [*ke pro farsi yad begirim*]
pro important is that pro Farsi learning take+1pl
'It is important to learn Farsi.'
b. *pro goft-am* [*ke pro mohem ast farsi yad begirim*]
pro said+1sg that pro important is Farsi learning take+1pl
'I said that it is important to learn Farsi.'
(Notice that in Persian the expletive pronoun is a demonstrative.)

Although sentence (1) is a perfectly grammatical in which the finite verb *xand-id* agrees in number and person with its null first person singular subject, there exist certain pragmatic conditions under which the deletion of the pronoun will render the sentence pragmatically inappropriate because it lacks an overt subject pronoun. More specifically, [+ pro-drop] languages allow lexical pronouns to operate in subject position, with certain discourse constraints. For instance, we cannot use sentence (1) as a response to a wh-question like *Who laughed*? because specific wh-words require a phrasal response which is grammatically well-formed and pragmatically felicitous.

4. # pro xandid-am

It is reasonable to attribute the infelicity of sentence (4), shown by the mark #, to the fact that the subject pronoun is only overtly expressed under conditions where it is emphasized or contrasted. According to Haegeman (p.452), *pro* by virtue of being a null element can not be stressed.

In the previous part we put forward the hypothesis that Persian allows lexical pronouns to occur under certain pragmatic conditions. As a reference to these conditions, a traditional Persian grammarian named Khanlari (1994) argues that subject pronouns are all deleted in Persian except for pragmatic purposes such as, emphasis, contrast, salienc, disambiguation, etc. Moreover, he acrimoniously criticizes those translators who translate books from European languages [+ pro-drop languages] and retain the subject pronouns in their Persian renderings as they are used in the original languages. Interpreted in the essential spirit of UG, the translators transfer the parameter value of the source language to the parameter value of the target language (Persian). The example Khanalri has selected to illustrate his point is:

5. *jack az ruye sandali boland shod.* ***U*** *xaste bud.* ***U*** *beyad miavard ke tamame shab naxofte bud.* ***U*** *arameshi jostju mikard.*
Jack rose from his chair. He remembered that he had not slept the whole night. So, he was trying to rest for a while.

Khanlari (p. 349) asserts that overuse of the pronoun *u* 'he' in the above passage is an "awkward redundancy" and sounds counterintuitive to native speakers of Persian. The core fact of Khanlari's qualifying remark is that not only has a parameter value been carried over from English to Persian in (5), but also the translation displays violations of discourse constraints as well as authenticity criteria. Later in the paper, we will elaborate

on these concepts in the context of language pedagogy.

Along the same line of argument concerning pragmatic constraints, Weiman and Succar (1985:32) remark that in Spanish verbal endings like *–o*, *-amos*, etc. are sufficient to indicate 'I', 'we', etc. The pronouns are used for emphasis or clearness. For a description of similar discourse constraints, see the pro-drop languages in Comrie (1990).

First Language Acquisition

According to Radford (p. 20), the child's early grammatical development is traditionally divided into four main stages: prelinguistic , single- word , early multi-word, and multi-word. The pre-linguistic stage specifies the period before the development of the child's first words; the single-word stage is the period during which children's utterances consist of single words in isolation; during the early multi-word stage children begin to put two, three, or four words together to form productive syntactic structures; the later multi-word stage is the period during which structures of five, six, or seven words emerge.

As I (1988) have indicated, children acquiring Persian produce early multi-word utterances around the age of 20 months. Their utterances emerge as simple propositions in a general schematic form of *subject+ N*, with overt pronouns in subject position. Towards the end of this period, they begin to acquire verbs and produce sentences showing evidence of having set the pro-drop parameter in Persian. In addition, he becomes aware of some, if not all, pragmatic conditions under which the use of subject pronouns becomes an obligatory constituent of the sentence. These developmental stages may be illustrated below:

6. *man pool*
   I money
   'I money'

7. *man pool dar-am*
   I money have+1sg
   'I have money.'

8. *pro pool dar-am*
   pro money have+1sg
   'I have money.'

9a. *Mum: ki tup-ra zad?*
   Who ball+ACC hit
   'Who hit the ball?'

9b. *Child: man zad-am*
   I hit+1sg
   It was I who hit it.'

What is of particular interest to notice, en passant, is the fact that in (8-b) the over subject pronoun is used in a tonically stressed position that has emerged later in the process.

Instead of using a stressed NP constituent as in (9-b), an adult speaker of Persian may use an it-cleft construction conveying the same propositional content. Notice the following conversational exchange:

10a. *ki zendegiat-ra xarab kard?*
who life+your+ACC messed-up did
'Who messed up your life?'
10b. *man xod-am bud-am ke kard-am*
I self +1sg was+1sg that did+1g
'It was I myself who did it.'

With reference to whether or not some discourse functions of syntax are language-specific and constitute part of linguistic competence, Prince (1988) argues that the use of it-cleft construction with respect to a particular discourse function in English and its fairly literal counterparts in other languages such as, Yiddish, Russian, are universally acknowledged as confirming the same underlying principles governing the choice and syntactic form in relation to a particular discourse function and therefore must be language- specific and must have been acquired with the language. Indeed, the it-cleft construction in Persian is prima facie evidence that will lend a strong support to this hypothesis. However, it would be necessary to make a distinction between micro-focus construction such as an NP construction and a macro-focus-construction represented by an it-cleft construction The first language acquisition data in (6-9) provides evidence that certain universal principles are genetically prepared to emerge at a specific point in the developmental stages of L1 acquisition. While a child uses a tonically stressed NP constituent, and adult speaker uses its it-cleft analogue, which is, of course, syntactically more complex and emerges later in the process. It seems hard to believe that the topicalized subject pronoun in (9-b) has an unmistakably formulaic character about it and is of the receptive schematic form memorized by the child. Empirically, the facts seem to confirm the hypothesis that children acquire the micro-focus construction with the language as part of their linguistic competence.

Acquisition of Pro-drop

Having presented a brief outline of the child acquisition of the pro-drop parameter in Persian, we can now return to consider some issues associated with acquiring the [+pro-drop] parameter by adult learners of Spanish, which shares the same parameter value with Persian. The acquisition of the pro-drop parameter has been studied by many researchers in the field. Phinney (1987) and Liceras (1988), inter alia, have investigated the acquisition of Spanish (a pro-drop language) by speakers of a non-pro-drop one. The overall results of their investigations, as summarized by Gass and Schachter (1989), provide empirical support for the position that Spanish parameter has an unmarked status. In other words, Spanish speakers learning English have to reset the L1 unmarked option to the L2 marked parameter, and therefore more positive evidence is required to reset it. Moreover, in the case of English speakers learning Spanish, the pro-drop was well established both at the acceptance and the production level. Finally, going from Spanish (L1 unmarked) to English (L2 marked) should be difficult on the assumption that learning a marked value is empirically harder and requires additional

positive evidence to motivate it. On the contrary, going from English (L1 marked) to Spanish (L2 unmarked) should be fairly easier.

Although the above-mentioned results suggest that it is easier to reset from the English value of the parameter to the Spanish value, White (1989, p. 86) argues that the [+pro-drop] parameter is marked based on the kind of evidence required to reset it. It is absolutely clear that [- pro-drop] languages require lexical pronouns, while [+pro-drop] languages allow both null and lexical pronouns. Now if [- pro-drop] is the initial, unmarked value, it can be reset on the basis of simple positive evidence represented by sentences with null subjects.

Since Persian is a pro-drop language with no restrictions on tense and person (Soheili Esfahani 2000, p. 232) and requires both lexical and null subjects. This observation gives evidence for articulating a similar postulate to that proposed by White for Spanish and posit that Persian has a marked status too. Therefore, we subscribe to the [+pro-drop] Marked Hypothesis that stipulates simple positive evidence is required to switch to a marked value. This is in contrast to the [+pro-drop] Unmarked Hypothesis that requires specific positive evidence to reset to a marked option.

Interlanguage

The term 'interlanguage' refers to "the interim grammars by second-language learners on their way to the target language" (McLaughlin, 1986). One of the cognitive processes involved in L2 is transfer via which L1 value is applied to the L2 value. For instance, White (1985, 1986) has studied whether Spanish learners of English transfer the L1 value of the pro-drop parameter to the L2 they are learning. The results show that Spanish learners display discordant L2 acquisition patterns and accept sentences with an implicit subject are more likely than the French learners who constituted the control group in this study. This suggests that the value of Spanish has been carried over to English. When the L1 is English and L2 is Persian, or one of the other pro-drop languages, the student's interlanguage can not give a clear picture of the adoption of the inappropriate parameter value. The problem lies in the fact that pro-drop languages, as noted before, use both null and lexical pronouns. Further empirical evidence consistent with the above assumption comes from overuse of the first singular pronoun *man* 'I' by a student who is learning Persian at an intermediate level. We have selected the data from this level because more advanced students have acquired a certain amount of knowledge about L2. This knowledge may, mutatis mutandis, become a source of errors (O' Grady, et al., 1997), and provides a potentially rich source essential for the study of interlanguage, its nature, and its relation to both the source language and the target language.

