Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture

Volume 4, Number 1 (Winter 2012)  ISSN: 1949-2774

Featured titles

“Training and intercultural orientation for family physicians in Italy”
by Pasquale Renna (Italy)  Page 1

“Desire to learn a foreign language and support from parents, teachers, and peers in the process of foreign language learn”
by Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel (Poland)  Page 9

“Youth, New Media and the Performance of Digital Identities”
by Joe Grixti (New Zealand)  Page 19

“Language fossilization from the perspective of foreign learners of Polish: problems and challenges”
by Marzena S. Wysocka (Poland)  Page 26
“English as a Second Language for young German adults: why it is studied and how cyber language might influence it” by Biagio Aulino (Canada), Roberto Bergami (Australia) and Iris Guske (Germany)  Page 40

“The other side: the Caribbean slave trade as foreground for the neoliberal tourist industry” by Howard D. Walters (USA)  Page 49

“Reading poems in foreign language learning contexts – an educational option” by Liliana Piasecka (Poland)  Page 61

“Reaching the unreached: Philippine distance education and dislocation” by Hazel T. Biana (Philippines)  Page 73

“Developing a classroom cultural exchange at Portland Community College” by Melody McMurry (USA), Cynthia Thornburgh (USA)  Page 85
The Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture (ISSN: 1949-2774) is a multi-disciplinary academic journal publishing original articles on research in areas such as:

- Arts and Humanities
- Business and Management
- Capacity Building
- Communities of Practice
- Computers and the Internet
- Curriculum Design and Enhancement
- Distance and Online Education
- Education-Industry Partnerships
- Educational Policy
- English as a Second Language
- Entertainment and the Media
- Entrepreneurship
- Ethnicity
- Government and Politics
- Health and Recreation
- Knowledge Management
- Language Skills
- Management of Educational Institutions
- Religion and Philosophy
- Science and Technology
- Social Sciences
- Society and Culture
- Teacher Education

Manuscripts submitted may be based on research that is theoretical, practical, empirical, or exploratory.

The Journal aims to disseminate high calibre research to scholars across the globe through free on-line access at: http://www.theworldwideforum.org

Each manuscript is submitted electronically to the Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture and it is evaluated to determine the suitability of topic and content. Acceptable manuscripts are reviewed by at least two referees in a double-blind peer review process. This is a process where the authors’ and the referees’ identities are kept anonymous. Referees are asked to evaluate the manuscript against ten criteria, including originality, methodology, relevance and contribution to knowledge. Based on the referees’ reports the Editor-in-Chief makes a final decision on the manuscript and communicates with the authors, providing them with a copy of the referees’ reports. The outcome of the refereeing process may result in the manuscript being either: Accept (minor revisions may be required); Resubmit (major revisions may be required); or Reject (manuscript not suitable for publication). The journal has a flexible referencing policy, with any reference style acceptable, provided it is consistently used in the authors’ works. The journal also allows the use of English spelling variations recognising the wide cultural contribution of authors.

Additional information for authors is available at: http://www.theworldwideforum.org

Roberto Bergami
Editor-in-Chief
The Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture
(ISSN: 1949-2774)

Editorial Board

Editor –in-Chief

Roberto Bergami, Ph.D.
Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

Editors

Sandra Liliana Pucci, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Linguistics, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, USA

Annamarie Schuller, MEd, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

Editorial team

Associate Professor Lucia Buttaro, Ph D, Adelphi University, New York, NY, USA

Professor Danuta Gabrys-Barker, University of Silesia, Sosnowiec, Poland

Dr Iris Guske, Director of the Kempten School of Translation & Interpreting Studies, Germany

Dr Arthur Lizie, Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, MA, USA

Dr Lauren Stephenson, Assistant Professor, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

Professor Bruce C. Swaffield, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. USA
Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

This notice of expected ethical behaviour applies to all parties involved in having material published in The Journal of The Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture (WFEC). The parties are: the author, the journal’s Editors, the Peer Reviewers from the Editorial Board and the Publisher of WFEC.

Publication decisions
The Editors of WFEC are ultimately responsible for publication decisions relevant to WFEC. Decisions may be guided by editorial policies and legal considerations that may include, but are not limited to: copyright; plagiarism; and offensive and illegal material. Publication decisions are reached by consensus by the Editors, based on publication recommendations by peer reviewers. WFEC uses a double-blind review process.

Fairness in the publication process
Evaluation of manuscripts submitted is based on merit and is not be subjected to any form of discrimination or unfair treatment resulting from a number of considerations including but not limited to: gender; race; religion and other beliefs; ethnicity; or political beliefs of the author(s).

Confidential treatment of materials
All submissions are to be treated confidentially and Editorial Board members must not disclose any information about submitted manuscripts to parties other than the individual identified as the corresponding author, the Editors and the publisher. Unpublished materials remain the property of respective authors and must not be used howsoever by any other party involved in the publication process.

Authors’ requirements in respect of academic and ethical standards
Original research presented in any work submitted for publication consideration must accurately detail any data. Misrepresentation of data through fraudulent actions and/or statements, and like activities, will not be tolerated. Data obtained through original research should be kept for a reasonable time (suggested to be five years) post publication. Wherever possible, authors are encouraged to provide as much detail and data about their research for the benefit of others.

It is the responsibility of authors to obtain necessary ethics clearance to comply with institutional and legal requirements as appropriate and adhere to conditions of research as granted by the relevant organisations. This is particularly important where the research may involve human or animals subjects. Procedure followed in compliance with ethics requirements should be detailed in the article.

Basic standards of academic rigor are expected from authors. These standards include adherence to the author guidelines in respect of formatting and bibliography. Authors should ensure they refer to any significant other work that has informed or influenced their article. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Authors who use the work of others must cite/quote the full source of the originating material in articles submitted to WFEC for publication consideration.

Articles submitted for publication consideration to WFEC must not be concurrently submitted to other publication outlets. Substantially similar articles with no new data content
should not be submitted to other publication outlets as this practice is considered to be unethical by the Editors and the Publisher.

It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to ensure that all articles submitted to WFEC list the appropriate authors and that all authors have approved the final version of the article and given permission for its publication. Authorship of papers is to be limited to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the research (concept, design, data gathering, analysis, and discussion.) relevant to the article submitted. All other parties that may have assisted in parts of the process should be acknowledged in the article and contributors.

Authors are expected to disclose any conflict of interest that maybe perceived it impact of the final article. Conflicts of interest are not limited to financial considerations. Any financial contribution to research related to the article submitted should be disclosed.

It is the responsibility of authors to take remedial action should errors or inaccuracies be discovered by them in their article. The usual procedure would be to contact the Editor-in-Chief with a view to having a retraction issued or the paper withdrawn.

**Reviewers’ requirements in respect of review process and ethical standards**

The Editors rely on comments received by the reviewers in the publication decision making process. Reviewers must not contact the authors directly, rather, they provide comments to the Editor-in-Chief for appropriate action. The process is summarised as follows:

- On receipt of double blind reviewer comment, the Editor-in-Chief consults with the Editors to reach a consensus decision in respect of reviewed articles.
- If the decision of the Editors is to proceed with publication based on the double blind review process, the Editor-in-Chief will contact the corresponding author, providing them with anonymous feedback from the reviewers.
- It is the policy of WFEC not to alter reviewers’ comments.
- It is the author’s responsibility to make alternations to their original submitted articles in accordance with the reviewer’s comments, to the satisfaction of the Editors. This process should result in an enhanced publication.

Reviewers are expected to act promptly in respect of any article assigned to them and are to notify the Editor-in-Chief immediately in respect of any conflict of interest whatsoever (real or perceived), or to be excused from a review assignment because they do not feel appropriately qualified to do the process justice. The Editors will assign alternate reviewers in these circumstances.

As reviewer reports are a critical component of the publication decision process, reviewers are expected to provide explanations for changes required, supporting their arguments as clearly and fully as possible to allow authors the maximum opportunity to make appropriate changes to their work. Reviews should be conducted on the merit of a paper, disregarding opposing ideologies and without personal criticism of authors, as such conduct is considered inappropriate.

Reviewers are expected to check that all resource materials have been duly referenced and to disclose in their report any substantial similarities discovered between the work under review and other published materials they are aware of.
Dear Readers and Friends of the Forum,

This particular volume marks another milestone in our work to improve educational systems and increase cultural awareness around the world. Each one of the articles addresses a different and vital element in teaching and learning in this new century.

In addition to these diverse papers, the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture was fortunate to have three world leaders at our meeting in 2012. We heard from Ms. Thenjiwe Mtintso, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of South Africa to Italy; Mr. Wojciech Ponikiewski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Italian Republic, to the Republic of San Marino and to the Republic of Malta; and Mr. David J. Lane, Ambassador, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome. The messages from these distinguished guests gave participants a chance to learn more about global politics and universal cooperatives.

The keynote address for 2012 was “The Dénouement of the Italian University System” by Dr. Cristina Giorcelli, Chair and Professor of American Literature, Universita degli Studi Roma Tre. Her insights provided a look into the status of Italian higher education and she offered suggestions for much needed change.

On behalf of the Worldwide Forum, I invite you to read what professors and scholars all over the globe are doing in the fields of culture and education. I know you will find their research helpful in your own teaching. We also encourage you to attend our next forum to learn more about all we have done since our founding in Rome, Italy, in 2002. Through the years, people from more than 40 countries have contributed their time and assistance to our work.

Sincerely,

Bruce C. Swaffield, Ph.D.
Founder and Director,
The Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture
Dear Readers of the Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture,

On behalf of the Editors and the Editorial Board, I present you with the fourth volume of the Journal.

The Journal is a multi-disciplinary international publication, available online, that accepts manuscripts based on research that is theoretical, practical, empirical, or exploratory.

The authors of the featured titles in this issue come from ten different countries spread across North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia and Australia, a truly global representation. Likewise our Editorial Board features scholars from six countries across four continents.

The collection of works in this edition represents a sample of the academic papers presented at the XI Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture held in Rome between 28 and 30 November, 2012. These particular papers were chosen by the Editorial Board, for inclusion in this edition of the Journal, after a double-blind review process involving at least two reviewers.