11. *man dar sale 1982 be donya*
I in year 1982 to world
amadam. vaqti ***man*** *14 sale budam be*
came when I 14 year was to
dabirestan raftam. ***man*** *hich vaqt be daneshgah narafta pas*
high school went I no time to university notgo then
man *faqat diplom daram. hala* ***man*** *dar artesh hastam va sarbaz*
I only diploma have now I in army am and soldier
hastam. ***man*** *dar artes farsi yad migiram.*
am I in army farsi learning take
I was born in 1982. When I was 14 years old, I went to high school, I never attended university; therefore, I do not have a high school diploma. Now I am in the Army as a soldier and learn Persian.

In the above passage, which is skeletal autobiographical information, there are five instances of overuse of the pronoun 'I'. In a discourse context like this, a native speaker of Persian would intuitively use the first pronoun as a focus of attention in the first segment to introduce himself/herself and then uses null subjects that are referentially bound as variables by the first salient focus in the first utterance. (For the sake of expository consistence, we will use 'utterance' instead of sentence in dealing issues related to discourse analysis.)

With respect to overuse of subject pronouns in a [+ drop-language] interlanguage by students whose native language is [-pro-drop], White (1989, p. 86) argues that if native speakers of a [-pro-drop] language use pronouns in their interlanguage, this does not indicate that they have failed to reset the parameter. They may not have worked out the precise constraints that govern the use of null versus lexical pronouns. We can reinterpret White's remark as implying that the learners of a pro-drop language will develop a linguistic competence and become aware that the licensing and identification conditions of null subjects are recoverable from the verbal inflections but may lack a pragmatic competence to infer that (1) the same null subjects may be used to denote an entity whose reference is recoverable from the context, and (2) overt subject pronouns are used only and if only to denote whatever discourse constraints are at work. In other words, there are good reasons to believe that learners of a pro-drop language use overt pronouns free of discourse constraints on their identification in a discourse model. In consequence, where pragmatic knowledge does not suffice to enable learners to use null subjects pronouns they resort to their syntactic competence. Thus, it is worthwhile, theoretically and pedagogically, at this point to raise a question as to why students make discourse-level errors and show a conspicuous lack of success in working out the discourse constraints involved in the context. In order to find an answer to this question, we have to take an excursion into four areas: (1) the difference between core grammar and peripheral grammar in terms of markedness, (2) duality in the parameter value of Persian, (3) discourse structure, and (4) the issue of authenticity.

Unfortunately, these areas have not received the attention they deserve in situations where Persian is taught as a foreign/second language The rest of the paper will be an attempt to address these issues to the extent that they are crucially relevant to resolving the pedagogical aspect of teaching the pro-drop parameter of Persian to speakers of English, without elaborating on their theoretical concomitants or the

deductive consequences of the pro-drop parameter for the rest of the grammar, including subject-verb inversion, and that- t effect, etc.

A partial answer to the questions raised above may be found in the theory of markedness (Chomsky, 1981, 1986), which differentiates core grammar from peripheral grammar. Core grammar is an instantiation of the principles and parameters that are part of the child's genetic endowment. Peripheral grammar is the set of marked elements and constraints that are outside of core grammar and are exceptions or idiosyncratic features of the language. The underlying assumption being that the rules of core grammar are perceived to be unmarked (regular and frequent) and minimal exposure is required to learn them because they are predicated on a principle of UG. In contrast, the rules of peripheral grammar are thought to be marked (irregular and infrequent) and need to be learned on the basis of positive evidence of their existence in that language.

However, the difference between core grammar and peripheral grammar in terms of markedness is nor so straightforward. Based on L1 acquisition data as in (6-9) and overuse of lexical pronouns as shown in (11), we may tentatively propose a Two-pronged Value Hypothesis according to which the core grammar of Persian has an initial, unmarked value which is associated with the null subject. This is the value that the child learns with minimal exposure in the process of L1 acquisition. There is another marked value of the parameter that is acquired later on the basis of specific evidence concerning the discourse functions which, as we noted before, constitute part of the child's linguistic competence. There is no doubt that without the rules that govern how we construct discourses of various kinds and the constraints they impose on our communicative activities our language would be in a chaotic situation (Brown 1994).

In case our assumption is along the right lines, that leads us to the following paradigm of learning the pro-drop parameter of Persian. English speakers learning Persian as a foreign or second language will initially pick the unmarked [+ pro-drop] value of the parameter. This is the value that generates sentences with *pro* in subject position. On the other hand, the marked value is adopted on the basis of specific evidence that would comprise of a set of observed structures illustrating the application of discourse considerations In the absence of exclusive evidence for the marked value, the leaner should encounter difficulty as predicted by Eckman's Markedness Differential Hypothesis (as cited in Mclaughlin, p. 89). On the basis of a comparison of the first language and the target language, those areas of the target language that are marked than in the first language will be difficult.

Discourse Structure

Discourse analysis, as defined by Van Lier (1995), involves the study of the organization of language beyond the boundary of sentence or utterance level. Since discourse analysis is a highly controversial issue in the entire field of linguistics and denotes many fields (Prince,104), dealing with such an uncharted territory of rules and principles governing discourse analysis lies beyond the scope of this paper, but an important issue for the future research to address. What follows is an informal account of basic rules and conditions governing discourse constraints in the spirit of Centering Theory (as cited in Taboada, 2002) essential for understanding the functions and referential properties of null and lexical pronouns as they occur in a discourse structure in Persian.

Centering theory is primarily concerned with intersentential processes in which each utterance contains a most salient entity, which is called the 'center' of the utterance. This center represents the topic of the utterance. Furthermore, centers are often associated with prominent structural positions. For instance, subject positions are preferred locations of center over object or adverb positions. Thus, Centering is a theory of focus of attention in the discourse, and its relation to the choice of referring expressions. It provides rules and principles to explain how entities become focused as the discourse proceeds and, more importantly, how transitions from one focus to the next make the discourse coherent.

In a discourse context, there is a list of entities mentioned or evoked. First, we have the forward-looking center the first member of which is the preferred center. Second, there is the backward-looking center, which is the highest-ranked entity from the previous utterance repeated in the current utterance. In addition to the centers, there are different types of transitions, based on the relationship between the backward-looking centers, and the relationship of the looking-backward centers and the preferred centers of any given pair of utterances. Among others, CONTINUE is the transition in which the backward-looking center and the first member of the looking-forward center of the current utterance are the same.

With this brief theoretical outline which preserves the essential spirit of Centering theory, while eschewing some accompanying technical complications introduction, we will proceed to examine a written text and a dialogue in Persian to explore the anaphora resolution strategies used by the write in the former and the speaker in the latter. However, before embarking upon our discourse analysis, we have to familiarize ourselves with a couple of differentiating Persian syntactic properties prerequisite for understanding the discourse issues under consideration.

Persian is an SOV language. In this linear order the subject remains unmarked, and tends to be also the topic and no affix is used to identify the topic. The direct object takes the postposition –ra, and the finite verb agrees with its subject in person and number. Another salient property of Persian is that it shows a propensity for anaphoric pronouns rather than cataphoric pronouns for their productivity and referential transparency. Compare (12, a and b):

12a. *ali qazayash-ra xord va pro raft*
Ali food+his+ACC ate and pro left
'Ali ate his food and left.'

12b. *pro xord qazayash-ra va ali raft.*
pro ate food+his+ACC Ali left
'Ali ate his food and left.'

Notice that in (12a) the null subject *pro* sequentially follows its antecedent Ali in the first part of the sentence. In (12b), however, the null subject pronoun appears before its antecedent which occurs in the last part of the sentence.

In a discourse context, one of the entities serves as a referent / antecedent to which the pronoun refers. To figure out how anaphoric terms are linked to their referents is a process called amphora resolution, as indicated in the following:

13. John is married.
14. He has two kids.

The antecedent of a pronoun may come in the same sentence, or in the preceding sentence as in (14), or it may occur far back in other sentences as our text gets larger. In this kind of discourse, we envisage discourse as a series of segments where each segment is a stretch of discourse signaled by cue words or expressions such as, *ok*, *by the way*, *anyhow*, etc. In each segment there is an object which is the prime candidate for prononminal reference. Consider the following conversational exchange in which the pronoun *it* in the last sentence refers anaphorically back to the word *book* in the first sentence.

15. A: By the way, where should I put the **book**?
    B: Let's see. Put it on my desk.
    A: When I came home I found out that **it** had been misplaced.

Now let us consider how an Iranian columnist describes R. Reagan, the late president of the Unites States of America. The text is translated from a Persian journal, with overt and null subject pronouns as used in the language.

16. R. Reagan had a sincere tone, - wrote English fast, -could establish a good communicative relationship with his addressee, - showed a wonderful mastery of words,- and mixed his statements with irony---. He was wise and tactful.

In the above text, the author proceeds from establishing the NP expression (R. Reagan), which can be construed as a salient focus of attention. The first utterance is followed by a series of null subjects until we get to the last utterance. The transition is achieved by switching to the overt pronoun *I* in the last utterance. More specifically, the preferred center in the looking-forward list represents the looking-backward center, where the highest- ranked entity from the first utterance is realized as an overt pronoun in the current utterance.

The writer uses an overt subject in the last utterance for two reasons: (i) to continue the same topic of the discourse and (ii), more importantly, to provide the readers with specific characteristics of the president in this segment of the discourse.

Now, let us consider the dialogue.

17. Jones: *dishab* ***man*** *va khanom va agha va khanome Tabrizi raftim rasturane Khan Salar. Hame jur ghazaye Irani dashtand.* ***Man*** *va khanom chelo kabab khordim, agha va khanome Tabrizi chelo khoresh khordand. Namidanam chelo khoresh chetor bud vali chelo kababeshan ali bud. Musik Irani ham dashtand. Dekore rasturan kamelan Irani bud. Kheili jalaeb bud. Yek shab ba shoma miravim anja.*
    Smith: *Fekre khubi ast. Panj shanbe shab chetor ast?*
    Jones: *Mamulan panj shanbe va jom'a xeili shulugh ast. Shanbe barname darid?*
    Smith: *na, barname nadaram.*
    Jones: *Pas shanbe miravim.*
    Smith: *besyar khub.*

18. Jones: Last night my wife and *I* with Mr. and Mrs. Tabrizi went to Khansalar restaurant.

    They had all kinds of Iranian food. My wife and *I* had chelo kebab. Mr. Tabrizi and his wife had chelo khoresh. *I* don't know how the chelo khoresh was, but their chelo kebab was exellent. *They* also had Iranian music. The décor of the restaurant was entirely Iranian. *It* was very interesting.*We*'ll go there with you some night.

    Smith: *It* is a good idea. How about Thursday night?
    Jones: Usually *it*'s very crowded on Thursday and Friday. Do *you* have any plans for Saturday night?
    Smith: No. *I* don't have any plans.
    Jones: Then *we*'ll go on Saturday.
    Smith: Very well.

The Persian situational dialog involves a situation, where two families went to a restaurant for dinner. Initially, the speaker proceeds from using the first singular pronoun *man* 'I' as a salient focus of attention in a conjunct to introduce his family and himself. This segment of the discourse is followed by a null subject until we get to sentence (3) in which the same pronoun is used for the purpose of comparing the two families in terms of their food preference. From this location onward, the dialogue continues with null subject pronouns as well as the pleonastic pronoun *in* 'this'. Throughout the whole dialogue, the null subject pronoun anaphorically refers back to the subject in the first utterance. As for the relation of transition and the anaphoric term, *pro* marks the coherent continuation of the discourse topic. Similar reports have been reported for a corpus of dialogues in Spanish. (Taboada, p.181)

English, as noted before, is a non-pro-drop language with a SVO linear order in which the structural configuration of the sentence is considered to correspond closely to grammatical functions and to linear order. According to O'Grady et al. (p. 274), the subject of the sentence tends to function as the topic without a special affix to identify

the topic, as opposed to some languages like Chinese which makes the topic by *–wa*.

The major difference between English and Persian with respect to discourse structure may be attributed to the use of an overt pronoun as a focus of attention, or it may serve the function of reaffirming the topic in the current utterance. (Suri and McCoy,1993). While Persian uses an overt pronoun in a segment of discourse where a constraint is at work, English uses an overt pronoun merely as a cue for topic continuity (Almor, 2002). This difference is responsible for the discourse-level errors of English-speaking students learning Persian. These errors are likely to persist until students learn the discourse constraints and discourse mechanisms.

We can summarize the main points we have discussed regarding discourse structure in Persian and English in the following terms. The parametric variation between English and Persian with respect to their discourse structure may be attributed to the difference between reference salience and anaphoric explicitness. While Persian uses an overt pronoun in a segment of discourse when a constraint is at work, English uses the same pronoun for topic continuity (Almor, 2002), or reaffirming the present topic (Suri & McCoy, 1993). This difference is responsible for the discourse-level errors of English-speaking students learning Persian. These errors are likely to persist until students learn the underlying discourse structure and its full plan.

In addition to discourse problems, what is particularly problematic from our point of view about the translation in (5) and the autobiographical sketch in (11) is that they also show violations of issues related to authenticity. Although there may be no global and absolute notion of authenticity (Harmer, 1989), we can safely assume that overuse of subject pronouns in these texts does not reflect real use of language in the real world by native speakers of Persian. As a consequence, raising students' consciousness (Larsen-Freeman, 2003) about the authentic criteria of a text comes into play that will facilitate language acquisition in the sense of understanding the full range of expression used in the target language. In accordance with Harmer's proposal (p. 164), students should be given ample practice in reading and listening to texts that aim for 'semi-authentic' or 'user authenticity' that are appropriate to the current needs of the learners. The reading of such texts will help them to acquire the necessary skills they will need when they eventually come to tackle authentic materials in the real world.

Teaching Procedure

Having discussed the theoretical and pragmatic foundation of issues related to the nature and function of null and overt subject pronouns in Persian, we are now ready to consider a set of interactive techniques that provide students with positive evidence and, particularly, specific positive evidence to use both null and lexical subjects in appropriate contexts. By dint of the fact that [+ pro-drop] is an inherent parameter of Persian grammar, its values should be taught at the basic ILR proficiency levels (1/1+), where students are aware of basic cohesive features, namely, pronouns and verb inflections. By resetting the [+pro-drop] parameter of Persian as early as possible, English-speaking students will be able to speak and write Persian naturally and fluently without overusing or possibly underusing lexical pronouns. The exercises here are designed in such way as to focus on both fluency and accuracy as important goals to pursue communicative language teaching.

The goal of the first activity is to make students at elementary proficiency level **visionary** with respect to the syntactic and semantic relationships between overt pronouns and their corresponding verbal endings.

Stage 1: Students are told that they are going to work in pairs, A and B.

Stage 2: The teacher will put simple sentences containing all pronouns on cards appropriate for the students' reading ability at this level, including simple narratives of routine events and simple descriptions of people, places, or things.

Stage 3: Student A reads the sentence and discusses it with Student B to find the correlation between lexical pronouns and verbal inflections.

Stage 4: A representative from each pair announces the result.

Stage 5: The pairs get together to come to a consensus

Stage 6: When the group has reached a decision, the teacher and the class can conduct a feedback session to see what the pronouns and their verbal inflections are. (If the teacher uses past tenses, he/she should give students a chance to discover for themselves that the verbal inflection for the third singular person is a zero morpheme.)

Now students may put the results on a table, using a different color for each pronoun. Some examples for this stage of activities may be given as follows:

19. ***man*** *farsi yad migir-**am***
    I Farsi learning take+1 sg
    'I am learning Fasi.

20. ***ma*** *har shab dar manzel sham mixor-**im***
    we every night in home dinner eat+ 1pl
    'We eat dinner at home every night.

This activity is a great fun and produces a lot communicative output. The goal of the second activity is to make students **interactive**, that is, to make them react to certain events producing simple propositions without overt pronouns. Pictures, films, slides, photographs, and video clips may be used as a support for interactive techniques in this activity.

Stage 1: Students are told they will work in pairs.

Stage 2: The teacher shows the pairs a picture of some people engaged in a particular activity.

Stage 3: Each pair decides what the people are doing.

Stage 4: After a given time, the teacher asks a pair to read the sentence.

Stage 5: Other pairs can ask questions and challenge choices. Some representative examples for this stage are

21. *pro dar-**and** midav-**and***
    pro have+3pl run+3pl
    'They are running.'

22. *pro dar-**ad** qaza mixor-**ad***
    pro have+3sing food eat+3sg
    'He/she is eating.'

This activity may present problems with forming present progressive tense. If students form sentences using simple present tense as an alternative, the teacher should accept them because the focus is on inflections..

The goal of the last activity is to make students **creative** in order use overt pronouns under appropriate pragmatic conditions-emphasis, contrast, etc.

Stage 1: Students are told that they are going to work in small groups

Stage 2: The teacher may distribute some pictures of games, foods, fruits, items of clothing, colors, etc.

Stage 3: Each student in the group picks what he / she likes and asks other members whether or not they like the same thing.

Stage 4: When students have completed their conversations, the teacher leads a feedback session by asking the students whether or not they like the same thing.
Some examples for students to ask their group members and for the teacher to ask the class are:

23. *man footbal dust dar-am, to chetor?*
    I football liking have+1sg you how?
    'I like footall, what about you?'

24. *man angoor dust dar-am, to chetor?*
    I grapes liking have+1sg you how?
    'I like grapes, what about you?'

A suitable activity would be to divide the class into two equal groups and have the members of the first group engaged in doing something such as, opening the door, closing the window, etc. Then each member of the second group asks each member of the firs group who did what. Some examples:

25. *Ki dar-ra baz kard?*
    who door-ACC open made?
    'Who opened the door?'

26. ***man*** *dar-ra baz kard-am*
I door+ACC open made+1sg
‘ I open the door.’

27. ***u*** *dar-ra baz kard*
he/ she door+ACC open made
‘He / she opened the door.’

Alternative questions in pairs or small groups will work just as well for this purpose.

28. ***to*** *bolantar az u hasti ya* ***man****?*
you taller from he/she are or I?
‘Are you or I taller than him/ her?’
29. ***to*** *kutahtar az u hasti ya* ***man****?*
you shorter from he/she are or I?
‘Are you or I shorter than him/ her?’

This is an enjoyable activity and puts students in a realistic situation.

To teach other aspects of discourse constraints, it would be suitable to put students in pairs, A and B. Student A should give student B brief autobiographical information about age, education, marital status, etc. Student B does the same thing. When the pairs have finished their conversations, each member gives his / her partner’s information to the class. The teacher corrects the students’ discourse errors and puts them on the SmartBoard. At this point students should familiarize themselves with the discourse constraints that null and overt pronouns impose on their communicative attempts.