Much time and effort went into the preparation of this issue of the Journal. From the planning stages, the development of reviewing criteria, to the authors who submitted high calibre papers, to the reviewers who diligently carried out their task of providing valuable feedback, and to the authors again for submitting the final revised version of their research.

There are too many to thank individually, but I express my gratitude collectively to all who have worked so hard to make the Journal become a reality. I especially acknowledge the contribution and the constant dedication to the Forum by Professor Bruce Swaffield.

I encourage all the readers to consider making their own contributions in future editions of the Journal.

Sincerely,

Roberto Bergami
Editor-in-Chief
December 2012
Training and intercultural orientation for family physicians in Italy

Pasquale Renna, Ph.D, Department of Sciences of Education, Psychology, Communication, University of Studies of Bari Aldo Moro, Bari, Italy
renna_pasquale@libero.it

Abstract
In Italian complex and “liquid” society, an essential agent of health promotion is the family physician. This contribution focuses on intercultural orientation for family physicians in view of the well-being and inclusion of immigrant patients coming from Eastern Europe and North Africa.

Keywords: Health care Services, Intercultural Orientation, Culturally Sensitive Healthcare Practices

Introduction

Orientation has been defined as a set of activities aimed at supporting and facilitating decision-making processes of individuals during specific career transitions (Domenici, 2009; Grimaldi & Quaglino, 2005; Huteau & Guichard, 2001). These activities run along the entire span of professional life. In recent years such activities have focused on the implementation of methods that assign leadership roles to the subjects on the stages of their decision-making process orientation.

Intercultural orientation for general practitioners providing healthcare services to immigrants, to whom this paper refers to, focuses on not only initial training imparted at universities, but also to lifelong learning. Essentially it is aimed at providing the family physician with instruments that can verify:

- unveiling of their motivations and their goals in the context of the professional relationship with the immigrant patient;
- knowledge of the environment in which patients live, so that the real health needs of immigrant patients could be well compared to family physician's professional goals;
- the definition of an educational project through the mediation between the above mentioned professional goals and the objective reality represented by the health needs of immigrant patients.

It should be noted that, since the medicine was listed among the sciences, the so-called family physician is a medical figure that takes care for the patients in the environment in which they live and work. In this context there are two equally important professional dimensions: 1. the relationship with the patient and their disease, based on the collection of objective data through palpation, auscultation and percussion of the patient's body, and 2. the conditions and the relationships that exist in the life of the patient, based on observations of the patient’s living environment, work and family.

The collection of patient health information provides the basis for the type of medical intervention to be implemented. It may be broken down into three levels:

i) The first level, where the doctor simply prescribes health tips related to sleep or diet. This is aimed at recovery of organic impairment;
ii) The second level, where the doctor focuses on prescription of medications, in order to recover not particularly severe organic changes; and
iii) The third level, where the doctor focused on the referral of patients to specialized facilities for the treatment of diseases by professional medical specialist.

A diagnostic and/or therapeutic treatment tailored to the needs of the patient, which meets the criteria of efficacy and safety, is called medically appropriate. The appropriateness (Ministry of Health et al. 2007) of a medical intervention can be related to three types of appropriateness. Firstly, clinical appropriateness that relates to those criteria of efficacy and safety that will provide benefits for the health of the patient. Secondly, prescriptive appropriateness, that relates to prescription of medications for the treatment of diseases for which there is therapeutic indication. Thirdly, administrative appropriateness, that relates to the optimization of available social, economic and political resources in the context in which the patient lives.

With medical advancement in the treatment of serious diseases, the family physician operating within a specific geographical territory has gradually lost importance to alternative specialized health care centers that appear to have gained increasing popularity. Not infrequently patients needing immediate and effective solutions for their disease, do not take consider seeing assistance from the local physician, turning instead to doctors who work in specialized centers, who are perceived to offer diagnostic and curative certainty. This attitude does nothing but legitimize a particular approach to the provision of health care service, theorized and practiced by the biomedical paradigm that focuses not on the person's overall disease status, but only of the malfunctioning organ needing repair. Parallels to this process of technological applications in medicine occurred in the West after World War II, where there was a process of bureaucratization of the family physician operating in situ, who played a role of gatekeeper of the health needs, with the aim of directing patients to specialized centers. In this way, the sickness itself took the place of the sick person, so that there has been a fragmentation of the synthesis between person, culture and environment (Borgonovi, 2010).

Today, in Italy, the environmental medicine, by virtue of the increased importance given by the same biomedical research to the incidence of environmental and cultural factors in the onset of serious diseases, especially with regard to migration, can acquire a renewed role of synthesis. The family physician, within the territorial contemporary medicine, stands as the centerpiece of reception and interpretation of "global" care needs of the ill person.

2. The training needs of family physician between patient and environment

The professional training of the family physician is defined by European and Italian legislation and implemented in Italy through specific training institutions. The European Union, by Council Directive 93/16/EEC of 5 April 1993, aims to "facilitate the free movement of doctors and the mutual recognition of their diplomas, certificates and other evidence." This Directive, in particular, focuses on the strategic importance of a specific training of general practitioners for the whole health care system:

It is admitted, almost in general, the need for specific training of the general practitioner, who has to better prepare better to fulfill his function, which depends on the knowledge of his patients, by giving advices on the prevention of diseases and the protection of the health of the individual as a whole, and by giving appropriate treatment [...]. (Directive 93/13/EEC, in Republic of Italy Official Gazette n. L. 165, 07/07/1993, pp. 1-24).
The scope of specific training for the general practitioner is intended to encourage the creation of a professional specializing in health promotion, having as a criterion of intelligibility - a bio-psycho-social medical model, based on “welfare rather than cure” (Zucconi & Howell 2003, p. 82).

Health, prevention and wellness are three necessary concepts for a rethinking of a model of health no longer based just on repairing the human body, as practiced by hospitals and specialist physicians, rather on prevention of diseases based on health education of patients and practiced by the family physician. In particular, by the recovery of interest in humans (Annacontini, 2006, p. 93) which is carried out through dialogue with patients, the family physician, if supported by adequate training, could be able to restore Medicine in its function not only of treating diseases but also of supporting ill persons in the concrete situation in which they live because of the peculiar existential condition engendered by the disease. In this way, the family physician may help to achieve the full sense of the humanization of medicine. What is argued here is that a holistic approach is required when considering the provision of health services in an intercultural context, as it may apply to immigrants. Free from the power of the "doctor's eye" (Foucault, 1963, p. 43) on the patient's body, medicine could be revisited in the sense of a therapeutic alliance between health experts and citizens aware of their rights. According to Karl Jaspers:

Great things happen in silence. Perhaps the possible renewal of the idea of physician now has a privileged place in the family physician [...] through the direction of the entire process of restoring health (1986, p. 9-10).

The central role of the family physician is confirmed by Italian law. The Legislative Decree of 17 August 1999.368, October 23, 1999 art. 18, paragraph 1b, focuses on the content of university training of the surgeon:

The training of the surgeon includes [...] adequate knowledge of the structure, functions and behavior of human beings, healthy and sick, as well as relations between the physical and social environment of man and his state of health.

More specifically, the decree in question, in Articles 25 and 26, speaks of a School in General Medical Practice. The School is divided into 3000 hours, of which two thirds is dedicated to practical activity, with specified periods of training as described below:

A) Clinical and laboratory medicine, divided into at least five months performed at hospitals. It includes specific clinical activities and seminars on topics of clinical methodology, neurology and psychiatry, internal medicine, medical care, emergency medicine, medical oncology, geriatrics and clinical pathology;

B) General surgery, divided into at least two months, including: specific clinical activities for seminars on clinical methodology, general surgery, emergency surgery;

C) Mother and child specialization, divided into at least two months, including: specific clinical activities for seminars of general pediatrics, pediatric therapy, neuropsychiatry, pediatric preventive medicine;

D) Six months spent in an outpatient clinic of a family physician;

E) At least four months spent in basic structures of Public Health, including specific clinical activities at districts, clinics, doctor's offices and laboratories, and the participation to seminars in preventive medicine, environmental health, hygiene and prophylaxis; and

F) Obstetrics and gynecology specializations.

This type of extensive training is conducive to the provision of a holistic model of health care and this is discussed in the next section.
3. The family physician as an agent of empowerment and inclusion for immigrant patients in Italy

The social inclusion of immigrant patients in Italy, occurred following the great migrations of people coming from East Europe and North Africa in 1990s, and this has been a very complex process. The family physician, as the doctor of the person, attentive to health issues as part of the social and cultural contexts of reference, is certainly a powerful agent of inclusion. The doctor-immigrant patient relationship, in this sense, should be oriented towards patient empowerment.

An approach centered on patient participation is one of the essential themes of the Ottawa Charter (1986), that foresees a health service capable of overcoming the traditional approach based on a simple range of services, towards a Health Service that systemically takes into account the needs of the patient. The process of patient empowerment (Saltman & Figueras, 1997, p. 60 and 101) also requires a therapeutic alliance with the doctor. In this sense, the first step to empowerment is the partnership, through which the patient participates in the doctor's decision, actively contributing to the definition of the objectives of the health service (Spinsanti, 2004, p. 67).

Another key aspect of the partnership, which collides head-on with the traditional medical paternalism, according to which the patient should docilely adapt to the rules established by precise health-rituals, is the protection of the rights to information and self-management. It must be said, then, that through a therapeutic partnership, especially if supported by well prepared and competent cultural mediators who work together to the family physician, the family practitioner could soon become a key figure in order to integration and inclusion of immigrant patients in the European and, mostly, Italian society.

According to the above, especially for immigrant patients, in Italy the family physician now has the opportunity creating a real common cultural area with immigrant patients coming from Eastern Europe and North Africa. This is achieved mainly through the acquisition of specific skills in the field of networks and communication codes, on the interpretation of the different horizons of the disease, about what the doctor / patient relationship could take a full consideration of people's subjectivity and real conditions of existence (Seppilli, 2004).