The goal of the extra-class activity is to make students **aware of** the overall functions of the pronouns in Persian. Students should look at an authentic text to write out sentences with and without overt pronouns. The activities proposed here give students an opportunity to integrate the four skills and classify their efforts in more meaningful tasks according to the DLIFLC’s goal. *which is to train linguists, assess their language ability, and sustain their language ability for their post-DLI assignments.*

Students should be able to justify the use of the firs singular pronoun *man* ’I’ in the first and the last sentence in this authentic passage.

30. ***man*** *dar yek xanevadeye motovaset be donya amadam. aqhle tehran hastam.az haman*
kudaki, mixastam dar jam’e doxtarha va zanha basham hamishe be soraqe lavazeme
arayeshe madaram mirafatm va suratamra rangina mikardam.
hameye hamsen va salane man futbal bazi mikardand vali ***man***
*tennis dust midashtam****.***

Conclusion

According to Universal Grammar theory, languages share certain principles that are invariable across languages and parameters, which vary from language to another

one such a parameter is the pro-drop parameter that divides languages into two groups with respect to whether they allow the deletion of pronouns in subject position. Based on theoretical considerations and empirical reasons with respect to first and second language acquisition, we proposed a Two-pronged Parameter Value according to which the pro-drop parameter of Persian has an unmarked value that is acquired with minimal exposure and a marked value which requires specific positive evidence.

In addition the notion of duality in the Persian parameter value, this study investigated the discourse structure of Persian in an informal fashion in the spirit of Centering Theory. A comparison of overt subject pronouns between Persian and English shows that while English by virtue of being a non-pro-drop language uses overt pronouns to refer to the most salient referent as a cue for topic continuity, Persian uses null subjects to mark the coherent continuation of the discourse topic In contrast, Persian uses overt pronouns in contexts where discursive factors impose their constraints. In addition to discourse cursives text authenticity also imposes its own constraints.

Pedagogical implications of this study are threefold in nature. (i) learning language should be based on authentic instructional materials taken from a variety of genres pertaining to the target language culture,(ii) the learning tasks involving these materials should aim at equipping students with necessary skills and knowledge which will enable them to understand how language works in a discourse model and how to employ the materials for authentic purposes, and (iii) English-speaking learners of Persian should be taught the principles underlying the discourse structure of the target language as part of their pragmatic competence to be able to use null and overt subject pronouns appropriately.

This study should raise questions for further research in teaching Persian to English-speaking students and other non-pro-drop languages. In case learners show inappropriate use of pronominal references in a discourse model, we need a more extensive corpus of utterances to analyze in order to be able to make a fine distinction between language transfer and discourse-based errors. For a more adequate account conducting a more through analysis should be considered to characterize the nature of discourse constraints and to establish principles governing the links between transition type and pronoun choice in a discourse.

This study raises questions for further research teaching pro-drop language to speakers of non-pro-drop languages. In case learners of a pro-drop language show inappropriate pronominal use, we need to analyze more data in order to be able to make a fine distinction between language transfer and discourse- level errors with respect to lexical pronouns. Conducting a more through discourse analysis should be considered to identify the nature of discourse constraints and to establish principles governing the links between transition type and choice of pronoun in a pro-drop language.

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Learning Management Systems Conference

Kiril Boyadjieff, Steve Koppany, and Megan Lee
Curriculum Development Division

On March 15, 2005, the Curriculum Development Division (CD) of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) organized the first Learning Management System (LMS) Conference with the active participation and strong support from Continuing Education (CE) and Evaluation & Standardization (ES). This conference marks the beginning of the process of defining the specific DLIFLC needs for obtaining a comprehensive LMS that will meet the present and future requirements for curriculum development, teaching, studying, assessment and administration of foreign language learning. The 25 attendees at the conference included representatives from CDD, CE, ES, the Computer Technology Integration Office (CIO) and the Public Affairs Office (PAO).

The LMS Conference was opened up by DLIFLC's Vice Chancellor, Neil Granoien, and Steve Koppany, CD's Dean. In his welcoming remarks, Neil Granoien stated that the new Joint Knowledge Office of the Department of Defense (DoD) has tasked military training centers to meet the requirement that "everything talks to everything else," i.e., the need to address current and emerging DoD requirements (DODD 1322.18 and DODI 1322.XX) for Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM)-conformant training materials.[1]

Steve Koppany addressed these DoD requirements by outlining the general conference goals as: (1) raising awareness of the need for a suitable LMS, (2) establishing a community of professionals and organizations as a network of support, and (3) gaining a better understanding of the relevance of an LMS to the various aspects of the work being performed at the Institute. He also noted that at this initial stage of development as each unit defines its mission requirements, it is likely that there may be multiple LMS solutions, rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Steve Koppany identified the specific tasks of the conference and its working groups as preparing detailed recommendations outlining critical LMS aspects and drafting recommendations for the implementation of one or more modern, multi-purpose LMSs in support of the DLIFLC mission.

Background

According to some definitions, an LMS is an e-learning structure that allows one to assign privileges, link learning resources, and modules to individual learners and groups of learners, monitor individual and group performance, and collect and transfer assessment data to the student management system for reporting and recording purposes. However, most LMSs do not have the ability to generate instructional content.

[1] Defense Acquisition Professionals.ppt

An LMS is also described as software that automates the administration of training events. All LMSs manage the log-in and registration of users, manage course catalogs, record data from learners, and provide reports to management. An LMS also describes a wide range of applications that track student training, and may include functions such as:

- Authoring
- Classroom management
- Competency management
- Knowledge management
- Certification or compliance training
- Personalization
- Mentoring
- Chat
- Discussion boards

A Content Management System (CMS), on the other hand, is used to design, develop, and publish online materials. CMSs also assist educators to separate content from presentation by utilizing a variety of models and templates. In this respect, the Institute's Learning Object Generator (LOG) is a powerful tool with applications in foreign language education e-learning.

Many CMSs are used to store and subsequently find and retrieve large amounts of data. CMSs work by indexing text, audio clips, images, etc., within a database. CMSs often provide version control and check-in/check out capabilities. Using robust, built-in search capabilities, users can quickly find a piece of content from within a data-base by typing in keywords, the date the element was created, the name of the author, or other search criteria. CMSs are often used to create information portals for organizations and serve as the foundation for the practice of knowledge management. They can be used to organize documents and media assets. For example, a news agency may use a CMS to archive every story ever written for the paper. Likewise, they might use the CMS to provide an extensive library of photographs that are reusable for future stories.

A Learning Content Management System (LCMS), is an environment where developers can create, store, reuse, manage, and deliver learning content from a central object repository, usually a database. LCMSs generally work with content that is based on a learning object model. These systems usually have good search capabilities, allowing developers to quickly find the text or media needed to build training content. LCMSs often strive to achieve a separation of content – which is often tagged in XML – from presentation. This allows many LCMSs to publish to a wide range of formats, platforms, or devices such as print, Web, and even wireless information devices, such as Palm and Windows CE hand-held, all from the same source material.

Koppany, in consultation with Granoien, has concluded that in the light of current and foreseeable national security requirements, the rapidly expanding mission of DLIFLC calls for immediate and energetic steps in implementing and utilizing a modern LMS. In the initial stage of the conference preparation, Dean Koppany of CD received strong interest in implementing an LMS from Dean Hoffman of ES and Dean Vezilich of DLIFLC. This initiative also received critical support from Professor Earl Schelske, a DLIFLC consultant from University of Minnesota.

Statement of the Need

The LMS conference continued with three fifteen-minute presentations from the participating deans. In their briefings Steve Koppany, Mika Hoffman and Mike Vezilich outlined their respective Division concerns and priorities as related to identifying and using one or more LMSs to meet their needs.

Steve Koppany defined the requirements for implementing an LMS in terms of the current projects of CD's key projects. The LMS would pull together and manage the core teaching programs of the DLIFLC, which are the resident basic language courses, the intermediate and advanced Continuing Education courses, the country-specific familiarization courses, the Web-based maintenance Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS), and other special projects. His vision was augmented by Robert Lee, a Sy Coleman contractor and the GLOSS technology coordinator, who pointed out that a suitable LMS should serve as an umbrella structure in offering both resident and non-resident instruction materials.

Mika Hoffman presented her preliminary research of the multi-faceted needs of ES that could be met by the use of an appropriate CLMS. The specific needs of ES include a content management system with discretionary publishing capabilities encompassing test development, review processes, test materials and publishing capabilities. Specific needs also require usability with translations, production by categories, combination and recombination of test items, publishing in paper and computer formats, and formatting different types of test items. The test developers in ES need a simple user interface for entering data with the text editing in English and various foreign language character sets combined in the same string. The interface must be able to display some parts of the test while hiding others and track functions for various criteria such as IRL levels, dialogue/monologue, etc. For publishing, the LMS should be able to export and import selected date from other applications (MS Excel, MS Access, MS Word) and publish in either paper or electronic format, query objects by test form and position, generate overlap lists, publish different subsets of object information, and offer templates for test creation. Finally, for access and storage, the requirements include limited shared access across teams, security, and storage for large amounts of data with archiving and locking capabilities.

The next speaker, Mike Vezilich, outlined the specific needs for an LMS to add support to their mission of providing superior post-basic foreign language instruction via resident and non-resident programs to approximately 25,000 DoD and other US government personnel each year to assure full linguist mission readiness. The CE Directorate, with a total current faculty of 54, includes four Divisions whose focus is on developing curriculum and the distance learning programs.

In defining CE's needs, Vezilich identified four critical areas:

1. Establishing a sufficient bandwidth
2. Making sure that a future LMS is SCORM-compliant
3. Defining LOG functions for LMS with granularity to allow instructors to track critical success indicators
4. Establishing a Working Group with CD to meet regularly and exchange experiences as related to GLOSS, LOG, FAM, etc.

Mike Vezilich underlined that a pressing challenge in Distance Learning is to connect up to 50 sites at the same time to test the delivery of the materials. Managing these outreaches is where the LMS is needed for tracking classes, materials and students who are attending in mixed-level classes in distant places. Another area where an LMS can be of great use is to deliver materials to measure success in these shorter courses since the students in these field cannot rely on DLPTs or regular test programs.

Professor Schleske - What is an LMS?

Afterwards Steve Koppany introduced Professor Earl Schleske. Earl Schleske began with some background information on SCORM. Content developed in a SCORM-compliant LMS is storable, retrievable and interoperable among different vendor platforms.

Prof. Schleske addressed the following areas in his presentation:

- SCORM-conformant LMS
- Security
- Bandwidth
- Authoring tools
- Backups

Earl Schleske made an analogy of an LMS to a public library. Registration, repository, lessons, and metadata (information about the lesson) all have parallels to library cards, bookshelves, books and card catalogs According to Prof. Schelske, a SCORM-Conformant LMS should offer the following features:

- **Interoperability** at the **learner**'s level. Lessons created for one LMS will run on other SCORM-conformant LMS platforms
- **Easy to upload** lessons, using SCORM standard file format
- **Searchable** lessons that can be retrieved with keywords to access lesson metadata
- **Common Data Model** provided by SCORM with defined field names called Data Model Elements used for learner tracking and performance recording
- **Access** to full Data Model at learner's level
- **Custom programming** to benefit the **learner** with the full functionality of the Data Model; for example, with custom programming, a student can resume a partially-completed lesson.

Earl Schelske then provided an overview of related areas such as security, bandwidth, authoring tools, and backups. He pointed out that the system security could be enhanced by utilizing a Central Authentication Hub. He advised that the bandwidth should be sufficient to accommodate the current level of scalability. He also reported on the latest LOG version, which offers both stand-alone and SCORM-conformant LO output. Finally, he discussed the options of having a multiple servers for storage and backup.

Break-Out Sessions

The conference continued with four break-out sessions.

Session 1 – Tracking Information. Facilitated by Dean Koppany, the group created lists of specific information needed by DLI's students, teachers, and administrators that an LMS should provide.

In addition to using the language-learning content and activities, students need to be able to access their assignments, grades, homework, bulletin board, and links, with both local and global search capabilities. They need the tools to build and maintain their student portfolios, and to keep track of student-to-teacher contacts, the progress of the course, and the schedule of instruction.

In addition to these capabilities, instructors also need to have access to the LOG and related materials, all discreet materials for creating customized lessons, training materials, counseling tools, course objectives (FLOs) and assessment rubrics. They need to be able to check on students' assignments, homework, time on task, lesson visits, individual student progress, test scores, DLPT and OPI information, as well as build their own teaching portfolios.

Administrators have additional needs, such as tracking student and teacher attendance, milestones, technical problems, enrollment requirements, professional development, student and teacher feedback on programs, and be able to develop the course catalog and plan matriculation, graduation and retention dates. The granularity of the LMS, which is the ability to create detailed searches by keywords throughout all levels of the system using detailed search capabilities, is also a key for administrators. Additionally, the administration needs to track the availability and test schedules of their certified language testers, as well as maintain access to teacher portfolios, including accomplishments and projects.

This team also compiled a list of other foreign language professionals outside of the DLI faculty, staff and students who might need to have access to certain aspects of the traceable information, such as researchers, course development specialists, course language project managers, test developers, DLIFLC and other unit commanders, and the congressional liaison.

Session 2 – Metadata. Facilitated by Mr. Lee, this breakout group discussed the metadata tracking capabilities that an LMS would need to have to satisfy the diverse DLI mission. Metadata is defined as data about content. Mr. Lee brought up the question of what sort of taxonomy and data tagging should be developed to identify our materials, their unique components and their common components.

The group presented a basic SCORM model of how content pieces are pooled together and then accessed by proper tagging of the metadata. The main categories of the first and most general layer of tagging taxonomy include tagging each LO for language, countries, regions, topical domains (military, society, environment, political, etc.), sources (text, audio, video) and proficiency levels.

The range of commonality in all of DLIFLC's products would be tagged in the three major areas of language, proficiency level, and topical domains. Beyond that, a custom tagging scheme is needed. Layer two would be tagged according to major projects, such as GLOSS, Familiarization courses, and so on. The third level of tagging

would consist of a further breakdown to identify whether the content is a course, a chapter, a unit, a lesson, or an activity. And finally, a fourth level tags the method of delivery as Web-based, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), Video Tele Training (VTT), and other methods.

It is important to consider how the learning content and its metadata will be used in the future, not just now, to create taxonomy to catalogue everything so that the content and information can be used for a variety of needs. If every item is tagged correctly, then, for example, an out-of-use test item could be used elsewhere for another purpose. Another example would be learning styles. If learning styles are tagged on every lesson now, even though we don't presently use this parameter, someone may later want to specifically search for it.

Session 3 – Content Management. Whether using an LMS or a CMS, this breakout session, led by Major McNiel, established that the system should support DLIFLC's existing curricula, course structures and future, including paper, audio, Computer Assisted Teaching (CAT), SCORM, and CORDRA. It should be able to adapt both to what is online what is in the resident courses. It should provide access to audio, computer-aided, and SCORM pieces, as well as have the ability to link to external data sources.

These capabilities would give the system the needed flexibility for course instantiation. Objects that are part of the core course material would be dynamically updated both in the instructor and student materials. Each piece of the course would be created on and taken from a template, so that when the course curriculum changes, those specific components of the material could be easily updated. Also, supplementary exercises could be created and incorporated at any point. At the end of each course, the content could be re-evaluated and updated as needed, which would eliminate the need to completely rewrite entire courses in the future.

Therefore, the LMS or CMS must be flexible. Scalability, the ability to grow with future needs, is also a very important consideration.

Session 4 - Technical Issues. SFC Strohl facilitated the breakout group discussing the technical issues of choosing an appropriate LMS. The group emphasized that technical issues encompass every facet of the LMS. It should support many varied methods of access to the language-learning system. Off-post facilities must meet Army network standards for networking to the system. Also, delivering content to multiple locations brings up the issue of how to connect and coordinate the system.

The group dealt with the question of session management, and whether the LMS should simply be a tool for learners or if it should support a community of learners. If it were used to support and sustain a community, there are various implications for what constitutes a session. For network operations and management there are also military and civilian interface issues of security to be considered regarding E-mail, locations, tasks, attachments, FTP, backup bandwidth, and so on, requiring proper analysis and architecture.

The desired technical system should address the overall needs, provide a consistent method of use in the technical environment, be reasonably easy to use, and work every time. Specifically, this system should include:

- Uniform method of file transfer
- Email directory without walls
- Seamless access / transitions between .mil and .org
- Effective requirements ordinances
- Comprehensive architectural review – think out into the future, not just now
- Provide expert technical support personnel with present and future needs in mind
- Build a unified architectural vision and institute a dynamic review process that encompasses all of our needs, get the pieces into place, and then, review it regularly.

Recommendations

The participants unanimously agreed that the utilization of a suitable LMS will significantly enhance the Institute's capabilities to discharge its resident and non-resident mission responsibilities. At this stage, there may be multiple LMSs appropriate for different units. The list of specific benefits includes, but is not limited to:

1. Enhance accountability by tracking critical success indicators
2. Provide an umbrella learning environment that students, teachers and administrators can all use in an interactive way for the benefit of their personalized needs
3. Improve statistical feedback on both teaching materials and course delivery
4. Equip content developers with a new tool to monitor the effectiveness of the produced materials
5. Render cost-effective course upgrades and modifications by utilizing an integral LMS/CMS
6. Cultivate a sense of community in the learning environment
7. Assist the independent learner in a more accurate selection of appropriate materials by the flexible use of metadata

A successful implementation of an LMS in combination with a virtual classroom, however, will require a significant upgrading of the current bandwidth and its reliability. The recommendation is that the "pipe" to the Internet should be at least 100 Mbps. One Gbps should be the goal within the next 12 months to satisfy the expected level of scalability.

An LMS will require a reconsideration of the current way DLI applies security measures. Firewalls and Virtual Private Networks should play appropriate roles to combine enhanced security measures with suitable levels of network access and communications critical to the development and delivery of instructional and test materials. The current approach of blocking many services such as file transfer, remote desktop, conferencing software, etc. should be replaced by more imaginative and technically sophisticated configurations promoting both security and effectiveness.

An LMS will also require the application of standards promoting SCORM-compliance in all curriculum development efforts. In this respect, CD has already made significant progress with our premiere authoring tool - the Learning Object Generator (LOG). The latest LOG version allows the development of materials both as stand-alone and LMS (SCORM-compliant) Learning Objects. We might also consider the concept of a mobile, stand-alone LMS installed on hard-drives when teachers are on MTT missions.