From an intercultural point of view, the doctor-patient relationship is even more strategic as it is well established that "ill" is not the same everywhere. The experience of illness is inserted in different frames of meaning in different cultures. In some cultures, the disease challenges the individual to respond virtuously: with patience, courage and resignation. In other cultures, the disease is a request made by individuals towards a society that must provide health care ..." [...]. People do not "sick" all the same way. Socio-cultural aspects affect what people consider as a disease [...]. What is believed to illness or health is not constant [...]. Specific "diseases" are "socially constructed" in a
spiral process of invention / recognition / care [...]. Being sick (or healthy) is not a solitary act. The "sick role" focuses on the web of relationships that bind this role and structure of conversations in which it is recited (Barnett Pearce, 1994, p. 39-41).

In Italy the Region of Puglia (in the South-East) recent legislation on health, focuses strongly on both the principle of universality of care, and on the principle of inclusion of immigrants. Regional Law of 4 December 2009, No. 32 "Regulations for the hospitality, civil society and the integration of immigrants in Puglia" has established, among other things, unequivocally a highly advanced creation of the right to health. To this end this law introduced a special category of immigrants, referred to as FTP (Foreigners Temporarily Present), with which it is intended to indicate the illegal immigrants, to whom the right to basic health services are guaranteed in order to promote their basic rights to health, as stated in Article 5:

Pursuant to Article 43, paragraph 8, of the regulations issued by the President of the Republic August 31, 1999 n. 394, pursuant to Article 1, paragraph 6, of t.u. issued by Legislative Decree no. 286/1998 laying down implementing rules and the same you, coordinated with the changes and additions to regulations adopted by decree of the President of the Republic October 18, 2004, n. 334, the Region identify ways to ensure access to essential care and continuing to foreign citizens temporarily present (FTP):

- FTP choose the family physician, or pediatrician for children, who shall be registered for six months, renewable. Day and night non-deferrable health benefits are guaranteed;
- FTP may apply to both the network of family planning clinics that the public authorities and hospitals to take advantage of:
  1) visits to gynecologists, performance for the protection of pregnancy and maternity, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases;
  2) screening, contraception, maternity protection and responsible parenthood and assistance procedures for the voluntary interruption of pregnancy;
  3) performance of the vaccination centers for those recommended by the National Health Service;
  4) performance specifications provided by mental health centers;
  5) post-accident rehabilitation, as well as the intensive and extensive rehabilitation related to the disabling condition;
  6) all services related to emergency: emergency room, inpatient admissions, in a day hospital and day surgery, dialysis.

As it can be observed, the above mentioned Article 5, states that most part of the basic health services to which immigrants in Puglia are entitled to access is delivered by family practitioners. In fact in Italy the family physicians are concerned with prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases; screening, contraception, maternity protection and responsible parenthood; performance of the vaccinations and many others medical treatments related to disease prevention and health promotion by proper educational plans.

As Geraci says, “if the ability to welcome and concrete integration policies and integration can significantly change the health of immigrants, reducing specific risk factors, we must also emphasize that the degree of accessibility and availability of health services is a crucial issue in order to protect this population: accessibility mainly depends
by the regulations, but the usability of "cultural" services could be a specific skill by family physicians in order to adapt responses by Health System to their health needs” (Geraci, 2007, p. 11).

Conclusion

The family physician is probably the training institutional subject as a part of the restructuring of the National Health Service that sees the passage from a model centered on the hospital and health medicine specialist at a health model focused on local services and general medicine. The family physician, therefore, needs a strong pedagogical preparation in order to address the key role assigned to him as a promoter of the health and empowerment of the patient with his disease. Especially the immigrant patient, that presents itself as a great resource work for Italy, needs education policies to deal with a complex relationship to the disease.

The above mentioned education policies should be based on two essential goals (Zucconi, A. & Howell, P., 2003):

- **Health education.** The World Health Organization (WHO) tells us about the conditions in which a person, or a community, is able to realize aspirations and satisfy health needs (http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/). The aim is not to achieve perfect health, but to ensure the health as a resource for everyday life. In fact health could be defined as the ability to realize the potential of the individual, in order to respond positively to the challenge of the environment. In this sense health is a resource for everyday life. It is not a goal in life, but as an indispensable tool for the pursuit of any goal. Health education not only communicates information, but also promotes the motivation, skills and confidence, which are necessary conditions to improve health. Educate to health means to communicate information concerning the social, economic and environmental situations that affect the health; but also to communicate information about risk factors and risk behaviors. Health education can, therefore, improve health and reduce disease of individuals and groups, through a proper education of attitudes and behaviors. The purpose of health education can be summarized as follows: 1. to become aware of their own health, with the aim of being able to identify and explain their health problems; 2. to acquire information and knowledge about specific health problems; 3. bring about a change in habits and behaviors by enforcing self-decision; 4. promote social changes in order to promote a healthful environment. The point links health education and health promotion.

- **Health promotion.** Health promotion is the educational process of enabling people to increase control over their health and improve it. In this sense, health promotion is a comprehensive social-political process. It involves not only the actions aimed at strengthening the capacity and skills of individuals, but also action aimed at changing social, environmental and economic in order to mitigate the impact that they have on the health of the individual and the community. As a political process, health promotion enables people to increase control over the determinant factors of health and, consequently, to improve their health. The Ottawa Charter (ibidem) identifies few basic strategies for health promotion: plead the cause of health to create the essential conditions for health; to enable all people to develop to their full potential for health; to mediate between different interests in society, in order to pursue individual and collective health.

Since both health education and health promotion are focused on individual responsibility for the self and social care, the role of the family doctor is characterized as the most appropriate
medical figure in order to help patients in the pursuit this objective. The global economic
crisis currently underway involves, in fact, a growing emphasis on educational policies can
avoid those individual and social behaviour that, as pathogens, are no longer sustainable on
the side of social costs. To this end, the health of immigrant patients in Italy needs to be
protected through the good habit of taking care of themselves, of other people and of
environment in order to avoid behavior pathogens and promote responsibility for the future of
all mankind.

References

Ingrosso, M. (a cura di) (1994). La salute come costruzione sociale. Teorie, pratiche,
Borgonovi E. (2010). L’evoluzione nell’organizzazione dei servizi territoriali negli ultimi
Domenici G. (2009). Manuale dell’orientamento e della didattica modulare. Roma-Bari:
Laterza.
Armando.
309, pp. 107-111.
FNOMCeO (2002). Delibera e linee guida su Medicine e pratiche non convenzionali. Terni.
Fondazione Intercultura (2009). Identità italiana tra Europa e società multiculturale (Atti del
Raffaello Cortina.
Laterza.
Gallelli, R. (2009), Cultura del corpo ed educazione alla differenza, in Manfredi M. (a cura
di), Variazioni sulla cura. Fondamenti, valori, pratiche, Guerini e Associati, Milano.
Milano: Franco Angeli.
Milano: Franco Angeli.
Pensa Multimedia.
http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/
Desire to learn a foreign language and support from parents, teachers, and peers in the process of foreign language learning

Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Opole University, Opole, Poland
epiech@uni.opole.pl

Abstract
Social support received from parents, teachers and peers fulfils the individual’s need for attachment, care, and attention. These support types are hypothesized to be related to the student’s desire to learn a foreign language, allowing for personal growth and cultural enrichment. The participants in this study are 609 Polish secondary grammar school students. On the basis of their levels of desire to learn a language, they were divided into those with a low desire (N=156) and a strong desire (N=159). Comparison demonstrates that those with a strong desire to learn a foreign language experience high levels of parental and peer support. This finding can be attributed to general feelings of acceptance with regard to their significant others, at the same time creating good prospects for the future. However, there is no connection between the desire to learn a foreign language and teacher support, mainly because the support all teachers demonstrate does not recognize the merits of the foreign language learning process or the wants of individual learners.

Keywords: desire to learn, social support, support from parents, teachers and friends, grades, foreign language learning

Introduction
The relationship between the desire to learn and foreign language achievement has been the subject of extensive research (see for example Harackiewicz et al., 2008). Unfortunately, it has not yet been established whether this relationship can be explained by the moderating power of social support provided by three main groups: parents, teachers, and friends. For the purpose of this paper it is hypothesized that social support types, that is parental, teacher, and peer support, are strongly related to the desire to learn a foreign language. In order to corroborate this hypothesis, this paper first presents the concept of social support and its types, along with their role in the language learning process. Next outlined is the desire to learn a foreign language, discussed against the framework of theories of motivation, followed by the results of empirical research focusing on the relationship between forms of social support and the desire to learn. The paper ends with a discussion and the resulting implications for teaching practices.

Forms of social support
Social support is broadly understood as the individual’s perception of being cared for and aided whenever in need, as well as of being able to gain the understanding, assistance, and evaluation of significant others. Modern definitions of the term stress the importance of one’s ability to take advantage of “social assets, social resources, or social networks (...) when they are in need of aid, advice, help, assistance, approval, comfort, protection, or backing” (Vedder, Boekaerts, & Seegers, 2005, p. 269). One’s need for attachment, care, and attention can be satisfied by an optimal support system, which can boost one’s sense of trust and life
direction (Kleinke, 1998). Generally speaking, it has the power to buffer life’s stressors and promote one’s health and well-being (Demaray et al., 2005).

Young people derive social support from three main sources: parents and family, classmates and peers, and teachers (Rueger, Malecki, & Demaray, 2010). Parental support can be understood as “gestures or acts of caring, acceptance, and assistance that are expressed by a parent toward a child” (Shaw et al., 2004, p. 4). Hence, the role of parents is to provide a secure home for their children. As primary caregivers, they are the main providers of social support for their children’s needs, also in reference to school-related problems. When good, experiences with parental support may lead children to generalize this learning experience, and seek out supportive environments (White, 2009). Hence, parents’ positive attitudes and interest in school can impart encouragement and help, and render assistance in their child’s school work (Danielsen et al., 2009). It has been established that good relationships with parents are significant for positive self-esteem, while general well-being support from this group is a better indicator of positive development than peer support (Helsen, Vollebergh, & Meeus, 2000). All in all, research suggests that parents appear to be a crucial source of social support during the transition to adulthood (Ghate & Hazel, 2002).

While maturing young people also focus on their relationships with friends, which means that they tend to seek sources of social support in their peers (Levitt et al., 2005). Aside from being companions in leisure activities, peers are sources of instrumental and emotional support, helping the adolescent cope with everyday stressors, and overseeing adherence to behavioral norms (Wentzel, 2003). Peer support then, seen as the individual’s general support or specific support behaviors from friends or peers, which enhances their functioning and/or may buffer them from adverse outcomes, is also an important predictor of emotional well-being and emotional distress (Wentzel, Barry, & Cauldwell, 2004). As another factor contributing to students’ satisfaction with school, peer support caters for the needs for relatedness, independence, and ability. For this reason, students with high levels of peer support experience higher levels of school engagement (Garcia-Reid, 2007).

Teacher support is usually seen as the degree to which teachers listen to, encourage, and respect students (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). Undoubtedly, the student’s perceptions regarding whether the teacher cares about them and is willing to help undergirds successful functioning in the academic domain. Teachers are the most valid source of direct support within the educational context. Their behavior promotes the student’s feelings of well-being and security. Aside from that, they can offer the students time, knowledge, and concern. Their guidance can help the student understand and manage stressful situations induced by the learning process, while the teacher’s evaluation of the students’ performance helps them to excel academically. Henceforth, teachers exert an important effect on school engagement, beyond the effect of parental support (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). Moreover, supportive teacher-student relationships help maintain students’ academic interests and more positive peer relationships (Wentzel, 1998).

Within the domain of foreign language learning, social support has received little attention on the part of researchers. As far as parental support for adolescents learning a foreign language is concerned, it has been established that it is positively related to children’s educational outcomes – that is, foreign language (FL) achievement and homework self-efficacy (Dumont et al., 2012). However, the authors stress that the above finding is justified only when the parents’ assistance with the students’ homework is desired. Similarly, in the study by Csizér and Lukács (2010), the role of parental support in their children’s FL learning is found to be
more complex, as parents can send mixed messages in terms of the usefulness of the foreign language. As far as teacher support is concerned, students who have a feeling that they can count on the instructor’s help, advice, assistance, or backing, manage the learning process more successfully. They experience lower language anxiety levels, evaluate their language abilities highly, and receive better final grades (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011). However, it has also been established that foreign language learners’ feelings of alienation from school and forms of cooperative learning are negatively correlated with teacher support, significantly influencing academic achievement (Ghaith, 2002). Social support received from friends allows for the extension of the student’s social network by including new friends from another cultural context (MacIntyre et al., 2001). Aside from that, peer support has been found to be a weak predictor of FL achievement, contrary to other forms of social support that prove to be unimportant (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2013).

**Desire to learn a foreign language**

The term desire usually has a twofold conceptualization. It is seen as an attractive experience or a force that cannot be controlled. Yet desire also empowers the individual to make decisions on their own behalf (Cameron & Kulick, 2003). Such a dual view on desire allows this alluring concept to permeate various domains, education being one of them. Here the term desire to learn is used to denote a psychological state in which the learner has a need and wish to learn. It can be stipulated that this prerequisite may not be controlled, at the same time giving the learner the power to seek satisfaction independently through studying in order to satisfy the craving for a deeper understanding of the language, which advances learning. In this view, a desire to learn is seen as a series of moves, motives, and attractions, satisfying the learner’s craving for knowledge.

In the field of foreign language learning, the importance of the desire to learn has been recognized in the most influential motivational theories. Motivation to learn a foreign/second language is viewed as “the incentive, the need, or the desire to achieve proficiency that the learner feels to learn the second language” (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 47). As Gardner proposes, it is “the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (1985, p. 10). This view approaches the construct of desire to learn as a need and wish, whose satisfaction brings one a deeper understanding of a foreign language and a community. Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced the term of integrative motivation to refer to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment, when the learner desires to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community. Integrative goals reflect the desire to learn a foreign language for the purpose of communicating with or becoming part of a target community. Their main characteristics are positive attitudes toward the learning situation (the teacher and course), positive attitudes toward the target language community and the learning process, interest in foreign languages in general, and a desire to learn the language. To achieve their linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes, a motivated learner must show positive attitudes toward learning, exert effort, and have a desire to learn (Gardner, 2001). In this view such a desire is connected with admitting the importance of knowing the language for instrumental and integrative reasons. A motivated learner understands the value of knowing a foreign language, and learns it to participate more fully in the FL society, as well as for pragmatic reasons, such as getting a better job in future.

The empirical research carried out for the purpose of understanding the learner’s desire to study a foreign/second language demonstrates that in the case of learners of a foreign
language, motivation for learning is usually high due to the popularity of a language, such as English, as in the case of FL learners in Sudan (Abdelrahim & Humaida, 2012). Also, Filipino FL learners are highly motivated to learn English because of economic and career opportunities. Their desire to learn a foreign language is connected with pragmatic gains, such as getting a better job and even employment abroad (Gonzales, 2011). Iranian students learning English show a great desire to learn that language, because they believe that English is an important international language, and its mastery is necessary when one wants to visit other countries (Chalak & Kassain, 2010). As far as second language students are concerned, such a desire may be grounded in one’s pursuit of greater economic well-being and a stronger sense of belonging (Mady & Turnbull, 2012). This is the case of Allophones settling in Canada who want to learn the official languages to expand their multilingual identities and to optimize their economic and socio-cultural opportunities.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between forms of social support and the desire to learn a foreign language (English) in the Polish educational context. The paper was prompted by a growing interest in understanding the social variables underpinning the process of foreign language learning, such as social support, whose research in this field is still scarce. As well, studies on social support’s relationship with the desire to learn a foreign/second language are practically nonexistent. For the purpose of this research it is speculated that the desire to learn a language is strongly related to social support due to the fact that individuals who are convinced that they are respected and cared for feel free to pursue their desires. This seems especially relevant to the desire to learn a language, which is a want that may have positive connotations for everyone with close bonds with an individual experiencing such a desire. In the case of parental support it can be posited that familial expectations, the role models parents offer, and the investments that they are ready to make for their child may induce a significant incentive for a language learner to instigate and sustain the desire to learn a foreign language. Apart from that, it is also expected that peer support may also be strongly related to a desire to learn a language, due to the fact that peers and friends the learner may have are likely to respect and understand the desire to learn a foreign language (such as English) for its instrumental advantages. In the case of teacher support, it cannot be assumed that all the teachers taking part in the FL learner’s educational process may respect their students’ desire to learn a language, for the reason that they are likely to pay attention to their own subject matter area. Hence, their support may not be noteworthy in this respect. For these reasons, the main working hypotheses proposed for the purpose of this study is:

H: Students with a stronger desire to learn a foreign language experience stronger forms of social support in comparison to those with a weaker desire.

Method

Below is a description of the participants of the study, followed by a depiction of the instruments. The section ends with an account of the procedure implemented for the purpose of the empirical research.

Participants

The participants in the study were 609 students from 23 classes of the six secondary grammar schools in Opole, southwestern Poland (384 girls and 225 boys). Their mean age was 17.50. They were all second grade students with three to six hours a week of English instruction.
Their level of proficiency in English was intermediate. Their other compulsory language was French or German (about two lessons a week). 426 of them did not have any extracurricular English language instruction, while the remainder (183) had some out-of-class experience during the research procedure.

On the basis of the participants’ levels of desire to learn a language (Kissau, 2006) the sample was divided into quartiles. The lower one, dubbed LD (≤44 points), comprised 156 students whose desire to learn English was low, and the upper, HD, accommodated 159 students with a strong desire (≤57 points). The middle quartiles were excluded from further analyses.

**Instruments**

The basic instrument adopted for the purpose of the research was a questionnaire. Its first part explored demographic variables such as age, gender (1 – male, 2 – female), and extracurricular activities devoted to broadening the knowledge of English (1 – yes, 2 – no).

The study utilized the *Perceived Parental Support* scale, adopted from Chen (2005). It comprised 38 items that measure the emotional, instrumental, and cognitive support provided by the informants’ parents. The sample items in the scale were: *My parents make sure that I spend the majority of my time doing homework and studying* or *My parents help me find ways to resolve school problems*. The participants indicated their perception of parental support on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). Eight negatively-worded items were key-reversed. The minimum score was 38, the maximum 190. The scale’s reliability was measured in terms of Cronbach’s alpha, showing very good reliability (α=.86).

Also used was the *Perceived Teacher Support* scale, adopted from Chen (2005). It featured 32 items measuring a similar kind of support, but this time offered by the informants’ teachers of all subjects. The sample items in the scale were: *I feel comfortable sharing my school problems with my teachers* or *My teachers spend time outside of class to explain to me the materials that I don’t understand*. The items were assessed with a similar Likert scale, while three of them were key-reversed. The minimum score was 32, the maximum 160. The scale’s reliability was α=.88.

The last scale measuring support was the *Perceived Friend Support* scale (Chen, 2005). It contained 22 items measuring the informants’ perceived support from their friends, such as: *My friends want to help me to do my best in school* or *I feel comfortable asking my friends for help*. With a similar Likert scale, two of them key-reversed, the minimum score was 22, the maximum 110. The scale’s reliability was again α=.88.

**Procedure**

The data collection procedure took place in April 2011. In each class, the students filled in the questionnaire. The time designated for the activity was 15 to 45 minutes, depending on their speed. The participants were asked to give sincere answers without taking excessive time to think. A short statement introducing a new set of items in an unobtrusive manner preceded each part of the questionnaire.
The design of the study is mostly differential, comparing groups that are differentiated on a pre-existing variable, i.e., levels of their desire to learn English. The research was conducted by comparing means obtained on the social support scales (parental, peer, and teacher support) in groups with low (LD) and high levels of desire to learn English (HD).

**Results**

In the beginning the means and SD for all the grouped variables were calculated. They are divided into groups with low (LD) and high desire to learn English (HD) (see Table 1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>LD (N=207)</th>
<th>HD (N=190)</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental support</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher support</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aside from descriptive statistics, the table also shows the results of the t-test for independent samples. Students with a low and high desire to learn English differ significantly in their parental and peer support, while they can be regarded as similar in the degree of their teacher support.