Conclusion

DLIFLC supports thousands of linguists by offering basic language courses, refresher, sustainment and enhancement courses, and proficiency testing and evaluation as the major aspects of our mission. In addition to the resident student body, our clients are often in remote locations and in various time zones. LMS is critical to a teacher-led instruction that spans time and distance. To remain in the forefront of foreign language education, the Institute must vigorously pursue this opportunity and energetically engage in the selection and implementation of a suitable LMS (or multiple solutions) that meets our present and growing needs.

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TESOL REPORTS

Developing and Testing New Materials

Lidia Woytak
Academic Journals

This year a group of twenty some faculty and staff members from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) took off for the unpredictable April skies of San Antonio to participate at the 39th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit. The DLIFLC folks went there to present, to learn, and to communicate in the halls of a spectacularly designed modern convention center. On a run from presentation to presentation, the attendees could hear a gamut of languages against the background of calming tunes of never-ending river flow.

Outside the convention walls, the attendees could taste a variety of dishes served in Spanish, Mexican, Native American, German, Polish, and Hungarian restaurants along the riverwalk. These restaurants were just one attestation of multiethnic nature of San Antonio inhabitants. These inhabitants and their predecessors have created such national treasures as the Alamo (and four other Spanish missions), the Mexican Market, San Fernando Cathedral, and the Modern Museum of Art.

At the convention, I had the opportunity to present *Applied Language Learning* and *Dialog on Language Instruction* to the participants of the session titled "How to Get Published in other Serial Publications in the Field of Applied Linguistics." The session was organized by the editors of TESOL Journals. About 30 editors were invited to present their academic journals. Following editors' presentation of the journals, the participants had an opportunity to ask questions and subsequently to talk personally to the editors.

Many participants expressed interest in *Applied Language Learning* and *Dialog on Language Instruction*. They swiftly took complimentary copies of the journals. Several people signed up on the journal mailing list. Others expressed interest in writing an article for the journals.

In addition to my participation at the editors' session, I attended several sessions that were related to my work at DLIFLC. I found the sessions "Cognitive Load Theory and TESOL Materials Development" and "Teacher Trainers Negotiating Roles in Cyberspace" informative and relative to our work at Curriculum Development Division.

"Cognitive Load Theory and TESOL Materials Development" was presented by Gregory Anderson and Matt Kline of University of Southern California. Anderson and Kline had begun their session by reviewing three types of memory; namely short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory. They pointed out that short-term memory is limited to several bits of information, working memory is of larger but of limited capacity, and long-term memory is permanent. The presenters stated that working memory is engaged during learning process.

Both Anderson and Kline frequently referred to the findings of the founder of cognitive load theory, J. Sweller, during their presentation. According to Sweller, optimal learning occurs when the learner is exposed to a combinations of elements, or schemas, rather than isolated elements. Schemas are "sophisticated structures that permit us to perceive, think, and solve problems." They constitute contents of long-term memory; In other words, schemas are cognitive structures that make up the knowledge base in every individual. They are acquired over a lifetime of learning, and may have other schemas contained within themselves.

Kline stated that students process information contained in instructional materials using working memory. If the materials contain the right amount of cognitive load, the processed information is learned or acquired as a schema. If, on the other hand, the materials contain too much of cognitive load, the information, or part of it, is lost.

Therefore for schema acquisition to take place "instruction should be designed to reduce working memory load."

As an example, they flashed a string of 10 digits. Next they asked the participants to recall them. No one was able to recall them. Afterwards they flashed 10 digits again; this time they arranged ten digits in three chunks. Subsequently, when asked to identify the chunked digits, some participants were able to recall them entirely and others partially. Thus the participants experienced first hand that chunking promoted acquisition.

Subsequently, Kline and Anderson recommended that course developers place new related information in the same area rather than in different areas of the materials. Such arrangement fosters focused attention and thus facilitates learning. On the other hand, placing related materials in different areas splits learner's attention. Split attention increases the working memory load substantially and prevents learner from acquisition of schemas.

To counter split attention problem, they enumerated ways of reducing cognitive load of instructional materials. Specifically they asked the textbook writers to present a rule first, followed by an example and next by an exercise. In this way learners would avoid attention split and thus be able to focus attention fully on the learning task.

Subsequently they reviewed several poorly designed language exercises. One exercise dealing with formation of past tense, for example, lacked presence of rule above examples. Thus it unnecessary demanded more cognitive load than it would if the rule was presented.

Afterwards they commented on an exercise that consisted of a list of numbered words referring to city buildings in the top half of the page and a drawing of these buildings in the bottom half of the page. Each building had a number on it in accordance to its representation. The presenters commented that placing numbers on the buildings rather than the actual names unnecessarily added up to the cognitive load of the learner and thus impeded processing as well as acquisition of schemas.

As an example of a well-designed exercise, they presented the exercise on spelling of –ing; this exercise contained four rules presented in a form of a chart. Each rule was followed by two examples. Finally immediately following the rules and the examples, the exercise was presented in the bottom part of the page. Again integration of rules, examples, and the actual exercise at the same spot lowered learners cognitive capacity.

Kline and Anderson added that learning is facilitated by visual and auditory input. As good examples they cited history lessons from PBS Tapestry Series. They also recommended inclusion of goal-free sessions in the curriculum. Such sessions they pointed out, optimize acquisition. Finally they also advocated asking students open-ended questions.

In summary both Anderson and Kline convinced the participants that every bit of information, i.e., a word, a phrase, a picture in instructional materials adds to learner's cognitive load. Thus the message to course writers and designers was clear:

1. Do not overload learners with unnecessary information.
2. Arrange the essential information in an optimal spot.

I found the session titled "Teacher Trainers Negotiating Roles in Cyberspace" by Martha Cunningham and Renee Jourdaneis also interesting and applicable to our work at the Institute. During their presentations, Cunningham and Jourdaneis discussed ways of helping students convert a face-to-face class to an online course.

Cunningham informed the audience that three instructors and 10 graduate students participated in the workshop on online chatting. They were divided into three chat rooms. Five chat meetings took place. The students were working towards MA in computer-mediated instruction in ESL. As homework, they were assigned to view three sites and comment on them.

During the workshop, they engaged in both synchronous and asynchronous chatting. They quickly realized that during synchronous chatting they needed assistance from a person with technological skills. They noted that, for some reason, asynchronous chatting turned out more interesting comments from the students than the synchronous one.

The presenters pointed out that the analysis of emails revealed that there were differences between the ways students expressed themselves and the way the instructors did. Two instructors (Kathi Bailey and Renee Jourdenais) were sending empowering comments to the students. Renee Jourdenais emails revealed that she was trying to fit in by switching from formal to casual style and specifically by switching from *I* to *we.* Martha Cunningham, on the other hand, focused on cheering the class.

Analysis of student protocols further revealed a struggle with turn taking, missing turns, and taking turns at inappropriate times. The students discovered that they needed to establish chatting conventions. They also suggested that establishing an online café would help.

I believe that a similar online workshop could be tried out during implementation of a new set of instructional materials at one of the schools at DLIFLC. Such workshop would give an additional opportunity for students, teachers, and course writers to communicate about adequacy of new instructional materials. Also in my opinion, an online café would further facilitate smooth transition of instructional materials from writers' desks into classrooms.

Engaging Students in Activities

Eleine Patterson
Curriculum Development Division

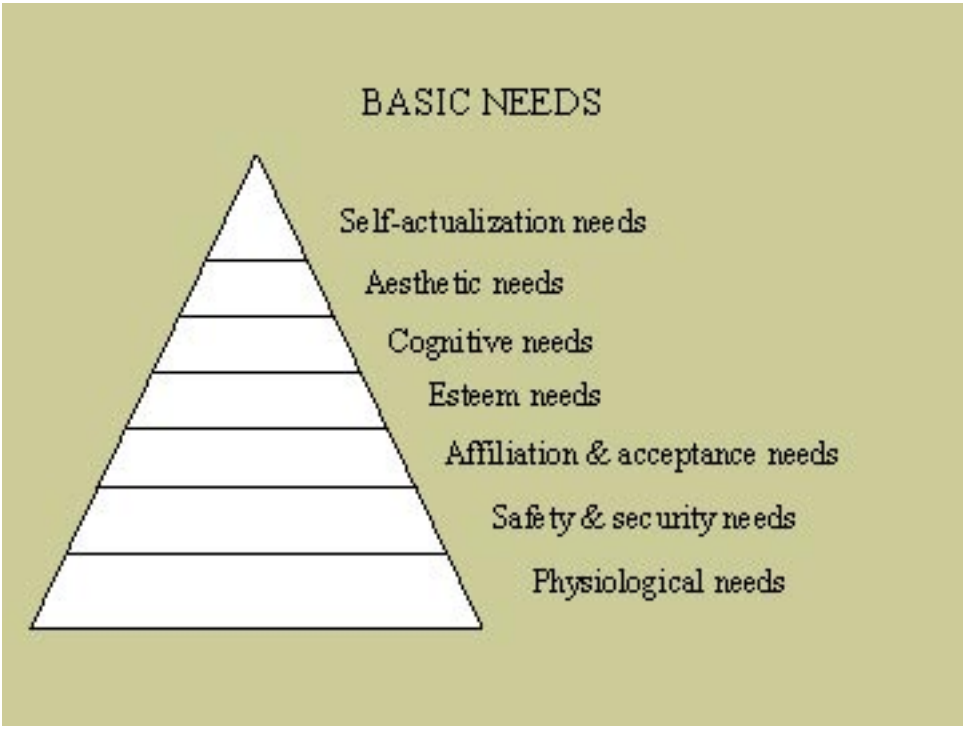
There were several presentations that remained in my memory and triggered ideas in relation to what we are doing here at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. One of such presentation was "Practicing Structured Long Turns Using DVD Clips" by Ron Belisle and Anita Aden. The presenters demonstrated how the scenes from popular movies can be used for developing speaking skills through sustained dialogues.

The activity has two parts. In the first part, students work in pairs. One of the students in each pair watches a silent segment of a movie, while the other one is not looking at the screen. Student #1 describes to Student #2 what is happening on the screen. It is up to a teacher to select a movie segment that would prompt students to produce the language. The segment demonstrated by the presenters was full of action, appearing in a chain of sequential events that made a nice story—a perfect example of L2 (second language) narration. The events and the actions of the characters were rather self-explanatory and did not provide much opportunity for interpretation. At the same time, if a student did not know a concrete word, he or she could use circumlocution - "talking around" something, usually by supplying a descriptive phrase in place of a name. The activity could be modified by allowing Student #2 to interfere with Student #1's description and ask for clarifications as needed.

In the second part of the activity, students received a list of questions about the movie segment. They compared their answers and discussed the discrepancies in the information they received from their partners. After that, the class as a whole watched the movie segment with the sound on. You can probably imagine all the excitement and laughter caused by the scenes that were not very accurately described by students #1, and very differently imagined by students #2.

Another presentation that appealed to my professional interests was a presentation by Kris I. Lambert of Kapiolani Community College, Hawaii, "Crafting Student Engagement in Learning". The presentation focussed on the effective ways of enhancing progress of slow students. Lambert shared with the audience classroom procedures and practices that stimulate proactive student behavior.

The presentation focused on the concept of motivation and its key role in language learning. According to Raymond Wlodkowski, of Antioch University, there are six major factors that impact learner motivation: need, attitude, stimulation, affect, competence and reinforcement. Wlodkowski states that needs and attitudes should be considered as the lesson is introduced; stimulation and affect while the lesson is in progress; and competence and reinforcement at the conclusion of the lesson. Out of Maslow's *Hierarchy of Basic Human Needs* the presenter elaborated on affiliation and acceptance needs as the most pertinent to her students.



To illustrate student learning and problem solving in her ESL classes Lambert chose John Keller's *ARCR* (attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction) *Model of Strategies*. For the purpose of this review I will quote attention and relevance strategies only, as they were used by the presenter for developing teaching techniques to meet students' acceptance and affiliation needs.

> **Attention Strategies** are "intended to draw the attention of the student to the material being learned"
> *Variability* - changing tone, movements, instructional format, medium, layout and design of print material and instructional patterns (t-s, s-s)
> *Participation* – involving students in games, role-playing, simulations, and other collaborative learning activities
> *Humor* – using puns, jokes, humorous analogies
> *Inquiry* – encouraging problem-solving, learner-selected topics, projects and assignments
> *Incongruity and conflict* – introducing contradictory facts, playing the devils advocate
> *Concreteness* – using visuals (photos, videos, graphs, tables, and diagrams), anecdotes, and biographies.

Relevance strategies "are intended to assisting students in attaching value to the learning task and in deepening the internalization of that value. How the learning task is portrayed to the student rather than impacting directly on the content itself".
Experience - demonstrating how new learning will use existing skills; relating current learning to prior experience, learner interests
Needs matching - capitalizing on the dynamics of achievement and risk taking, power and affiliation; activities that give students opportunities to exercise responsibility, authority influence and provide opportunities for cooperative interaction
Present worth - explicitly stating the current value of instruction as opposed to future value
Future usefulness - tying instructional goals to learner's own future activities
Modeling - demonstrating successful development of process/ procedure/outcome
Choice - allowing different methods to pursue work, organize work

For example, Lambert incorporates *the variability* factor in her classroom by constructing and deconstructing working groups even within a single teaching hour. This technique forces students out of their comfortable seats and makes them move around, something they might not be used to in the past.

Lambert shared a few teaching techniques that meet students' acceptance and affiliation needs, like starting collaboration and group work early on in the course and introducing activities that encourage students to learn about each other and about themselves as individuals. Such activities maximize student-to-student interaction, introduce metacognitive strategies and promote a sense of community within the classroom.

Kris I. Lambert described an interesting paraphrasing technique that she borrowed from Dr. Ted Plaister's presentation at Hawaii TESOL. Using this technique, sudents dissembled a sentence into its meaningful components and then reconstructed it using synonyms or paraphrases. At the same time they focused on the relationship between structure, usage, and meaning.

Among sharing other effective strategies and techniques, the presenter encouraged teachers to use "the carrots" strategy by giving students extra points for trying to communicate, for conducting outside research, for volunteering in class, for helping out peers, and other activities.

Reflective Teaching: Input and Output experience

A. Monim S. Mohamed
MEII, Department B.

I attended a workshop on *Reflective Teaching* held from June 13 to June 23, 2005, in Freedom Hall, Building 620 Middle School. It was administered and facilitated by the Academic Specialist, Dr. Ali Cicedag.

The workshop was well-prepared, well-structured, and well-executed. I really benefited a lot from the observational feedback, whether given by the facilitator, my peers, or by the students themselves. Observation was the critical part in most of the reflective activities. Supported by audiovisuals and directives from the facilitator, all observations were followed by genuine and beneficial written and verbal critique. As you know, observation and its subsequent feedback requires depth and insight to evaluate the teacher's talent and capability to teach. It also requires giving honest and realistic critique of that teacher's performance. All these issues are controversial in concept, but to me the final result of the workshop was superb.

Most of us have been victimized by previous experiences, whether it be the way we were raised at home or the way we were taught at schools. Those patterns of behavior might have a direct impact on our perception of the world or on the ways we are acquiring now to raise our children or teach our students. Such experiences, as psychologists have pointed out, reflect in our attitude and behavior. We are sometimes arrogant in strongly believing that we are on the right track, making the right decision and doing the right thing. In the meantime, we deny giving anybody or even ourselves the opportunity to check or recheck the validity or the effectiveness of our decisions and actions.

This workshop has given me an empirical experience through which I can envisage myself and make some self-corrections. It is as simple as that. Imagine yourself standing in front of a mirror, and you discover that your outlooks reflect differently than the ones you have in mind. Most likely you will start making some modifications to your personal appearance, like trimming your mustache, combing your hair or straightening your shirt collar, etc. This is exactly what *Reflective Teaching* is all about. We need to see ourselves in the eyes of others and make use of their sound judgment in appraising and correcting our way of teaching.

I used to speak a lot of English in the classroom, but based on the observations and the positive feedback I received from my chairperson and the workshop team, I now speak in the target language most of the time. I was also uncertain about my time framing and utilization, but now I learned how to adjust the ratios of time needed for class activities. The student-focus approach has helped me a lot in giving more roles to the students and bridge the gap between their learning needs and my teaching methodologies. I am currently concentrating on getting the students involved in generating creative ideas related to lessons' tasks by incorporating the 1+ approach, whether in the classroom or during homework activities. Such drills, as I learned in the workshop, will enhance the schemata and challenge the students' cognitive abilities.

However, so many other elements have also contributed to the success of this workshop, especially those associated with the mission and objective of the DLIFLC, and the plans for faculty development. All efforts for the enrichment to this workshop contribute to other efforts exerted by other departments to achieve the ultimate goal of increasing the proficiency levels of the students. Faculty members need to coordinate with workshop organizers and be more aware of the latest development in *Reflective Teaching* theory and practice. Such communication will improve the DLIFLC learning process and will benefit both the student and the teacher. It is indeed a revolution against the beliefs we hold firmly about ourselves. We need to teach in a different way if the students are not responsive to the current one. This is the way we can change and develop for the better.

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General Information

Calendar of Events*

2005

Modern Language Association (MLA), 27–30 December, Washington, DC. Contact: MLA, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981; Fax (212) 477-9863, Email: convention@mla.org Web: www.mla.org

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages (AATSEEL) and **American Council of Teachers of Russian**, 27–30 December, Washington, DC. Contact: AATSEEL, Kathleen E. Dillon, Executive Director, PO Box 7039, Berkeley, CA 94707-2306; Email: aatseel@earthlink.net Web: www.aatseel.org

International Association of Teachers of Czech (IATC–NAATC), 27–30 December, Washington, DC. Contact: Hana Píchová, Executive Officer, Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Texas at Austin, PO Box 7217, Austin, TX 78713-7217; Email: pichova@mail.utexas.edu Web: www.language.brown.edu/NAATC/index.html

2006

Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), 16–18 February, Orlando, FL. Contact: Lynne McClendon, Executive Director, SCOLT, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; (770) 992-1256, Fax (770) 992-3464, Email: lynnemcc@mindspring.com Web: www.valdosta.edu/scolt

Georgetown University Roundtable on Linguistics, 3–5 March, Washington DC. Contact: Kendall King, Department of Linguistics, Georgetown University, Box 571051, 37th and O Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20057-1051; (202) 687-5956, Email: Natalie Schilling-Estes, Email: ns3@georgetown.edu

Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 9–11 March, Chicago, IL. Contact: Patrick T. Raven, Executive Director, CSCTFL, PO Box 251, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0251; (414) 405-4645, Fax (414) 276-4650, Email: CSCTFL@aol.com Web: www.centralstates.cc