Fig. 1: Parental, teacher, and peer support in students with low (LD) and high desire to learn a foreign language (HD)

**Discussion**

According to the hypothesis adopted for the purpose of this paper, students with a stronger desire to learn a foreign language experience stronger forms of social support in comparison to those with a weaker desire. The results of the research corroborated the hypothesis in the case of parental and peer support.

These findings can be explained by theories of development postulating that adolescents’ successful development demands trusting and caring relationships that enable autonomous decision making. This means that the learner’s development is affected by interactions with significant others, especially parents, teachers, and peers. These three support systems
simultaneously influence the student’s academic outcomes and their academic work. Therefore when students do not have opportunities for trusting relations, they are likely to suffer from psychological and academic maladjustment, unable to develop their needs and desires.

As far as parental support is concerned, students with a strong desire to learn a foreign language experience high levels of such support. This finding can be attributed to the general feelings of acceptance such FL students may perceive from their parents, allowing them to pursue their wants unobtrusively and with great approval. Learners may be conscious of the fact that their desire to learn English (a global lingua franca) is fully accepted by their parents, who are ready to invest in it with their time or money. Parents of such children may find it a significant indicator of their children’s future plans, because knowledge of English is likely to widen their children’s prospects for a good job, a future career, or entertainment. At the same time, it appears justified to suggest that the learners’ present time management, allowing them to study English freely, may be looked upon as a promising, success-seeking, and advantageous hobby that can be fully appreciated.

At the same time, students whose desire to learn English is very low do not experience noteworthy parental support. This pessimistic finding may reveal the inadequate nature of such parent-child relationships, which do not allow for the pursuit of the children’s wants. Yet, it may appear that without parental backup educational desires may give way to other desires of different nature, which may not necessarily require parental blessing. Evidently, such a situation is not conducive for studying, which is an obvious loss on the part of such learners. They deprive themselves of chances to excel in this domain due to a lack of passion for learning or a general lack of interest in English. All in all, it seems interesting that the role of parents in their children’s foreign language learning process cannot be overestimated – they are the primary caregivers and role models whose support or lack of it may eventually seal their children’s fate.

However, one may expect that the role of teachers should be extremely influential because of the educational nature of the desire to learn a foreign language. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the present research – students with a stronger desire to learn a foreign language do not differ from those with a weaker desire in the support they gain from teachers. As has been explained, students have contact with many teachers of various subjects during their secondary grammar school experience. Their instructors are quite likely to care mainly about the learner’s development within their own field of specialization, disregarding the merits of the foreign language learning process. Moreover, they may even question the learner’s attention, time, and effort paid elsewhere, and, in effect, weaken their need to pursue the desire to learn a foreign language. It may then appear that the learner’s craving is unrelated to teachers’ influences, which may again point to the autonomous character of the desire in the academic context.

The disparity in the levels of peer support offered to those with a strong and weak desire to learn a foreign language is the biggest in comparison to other measurements. It follows that this support type is most influential regarding the desire to learn. Peers, classmates, and friends offer support, helping one to enhance self-worth and develop social skills, as well as stable, positive attitudes toward school and the world outside it. Unsurprisingly, in favorable conditions one’s fascinations and desires are accepted, leaving ample space for pursuing desires. Students with a substantial desire to learn experience strong support from friends, who acknowledge their passions and wants.
In the case of students with a weaker desire to learn a foreign language, peer support appears significantly meager. It can be stated that their environment does not appear conducive to pursuing any educational aspirations. Their peers do not show them respect or backing, which jeopardizes any effort connected with cooperative learning or group work, so important to language development. It may thus be speculated that their desires may not spring from the educational context.

**Conclusion**

Social support appears an extremely valuable phenomenon whose importance for one’s well-being and successful development cannot be questioned. The results of the research clearly show that good parental and peer support are connected with the desire to learn a foreign language. Unfortunately, teacher support turns out to be inconclusive, which exposes the passive role of teachers in this area. Owing to this finding, it is vital to offer some suggestions to all teachers, irrespective of their subject area, in order to allow their students to cultivate their interests.

First and foremost, there must be a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. This can be achieved by showing more support to the students. It can be done by building up students’ beliefs in themselves, and showing them respect and genuine interest. Learners need to be recognized as individuals, involved in making decisions about the learning process, and made aware of ways of initiating and sustaining their motivation to study.

Aside from consciously focusing on the development of teacher support, teacher intervention can also aim to enhance peer support, connected with forms of cooperative learning. Students should work with classmates in order to foster confidence in their own skills. They can learn to rely on their mates, and acquire the skill of assessing their and others’ work (self- and peer-assessment), which can bring them feelings of great satisfaction. Group and pair work applied at various stages of the lesson can lead to the growth of a sense of community, allowing for a clear understanding and appreciation of the effort and the investment of their peers working for a common goal.

Finally, the teacher also has the power to promote parental support by directly addressing parents during meetings after classes. Given that opportunity, they may have a chance to establish good contacts between the student’s school and home. Then parents could be made aware of their children’s educational aspirations, as well as of particular ways in which they can be supported in the home context. Establishing a good rapport between the most influential groups of social support is likely to induce feelings of accomplishment and pride in the learner, allowing them to make responsible, yet autonomous, decisions concerning their desires, especially those connected with learning.

**References**


Youth, New Media and the Performance of Digital Identities

Joe Grixti, School of English and Media Studies, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand. j.a.grixti@massey.ac.nz

Abstract: The growth of digital media technologies and their widespread use by young people in most parts of the developed world have given rise to both celebration and concern. On the one hand, new media technologies have been seen as ushering a new era of creativity, active and interactive learning, and inventive experimentation with different forms of identity construction. On the other hand, the sheer scale of young people’s use of different types of new media technologies has given rise to unease about possible identity confusion, compounding levels of distraction, potential exposure to internet predators and cyber-bullies, and increased vulnerability to exploitation by powerful media conglomerates. This paper investigates the evidence behind these positions in order to examine whether and how being a ‘digital native’ is indeed bringing about dramatically new ways of thinking, being and behaving among today’s youth.

Keywords Youth, social media, identity, Facebook, digital natives

Introduction

The media are widely believed to play key roles in shaping cultural knowledge, behaviours, and social and personal identities at global, national, regional, and local levels. This is particularly true for contemporary youth: their media experiences are far more extensive and intensive than any other generation in history, and they constitute the first group to be enculturated into media and computer cultures from the beginning of their lives. The media have thus been identified as playing critically important roles (positive as well as negative) in the moulding of youth choices and behaviours – not least because young people tend to try out different roles and identities, and are at a point in their lives where they are most actively constructing identities and negotiating alternatives. This paper considers changing patterns in the mind-sets, attitudes and behaviour of a growing generation of young people whose exposure to digital media since early childhood has turned them into ‘digital natives’.

The extent to which young people in most parts of the developed world have embraced digital media technologies has given rise to both celebration and concern. On the positive and optimistic side, new media technologies have been argued to foster greater creativity, and their potential for facilitating interactive learning across time and space has been seen as a great boost to education, as well as facilitating inventive experimentation with different forms of identity construction. At a stage of life when issues of identity are particularly salient, digital media technologies have been seen as playing a central role in enabling young people to explore and express different aspects of their personality and to share them with others.

At the same time, new digital technologies have been argued to encourage distraction, identity confusion, increased vulnerability to internet predators and cyber-bullies, as well as further enhancing the ability of powerful media conglomerates to exploit the impressionable young. In this view, new digital technologies have enabled the global entertainment industries to further broaden their appeal by foregrounding spectacle at the expense of content. Similarly, because young people’s interactions with digital media are primarily playful and
non-instrumental, new media technologies have been seen as nurturing superficiality and lack of substance. Thus, since the exercise of making connections or eliciting a response has arguably become more important than the content of the message, new media technologies are seen as ludic ends in themselves, perpetuating a type of identity performance which cannot move beyond the playful and inconsequential.

**Youth, Social Media and Identity**

Young people have been very fast to integrate new media technologies into their everyday lives. This is particularly noticeable in their use of smart phones and the internet, and in their enthusiastic embracing of Social Networking Sites like MySpace and Facebook. According to the US-based 2012 “Mobile Youth Report”, young people spent more on mobile technology services in the last ten years than they did on movies and music in the last fifty, 60% of young people sleep with their phones, and 81% say that they would spend their last $10 on topping it up rather than on food (Mobile Youth, 2012). Nine out of ten 13- to 17-year-olds have used some form of social media, and three out of four teenagers currently have a profile on a social networking site (Loechner, 2012). Social networks and blogs now account for nearly a quarter of the time spent on the Internet, with Internet users spending more than twice as much time on social networks than they do in the second-most popular category: playing online games (Baker, 2012).

To pause briefly on gaming: according to the Entertainment Software Association’s annual study of game players in 2010, 97% of US youth play computer and video games, and there is strong evidence to suggest that this trend is increasingly mirrored in many other countries from every continent (McGonigal, 2011, pp. 11-12). According to one estimate, young people are on average spending ten thousand hours playing computer and video games by the time they turn twenty-one. For Jane McGonigal, this is a trend which should be leveraged because “these ten thousand hours are just enough time to become extraordinary at the one thing all games make us good at: cooperating, coordinating, and creating something new together” (McGonigal, 2011: 348). At the same time, however, other researchers have found that the young people who are motivated enough to mine the learning riches of the Internet are a decided minority and tend to be those who were already technologically and educationally privileged (Ito, 2012).

Facebook is the top destination of all social networks and blogs – a position which it achieved in 2008, when it overtook the teen-dominated MySpace. Up to this date, MySpace had been the most visited social networking site in the world since 2005, even surpassing Google as the most visited website in 2006. According to Loechner, 68% of all teens in the US now say Facebook is their main social networking site, compared to 6% for Twitter, 1% for GooglePlus, and 1% for MySpace (Loechner, 2012). According to its own figures, Facebook had 845 million monthly active users in 2011, 483 million of whom used it daily. 45% of Facebook users are aged 13 to 25, and researchers have found that university students spend an average of up to thirty minutes a day on Facebook, often logging in several times a day (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009).

Social Networking Sites have been described as “identity workshops” which provide young people with an opportunity for “identity play” or the ability to experiment and juggle between different identities and forms of self-expression not normally achievable in the real world. There is a danger of overdramatizing what this type of identity play involves. When the Internet was beginning to take off in a big way in the 1990s, new media networks were seen
by some scholars as allowing individuals to become “disembodied”, and to thus have unrestricted access to self-modification and experimentation with multiple identities. Sherry Turkle influentially argued that the ability to try out a multiplicity of online identities allows individuals to express themselves in unrestricted ways and thus to virtually experience a range of complementary or antithetical identities. As she put it, the internet allowed the self to become “not only decentred but multiplied without limit” (Turkle, 1995). More recently, however, serious doubts have been raised about the extent to which online selves can differ from the offline ones, and several researchers have shown that role-playing and identity-building as the basis of on-line interaction are a tiny proportion of Internet-based sociability (Castells, 2001). But Turkle’s argument does continue to make sense when applied to young people, who are still in the process of constructing and understanding their own identities. Most of the participants in Turkle’s study had in fact been younger people, whose sense of self was still in formation. As Manuel Castells puts it:

this kind of practice seems to be heavily concentrated among teenagers. Indeed, teenagers are the people who are in the process of discovering their identity, of experimenting with it, of finding out who they really are or would like to be, thus offering a fascinating field of research for the understanding of identity construction and experimentation. (Castells, 2001, p.118)

As several international studies have shown, young adults use Social Networking Sites primarily to keep in touch and reconnect with friends whom they also know offline. The emphasis in most of the interactions which take place online falls heavily on being always connected, even though the connection usually lacks any real exchange of information. Taking his cue from Malinowski’s anthropological description of communicative gesture, Vincent Miller has described these online interactions as “phatic” because they are concerned with the process and not the content of communication. Their principal aim is to fulfill the social function of expressing sociability and maintaining connections or bonds, rather than to inform or exchange any meaningful information or facts about the world. Communication without content and the notion of a connected presence have thus taken precedence over the exchange of substantive content (Miller, 2008).

Young people do, however, also devote considerable time and effort to constructing and developing their online identities, particularly through the photos of themselves and of their activities which get uploaded and updated on a regular basis. And because young people are at a stage of life when their sense of self is still in formation, the concepts of “identity play” and “identity workshops” do go a long way towards describing their on-line interactions. Social networking has thus become a mode of self-representation and display, or what has been termed the “online textual performance of self” (Nayar, 2010, pp. 62-3). This is especially noticeable in the ways young people represent themselves through the creation and regular updating of their online profile and status, not least because such representations become indices of taste and also a means of acquiring and displaying social capital.

Teenagers are very concerned about ‘status’, as reflected in their various hierarchies and categories of jocks, nerds, dorks and geeks, and their displays of their social identities on social media often become exercises in status negotiation (not unlike what happens in the school yard). Because of this, social media have become “a powerful peer-based learning environment where youth are constructing and picking up social norms, tastes, knowledge and culture from those around them” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In other words, a lot of the activity and interaction which takes place in cyberspace is not so much playing or experimenting with new identities as enacting and reinforcing pre-existing social ideals of
gender, sexuality, and appearance. And because young people’s socializing increasingly takes place online as well as offline, online profile management has also become an integral component of their real-life identities. The construction and management of online identities (the “online textual performance of self”) thus not only reflects but also plays a key role in shaping the patterns of their social behaviour, interaction and relations. It is also worth stressing that the creation, projection and performance of online identities on networking sites like Facebook need to happen within the parameters and (usually commercially-driven) structures of the site. Users thus construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.

Facebook Photos as Identity Performance

These patterns are well captured in a study conducted at Massey University in New Zealand which looked at how and why university students regularly use Facebook to post pictures of themselves at parties after consuming large amounts of alcohol (Tonks, 2012). Displaying oneself in party mode and drunk, these students insisted, is totally appropriate behaviour for people in their age group because this is “expected behaviour for university students”. In other words, the photos and profiles they were uploading reflected what they assumed to be socially defined perceptions of youth culture and behaviour.

In her analysis, Tonks identified a series of discursive patterns in the ways the students she interviewed spoke about their Facebook photos. These patterns and their underlying assumptions, she suggests, allowed them to perceive and present themselves as participating in a normalised, positive and socially acceptable online student drinking culture. The first of these patterns (which she calls “a normal and natural everyday discourse”) indicated that a Facebook photo culture was an embedded part of the students’ socialising and drinking practices. There was also a “fun, pleasure and humour discourse” which showed that the photos and the subsequent online interactions which they triggered were a positive source of light-hearted enjoyment. As Tonks puts it,

Participants were able to reconstruct and share their drinking episodes because the photos provided the participants with a visual online drinking story. The viewing and interactions with these photos became a post-night-out ritual that allowed participants to relive and continue the drinking experience after it had ended. (Tonks, 2012, p. iii)

Participants’ friends contributed drinking photos to each other’s profiles, and also interacted with the photos through the ‘liking’ and commenting tools. In this manner, Facebook became a site where friends expressed approval and thus reinforced a perception of youth drinking culture as normal and positive. Posting the photos and commenting on them were seen as ways of sharing and extending the pleasures of partying and being drunk. These representations thus reinforced the idea that being drunk is expected, normal and positive behaviour for university students. In this way, these young people were strategically locating themselves within a wider student drinking culture which they perceived as allowing them to display their excessive drinking as fun, normal and socially acceptable.

The students were also clearly concerned about acceptability and appropriateness, so that the types of photos which were shared online reflected what they believed to be acceptable behaviour. For example, being comatose as a consequence of drinking was considered acceptable and many photos reflected this. On the other hand, photos of being sick and vomiting were not represented on students’ profiles because they were seen as being beyond the boundary of acceptability and appropriateness. Significantly, the students were also
convinced that the acceptability or otherwise of this form of self-display changes with age and context. As their social positions changed with advancing age, they insisted, so would the ways they behaved or represented themselves. There are problems here with their levels of control in all this. For instance, when one of the young people in the study went on teaching placement as a student teacher, she became concerned about the Facebook photos of her drunken self being seen by pupils, parents and other teachers at her school. The change in her social position meant that what she had previously considered acceptable now became a problem.

**Blurred Boundaries and Virtual-Real Amphibians**

What these examples suggest is that new media technologies have brought about a dramatic blurring of traditional boundaries between different kinds of social space. It bears stressing that online and offline behaviour – our engagement with the virtual and the real – are not mutually exclusive activities. We have learnt to navigate fairly easily between the virtually real and the actually real because technologically developed societies have come to depend on their coexistence and overlap. To give a fairly obvious example, most of us use ATMs, engage with internet banking, use credit cards, or make online transactions as we move around our physical (or ‘concrete’) environments. In each case, we simultaneously inhabit the actually real and the virtually real, and what we do in one realm has real and direct consequences on the other. This propensity for what can be termed virtual-real amphibianism is particularly noticeable among the young.

Young people are still learning how to locate themselves appropriately in society, but because of the extent to which their lives have become inseparable from digital media, smart phones and social networking that learning process has become more complex and fraught. The use of new media, we can say, has blurred at least four types of boundaries which traditionally defined appropriate and inappropriate social behaviour.

*First:* demarcations between different kinds of social space have become blurred – so that private and public spaces, home and work, party and school constantly interpenetrate. Internet technology not only makes it possible to work from home and be on call virtually anywhere and anytime, it also makes it easy to ‘privately’ engage in informal social interactions or gaming in public work spaces like lecture rooms or shared offices. It also makes it possible for employers to check out what their current or prospective employees have been up to in their private life by checking their Facebook profile. This blurring of private-public boundaries has led a number of US states to officially make it illegal for employers to ask their workers for passwords to their social media accounts (Kravets, 2013), but the increasing fuzziness of distinctions between private and public means that all types of personal information posted on social media accounts is publicly available and often sought out and used by snoopers (ranging from employers to parents to potential predators) for purposes of surveillance or control.

*Second:* Distinctions between fantasy worlds and “real” worlds are constantly shifting and needing to be refined – as illustrated by the ways in which multi-player internet games like World of Warcraft or Second Life have impacted on relationships, self-image and the sheer amount of time which those addicted to them spend on them. There are many reported cases of players becoming so engaged in alternate gaming realities that they sacrifice their friends, jobs, and education for a virtual reality that offers prestige, social opportunity, and equality not available to them in real life. But even outside these extreme cases, it has become
increasingly difficult to define and explain exactly what it means to be ‘immersed’ in a digitally mediated interactive online experience and what impact this is having on how we distinguish between the real and the fantastic (Calleja, 2011; Grixti, 2012).

Third: Demographic categories have continued to blur. This is a pattern which was noted as early as the 1980s in relation to how television was blurring traditional age, gender, and authority distinctions by lifting many of the veils of secrecy between children and adults, men and women, and politicians and average citizens (Meyrowitz, 1985). If television made it very difficult for adults to control what and when children could learn about the adult world, new media technologies have raised the stakes even further, giving children even easier access to information and material which previous generations would have hidden from them. In this sense, our understanding of what it means to be a child or young adult has also been undergoing a dramatic qualitative shift, as have the ways young people see themselves and perform (Buckingham, 2000; Grixti, 2005).

Fourth: Online and offline behaviour have become conflated, and what happens in one realm has real and direct consequences on the other. In this sense, new media technologies are indeed re-shaping what identity means and how we display our identity to others. The self, as Lister et al put it, is becoming a “networked presence” (Lister et al, 2009, p. 208). We have all learnt to constantly navigate between the virtually real and the actually real because technologically developed societies have come to depend on their coexistence and overlap. But in the case of digital natives, this means that their survival and good health have come to be increasingly dependent on their skills as virtual-real amphibians.