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 15–19 March, Tampa Bay, FL. Contact: TESOL, 700 S. Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864, Email: conventions@tesol.org Web: www.tesol.org

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), 30 March–2 April, New York City . Contact: Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, PO Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; (717) 245-1977, Fax (717) 245-1976, Email: nectfl@dickinson.edu Web: www.nectfl.org

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT), 6–8 April, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Audrey Cournia, Executive Director, SWCOLT, 1348 Coachman Dr. Sparks, NV 89434; (775) 358-6943, Fax (775) 358-1605, Email: CourniaAudrey@cs.com Web: www.swcolt.org

* Courtesy of The *Modern Language Journal* (University of Wisconsin)

Association for Asian Studies (AAS), 6–9 April, San Francisco, CA. Contact: AAS, 1021 East Huron St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104; (734) 665-2490; Fax (734) 665-3801, Email:annmtg@aasianst.org Web: www.aasianst.org

American Educational Research Association (AERA), 8–12 April, San Francisco, CA. Contact: AERA, 1230 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-3078; (202) 223-9485, Fax (202) 775-1824 Web: www.aera.net

International Conference on English Instruction and Assessment, 22–23 April, Taiwan. Contact: Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Chung Cheng University, 168 University Rd., Min-Hsiung Chia-Yi, 621, Taiwan, R.O.C.; ++ 886-5-2721108, Fax ++886-5-2720495, Email: admada@ccu.edu.tw Web: http://www.ccunix.ccu.edu.tw/~fllcccu/

National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), 27–30 April, Madison, WI. Contact: NCOLCTL, 4231 Humanities Building, 455 N. Park Street, Madison, WI 53706; (608) 265-7903, Fax (608) 265-7904, Email: ncolctl@mailplus.wisc.edu

International Reading Association (IRA), 30 April–4 May, Chicago, IL. Contact: International Reading Association, Headquarters Office, 800 Barksdale Rd., PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139; (302) 731-1600, Fax: (302) 731-1057, Web: www.reading.org

Language Acquisition and Bilingualism, 4–7 May, Toronto, Canada. Contact: Conference, 234 Behavioural Sciences Building, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada, M3J 1P3; Email: labconf@yorku.ca Web: http://www.psych.yorku.ca/labconference/index.html

Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO), 16–20 May, Honolulu, HI. Contact: CALICO, Southwest Texas State University, 214 Centennial Hall, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666; (512) 245-1417, Fax (512) 245-9089, Email: info@calico.org Web: www.calico.org

American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), 17–20 June, Montreal, Canada. Contact: AAAL, 3416 Primm Lane, Birmingham, AL 35216; (205) 824-7700, Fax (205) 823-2760, Email: aaaloffice@aaal.org Web: www.aaal.org

Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC), 29 June – 1 July, Melbourne, Australia. Contact: Email: ltrc2006-info@unimelb.edu.au Web: www.languages.unimelb.edu.au/ltrc2006

American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), 5–8 July, Milwaukee, WI. Contact: Jayne Abrate, AATF, Mailcode 4510, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4510; (618) 453-5731, Fax (618) 453-5733, Email: abrate@siu.edu Web: www.frenchteachers.org

EUROCALL, 4–7 September, Granada, Spain. Contact: Tony Harris, Email: tharris@ugr.es Web: www.eurocall-languages.org/index.html

European Second Language Association (EUROSLA), 13–16 September, Istanbul, Turkey. Contact: Web: www.eurosla2006.boun.edu.tr/

American Translators Association (ATA), 2–5 November, New Orleans, LA. Contact: ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 683-6100, Fax (703) 683-6122, Email: conference@atanet.org Web: www.atanet.org

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 17–19 November, Nashville, TN. Contact: ACTFL, 700 S. Washington St., Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 894-2900, Fax (703) 894-2905, Email: headquarters@actfl.org Web: www.actfl.org

American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), 17–19 November, Nashville, TN. Contact: AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; (856) 795-5553, Fax (856) 795-9398, Email: headquarters@aatg.org Web: www.aatg.org

Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA), 17–19 November, Nashville, TN. Contact: CLTA Headquarters, Cynthia Ning, Center for Chinese Studies, Moore Hall #416, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 956-2692, Fax (808) 956-2682, Email: cyndy@hawaii.edu Web: clta.osu.edu

National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), 17–19 November, Nashville, TN. Contact: Mary Lynn Redmond, NNELL, PO Box 7266, A2A Tribble Hall, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109; Email: nnell@wfu.edu Web: www.nnell.org

American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT), 17–20 November, Boston, MA. Contact: Erika H. Gilson, 110 Jones Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544-1008; Email: ehgilson@princeton.edu Web: www.princeton.edu/~turkish/aatt/

2007

Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 8–10 March, Kansas City, MO. Contact: Patrick T. Raven, Executive Director, CSCTFL, PO Box 251, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0251; (414) 405-4645, Fax (414) 276-4650, Email: CSCTFL@aol.com Web: www.centralstates.cc

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 21–24 March, Seattle, WA. Contact: TESOL, 700 S. Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864, Email: conventions@tesol.org Web: www.tesol.org

Association for Asian Studies (AAS), 22–25 March, Boston, MA. Contact: AAS, 1021 East Huron St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104; (734) 665-2490; Fax (734) 665-3801, Email:annmtg@aasianst.org Web: www.aasianst.org

American Educational Research Association (AERA), 9–13 April, Chicago, IL. Contact: AERA, 1230 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-3078; (202) 223-9485, Fax: (202) 775-1824 Web: www.aera.net

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 16–18 November, San Antonio, TX. Contact: ACTFL, 700 S. Washington St., Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 894-2900, Fax (703) 894-2905, Email: headquarters@actfl.org Web: www.actfl.org

Information for Contributors

Purpose

The purpose of this internal publication is to increase and share professional knowledge among DLIFLC faculty and staff, as well as to promote professional communication within the Defense Foreign Language Program.

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The success of *Dialog on Language Instruction* depends on your cooperation and support. *Dialog on Language Instruction* accepts only original manuscripts with the understanding that they have not been submitted for publication elsewhere. All materials submitted for publication should conform to the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th Ed., 1994), available from the American Psychological Association, P. O. Box 2710, Hyattsville, MD 20784.

We encourage you to submit a previously unpublished manuscript, a review, a description of innovative classroom activities, a news item, or even a comment on language instruction. Express your ideas on all aspects of language instruction including teaching, learning, and research. Present your findings on language teaching, learning, classroom strategies and techniques, and applied research.

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Manuscripts should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages. Divide your manuscript into the following sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Organizing Construct
  Point 1
  Point 2
  Point 3
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Appendices
- Notes
- References
- Acknowledgments
- Author

Abstract

Provide a brief overview of your manuscript in 75 to 100 words. First, identify the topic of your manuscript in one sentence. Next state the purpose and the scope of your manuscript in a couple of sentences. Next name the sources used, for example personal observation, published books and articles. Finally, state your conclusion in the last sentence of the abstract.

Introduction

Describe the purpose of the manuscript. Relate it to the content of the recently, within the last two to three years, published literature. Describe work that had a direct impact on your study. Avoid general references. Cite only pertinent research findings and relevant methodological issues. Provide the logical continuity between previous and present work. Identify the main issues of your study. Point out the implications of your study.

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Divide this part into subsections. Focus each subsection on a specific issue identified in the introduction. In each subsection, identify the issue, describe it, and present your finding.

Discussion

Respond to the following questions guide: (1) What I have contributed here? (2) How has my study helped to resolve the original problem? (3) What conclusions and theoretical implications can I draw from my study?

Conclusion

Summarize your findings.

References

The list of references should be submitted on a separate page of the manuscript with the centered heading: *References.* The entries should be arranged alphabetically by surnames of authors. The sample list of references below illustrates format for bibliographic entries:

Dulay, H., & Burt, M. (1974). Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly,* 16(1), 93-95.

Harris, D. P. (1969). *Testing English as a second language.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Reference citations in the text of the manuscript should include the name of the author of the work cited, the date of the work, and when quoting, the page numbers on which the material that is being quoted originally appeared, e.g.,
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Faculty Exchange

This section provides an opportunity for faculty to share ideas through brief articles up to two double-spaced pages on innovative classroom practices, such as suggestions on communicative activities, team teaching, use of media and realia, and adaptation of authentic materials. Each sample of a model classroom activity should state the purpose, provide instructions and, if applicable, give supporting texts or illustrations.

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Manuscripts should not exceed two double-spaced pages. Reviews of textbooks, scholarly works related to foreign language education, dictionaries, tests, computer software, video tapes, and other non-print materials will be considered for publication. Both positive and negative aspects of the work(s) being considered should be pointed out. The review should give a clear but brief statement of the works contents and a critical assessment of contribution to the profession. Quotations should be kept short. Do not use footnotes. Reviews that are merely descriptive will not be accepted for publication.

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Manuscripts should be typed on 8.5 x 11 in. paper, double-spaced, with margins of about 1.25 in. on all four sides. All pages should be numbered consecutively. Each manuscript should be submitted in three copies. The first page should include only the title and the text. It is recommended that passages orquotations in foreign languages be glossed or summarized. Authors are advised to prepare a note pertaining to their professional status. An author's name, position, department, school, address (if outside of DLIFLC), and interests would be identified in the note. An example of such a note is presented below:

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- lack of organization
- poor quality of writing
- lack of applicability to instruction

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Notes

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