Conclusion

This paper has reviewed some of the key arguments about the ways in which new media technologies and social networking sites are influencing and helping to remould how young people perceive and structure their own identities and behaviour. I have drawn attention to some of the ways in which new media technologies have brought about a dramatic blurring of traditional boundaries between different kinds of social space, and suggested that the sheer scale of young people’s enthusiastic immersion as ‘digital natives’ in these reconfigured social spaces is indeed bringing about dramatically new ways of thinking, being and behaving among today’s youth.

The research evidence discussed in this paper leaves little doubt that young people’s aspirations and engagement with reality are increasingly inflected by their networked experiences and encounters. If young people’s survival and good health have indeed become dependent on their skills as virtual-real amphibians, then it is imperative for educators and parents to develop a better understanding of the constantly evolving ways in which today’s youth interact with digital technologies. Given the nature and scale of the boundary-blurring changes involved, the roles and responsibilities of those entrusted with the education and protection of the young call for greater engagement, insight and acumen than is allowed for by (ultimately ineffectual) attempts at policing or the imposition of controls. A changing world requires new and inventive approaches. Educators and caregivers too, in other words, need to adapt to the profound changes brought about by new media technologies by immersing themselves more creatively in the possibilities provided by those media. Like the young who are in their care, they too need to aim at becoming more proficient amphibians.
References


Language fossilization from the perspective of foreign learners of Polish: problems and challenges

Marzena S. Wysocka, PhD, College of Foreign Languages, Częstochowa, Poland
m.wysocka@wsl.edu.pl

Abstract
The paper is an attempt to outline beliefs and attitudes towards fossilization held and expressed by foreign learners of Polish in a FL classroom situation. The data derive from the questionnaire investigating learners’ (un)awareness of fossilization. Starting from the concept itself, defined as a propensity for language behaviours lacking appropriate forms and features, symptoms of fossilization, as well as factors conducive to and preventing fossilization in the form of learners’ experiences are touched upon. Finally, the examples of learner (de)fossilizing actions and measures are hinted at, as well as reasons for the status quo, and attempts to account for learners’ positive and negative perceptions are made, giving problem solutions and suggestions for teachers of Polish as a FL.

Keywords: language fossilization, perception, problems, challenges

Introduction
Fossilization, being, among other things, defined as a propensity for language behaviours lacking appropriate forms and features, takes on different forms and tendencies alone. The very tendencies are generated by many factors, amount and quality of input being the most prominent and influential ones. In view of the influence the above-mentioned exert on learners’ grammars at the advanced level, the article attempts to outline how foreign learners of Polish perceive the phenomenon in question, how they struggle with problems and respond to challenges in the course of language development.

Language fossilization
Explanations of the concept of fossilization reflect its diversity and complexity. To name a few, the phenomenon in question is perceived as:

- ‘ultimate attainment’ (Selinker 1974, p. 36),
- ‘(…) non-progression of learning (…)’ (Selinker 1992, p. 257),
- ‘(…) cessation of further systematic development in the interlanguage’. (Selinker&Han 1996),
- ‘(…) regular reappearance or re-emergence in IL productive performance of linguistic structures which were thought to have disappeared’ (Selinker 1974, p. 36), or ‘the long term persistence of plateaus of non-target-like structures in the interlanguage of non-native speakers’ (Selinker & Lakshmanan 1993, p.197).

More specifically, ultimate attainment stands for the end state the advanced learners reach well on their way to learning a language, denoting, at the same time, the lack of potential for further development. This inability to improve and/or develop in the language recurs under the label of a widely-understood non-progression or cessation of learning. Crucial as these notions are to the phenomenon of fossilization, they are not the only ones. As can be seen in the last two explanations, much of the onus also falls on a permanent retention and reappearance of (correct and/or incorrect) language habits and forms within the fossilised language competence.
Judging by the afore-mentioned descriptions, it goes without saying that fossilization is subject to changes, modifications and verifications. And, more precisely, it can be referred to as temporary, tendentious and regressive in character, resulting in language blockage and impediment, as well as incorrectness.

**Source of fossilization**

The sources of fossilization are numerous, and reach cognitive, psychological, neuro-biological, socio-affective and environmental dimensions. Cognitively speaking, it is the **lack of access to Universal Grammar (UG)**, **failure of parameter resetting** and **non-operation of UG learning principles** that are most frequently reported to bear an influence on the actual state of the knowledge of the TL. This is particularly true of adult learners, whose lack of access to full range of UG directly contributes to their incomplete L2 ultimate attainment. Stripped of those aspects of UG not incorporated into the L1, and deprived of **UG learning principles**, the learners have a limited knowledge of the TL, their process of learning being effortful and time-consuming.

From a psychological point of view, it is the learners’ **reluctance to take the risk of restructuring**, their **natural tendency to focus on content, not on form**, and **transfer of training** that contribute to fossilization. In the first case, the learners give up and do not say word instead of making an attempt to form reformulations and language alterations. In the second, As Skehan (1998) claims, the meaning priority, especially evident in the case of the adult learners, relegates the form of language into the category of secondary importance. This momentarily results in learners’ tendencies to ‘say less but mean more’, without exhaustive analyses and use of the structure of an already deviant language. As long as communicative effectiveness is achieved, the erroneous structures are doomed to survive and stabilize, usually becoming nothing but syntactic fossils. And, finally, **transfer of training**, be it the actual examples of teacher’s bad language, or the result of textbook content and method, it is considered to be the source of misused and overused forms, constituting an “overture” to fossilized competence.

Taking into consideration neuro-biological constraints triggering fossilization, much of the onus falls on **age and maturational constraints**. What is at issue is Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), which, in its second version under the name of the Maturational State Hypothesis, holds that

(…) early in life, humans have a superior language capacity. The capacity disappears or declines with maturation, i.e. even when it is used normally for L1 acquisition (Long 2003, p.497).

Having reached this stage in life, the learning process becomes explicit, and does not take place without a great deal of effort invested on the part of the learners. In addition, lack of brain plasticity, which reduces its capacity for new forms of learning, comes down to a non-fluent and non-native language construct.

As far as the socio-affective account of fossilization is concerned, **satisfaction of communicative needs** is given priority here. As it emerges from Selinker’s (1974) evidence, the learner’s self-confidence and perceptions of his/her language proficiency as fairly enough to communicate in L2 stop him/her from learning. Even though the learners might be aware of language inconsistencies and deviant forms fixed in their linguistic repertoire, they usually do not make any effort to restructure them since the language they produce meets their expectations. Communicatively efficient as the language may seem to its actual users, it is, in
fact, on the right way to regress, on account of being used fragmentarily, and/or being abused.

The relationship between the environment and language fossilization rests on the amount and quality of input the learners are exposed to in the classroom. Typically, the classroom input is very much limited and lacks in language variety. Most often, it comes from the teacher talk, student talk, and language materials to hand. Teacher talk, like foreigner talk, consists in adjustments at all language levels, and, by definition, is unnatural and artificial. In similar vein, student talk is given undesirable attributes on account of its unnatural way to develop. Lastly, the language materials widely-used in the classroom are non-authentic ones, and, thus, the input they provide is confined, more often than not, within the contents of the coursebook, evoking fossilization.

Scope of fossilization

Although Selinker & Lakshmanan (1993) clearly state that there is no precise list of fossilizable language structures, it is presently believed that, despite prominence being given to pronunciation, namely the so-called ‘foreign accents’, fossilization is expected to occur at phonological, morphological as well as syntactic levels. While foreign accents and examples of bad pronunciation in general are to a greater or lesser extent observable among FL learners irrespective of their L1 background and language, fossilizable language structures at the level of morphology and syntax are more L1 specific, and their frequency of occurrence is likely to differ with respect to the native language of a given FL learner.

L1 specific fossilization, to quote the evidence from the studies on fossilization reviewed by Han (2004: 114), manifests itself in the following morphosyntactic structures:

- grammatical gender and third person singular possessive determiners (e.g. fireman/firewoman instead of firefighter, his/him instead of him/his respectively);
- verbal morphology (verb forms and conjugation, e.g. *workes instead of works);
- grammatical morphemes such as articles, plurals and prepositions (e.g. *a apple instead of an apple, *foots instead of feet, and *on a lesson instead of in a lesson);
- relative clauses (e.g. placing a comma before a relative pronoun);
- adverb placement (e.g. placing an adverb between the verb and the object: *The student eats quickly his meals);
- locative alternation (misplacing verbs of load/spray, removal verbs and impingement verbs), and
- tense/aspect form–meaning associations (e.g. using perfective past tense forms for no result actions).

Not only does L1 influence fossilization of certain structures, but the target language to which the learners aspire is a decisive factor as well. Therefore, a wide range of structures susceptible to fossilization depends not infrequently on the specificity and complexity of L2, either impeding or facilitating the process in question. To name a few examples of target language fossilization, it is crucial to refer to Han (2004), who brings a preponderance of evidence on the relationship between the L2 item difficulty and its predisposition to fossilize. As it is illustrated in Table 1, the language areas conceived of as difficult to acquire by L2 learners, and thus particularly prone to fossilization, involve word order and case-marking in the case of German being the TL, and, for example, passive constructions or relative clauses posing hardship for L2 learners of English.
Table 1: Structures vulnerable to fossilization (adapted from Han, 2004, p.112)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic feature</th>
<th>Target language</th>
<th>L1 group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject-verb-object word order</td>
<td>Dutch or German</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Easy/Eager to please'</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French, Hebrew, Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronominal reflex of the NP head in a relative clause (e.g., The film was about a boy that he wanted to be free.)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Farsi, Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case-marking (e.g., Jeder Republikaner betrachtete er also sein persönlicher Feind.)</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Dutch, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-passive (e.g., The books have received.)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Chinese, Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using English progressive duratively (e.g., Day after day he was swotting for his exam.)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make + complement (e.g., They might make their friends get very upset about this.)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the above, Todeva (1992; in: Han 2004, p.116), singles out three linguistic categories at risk of getting fossilized due to the previously-mentioned item difficulty. These are:
- categories lacking a straightforward form-function relationship, e.g. articles;
- semi-productive rules, whose exceptions do not constitute clearly defined sets, and units highly arbitrary in nature, such as prepositions or collocations.

**Perception of fossilization**

Building on a preponderance of evidence for fossilization in general, its diversity and specificity with respect to L1 learners, the author of the article aims at investigating the foreign language users of Polish. What is at issue concerns linguistic behaviours symptomatic of fossilization and recognized as such by the sample, including problematic and challenging cases most particularly.

**The research**

The sample constituted 146 students of the Polish Language Course attending the School of Polish Language and Culture at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

8 different nationalities and languages the sample represented allowed for presenting them under the label of 3 different branches of the Indo-European language family, namely Germanic, Slavonic and Romance. The first group (A) comprised 13 German, 16 Scandinavian and 13 English students of Polish as a FL, it being 46 altogether. The second (B) was composed of 24 Ukrainians and 25 Slovaks, which makes 49 in total, whereas the third group (C) consisted of 14 Italian, 18 Spanish and 19 French course participants, that is 51 as a whole. As far as gender and age distribution is concerned, group A was made up of 17 female and 29 male students aged 21-45, group B contained 21 females and 28 males...
between 24 and 49 years of age, while in group C the number of female representatives came
to 25 and male ones to 26 between the ages of 20 and 31. In terms of qualifications, groups A
and B seemed homogeneous and included similar proportions of BA and MA degree holders,
i.e. 25 vs 21 and 25 vs 24 respondents respectively. Groups C, being younger in general,
predominated in BA students (27), it being 10 more than MA students (17), as well as 7
subjects with no diplomas whatsoever. When it comes to their language experience, it was
not limited to studying Polish as 100% of the German, English, Italian, Spanish and French
respondents admitted working as lecturers and/or teachers of their native language in
language schools in Poland; 9, 10, 4, 7, and 10 of them respectively having their BA in
language and culture (teaching).

Tools

The subjects were confronted with the questionnaire investigating the phenomenon of
fossilization and inter-related issues. In the first place, the task prepared for them
encapsulated a brief definition of fossilization as such, a short list of symptoms and
determinants of fossilization, and factors responsible for the process in question. Secondly,
the group examined was expected to respond to a set of questions investigating the subjects’
personal attitude to fossilization, evidence for fossilization in their interlanguage included.
Thirdly, the group was supposed to provide examples of measures taken to prevent
fossilization widely-used in the position of a learner (see Appendix).
The so called fossilization-related issues concentrated on Language achievements and
Language failure, and contributed to a set of instances of Language success and failure or,
put it differently, challenges and problems, enlisted by the respondents. Accordingly, the
subjects were to complete the already-made statements referring to language aspects they
perceived themselves particularly good and bad at (see Appendix).

Discussion of data: definition of fossilization

The opening question the sample dealt with in this section touched upon a definition of the
very phenomenon. In their attempts to explain and define fossilization, only 27 out of 46
students from the Germanic students responded. It was 10 German, 1 Scandinavian and 16
English informants altogether, and their overall contribution was the following:

Table 2: Subjects' definition of fossilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOSSILIZATION IS / EQUALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- a process,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a phenomenon,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a mechanism,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- negative and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- usual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All things considered, the entries provided by the subjects were very general in nature and
referred to language dynamism, poor quality as well as popularity and/or inevitability of the
very phenomenon. In addition to it, the very data reflected a great deal of fossilization
unawareness, ignorance or indifference the informants manifested and, at the same time, a clear signal for the course change, including above all language awareness training.

**Discussion of data: symptoms of fossilization**

The second fossilization-related issue concerned symptoms of fossilization. Accordingly, the subjects under investigation were expected to identify signals of fossilization to the best of their knowledge. This time, the students’ ignorance, noticed beforehand, seemed confirmed, it being composed of the lack of symptoms indicative of fossilization given or blank spaces being left in all cases rather than the statements completed. Those who made an attempt to describe the concept in the previous section, seemed unable to simply formulate linguistic examples of a “freezing” competence, be it an oral or written language mode.

**Discussion of data: causes of fossilization**

A similar situation was observed when the subjects dealt with the factors conducive to fossilization. Being devoid of any ideas and assumptions behind the very problem, or at a loss for the right or a better word in order to express themselves, 100% of all the questioned informants did not have a try at that question. Such behaviours call for immediate changes in terms of e.g. compensation strategies training, namely and the way they are introduced to as well as managed by the FL learners.

**Discussion of data: ways of preventing fossilization**

For similar reasons, the question on the ways of preventing fossilization was unanswered by the participants in question. Though, this time, it could also be the lack of feedback, and measures taken by the instructor(s) to perfect students’ linguistic performance or insufficient self-correction the sample experienced that accounted for such a state of affairs.

**Discussion of data: fear of fossilization**

When it comes to being afraid of getting fossilized, quite unsurprisingly, the subjects’ low awareness of fossilization translated into their potential fossilophobic reactions, them being limited to a few responses from the Germanic group exclusively:
As illustrated above, German students were equally fearful and fearless of fossilization, as little as 6% of Scandinavians, which constituted 100% of those engaged in this section, admitted being afraid, and a majority of the English (76%) voiced no fears at the thought of having language problems or deficits.

All in all, the informants seemed strongly fossilization unaware despite a language teacher/student background and “treatment” they underwent in the majority of cases. Only a minority of the sample defined the phenomenon of fossilization and did it in a very general and fragmentary manner. However, when asked about symptoms of fossilization, factors conducive to and measures preventing from being fossilized, none of the subjects provided any answers whatsoever, thus, proving their ignorance. And, finally, when facing the fear of getting linguistically fossilized, again only a handful of the students responded to the question, both showing and suppressing their anxiety, the latter being predominant on the whole.

Discussion of data: language achievements (challenges) and language failures (problems)

Having discussed the phenomenon of fossilization and fossilization-related issues, the closing part of the questionnaire was centred upon the instances of subjects’ language achievement and failure. The aim of this last section was to inquire about language strengths and weaknesses the group exhibited, as well as successful and unsuccessful undertakings in learning the respondents experienced.

As it turned out, the subjects’ language shortcomings and lack of self-confidence were much more “popular” than their achievements. The very difficulties, when considered by the sample hard to overcome, were, at the same time, language challenges to meet, constituting their wishful thinking at the moment of questionnaire completion. Staring from the language areas they perceived themselves as particularly bad at, each language category received percentages slightly below or above 50%.
Following the data, the most unsuccessful were Ukrainians (59% failed at lexis), French (58% did not excel in phonology) and Italians (57% experienced failure at phonology). What is more, the areas of their bad performance overlapped with their lack of language confidence. In the majority of cases, excluding Ukrainian and Italian students, failures and doubts had one linguistic dimension in common.

The biggest dose of unconfidence was true of Spaniards, Italians and French with respect to their lexical competence, as well as Scandinavians and Germans in the case of grammar and speaking respectively.

Given the subjects’ strengths and weaknesses, the questionnaire investigated their areas of success and failure. As the latter turned out to be left unanswered by the sample only successful “enterprises” and attempts were taken into consideration. These ranged from having a job or language certificate to attending a course and communicating in Polish on an everyday basis.
Basing on the figures presented above, communication was the most popular determinant of success reaching the percentage brackets from 67% (Spaniards) to 40% (Slovaks). Definitely less popular were courses (20% on average) and certificates (the average of 19%). And, least of all the subjects were proud of their work, though, it reflected their personal satisfaction with the fact of “having a job in Poland at the time of crisis”. Those who have left the question unanswered, stressing the fact that they were “still waiting for challenges and their success in Polish”.

**Conclusion**

Language-aware as the subjects in question are, they are by no means fossilization-aware. The very status quo is difficult to account for in a clear-cut manner as it might range from being the result of bad teaching received in colleges, lack of methodological framework, or just “I don’t care attitude”, to name a few. What might be of help, however, in solving the very problem seems to lie in developing, and, perhaps, in some cases, redeveloping the subjects’ ability to evaluate their command of TL, both as students and teachers, in a reliable way, and alongside the timelines the mechanisms responsible for “language condition” are subject to. The tool under investigation is the fossilization check-list (Wysocka, 2009):

**Table 3: A self-check list (Wysocka, 2009)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHECK-LIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I ORAL PERFORMANCE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the following list of items, and put a tick [x] next to those you happen to produce/experience/use when speaking. A blank space has been left at the end of each section for any items not included which are true for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAMMAR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>omission of articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misuse of articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of subject-verb agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of noun-pronoun agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of subject/object-pronoun agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong verb patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEXIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong phrases/expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong phrasal verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-existent words/phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORPHOLOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong prefixes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong suffixes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHONOLOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problems with pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLUENCY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silent pauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocal pauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>double repetitions of language sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triple repetitions of language sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quadruple repetitions of language sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all-purpose words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reformulations in the form of synonym substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reformulations in the form of information shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reformulations in the form of structure change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reformulations aimed at self-correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reformulations resulting in deviations from TL norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fixed expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfinished sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaningless sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART II  WRITTEN PERFORMANCE**
Read the following list of items, and put a tick [x] next to those you happen to produce/experience/use when writing. A blank space has been left at the end of each section for any items not included which are true for you.

**GRAMMAR**

- omission of articles
- misuse of articles
- lack of subject-verb agreement
- lack of noun-pronoun agreement
- lack of subject/object-pronoun agreement
- wrong word order
- wrong structures
- wrong verb patterns
- wrong verb forms
- verb omission
- double verb
- omission of verb inflections
- subject omission
- wrong prepositions
- misuse of prepositions
- overuse of prepositions
- omission of prepositions
- problems with plural/singular forms
- wrong conjunctions
- omission of conjunctions
- wrong pronouns
- overuse of pronouns
- pronoun omission
- wrong use of relative pronouns
- omission of relative pronouns
- double negations
- problems with determiners
- problems with direct/indirect questions
- misuse of quantifiers
- wrong quantifiers
- wrong tense
- problems with reported speech
- problems with comparison
The list has been constructed on the basis of the research findings being the symptoms of fossilization most frequently observed. Divided into two sections, the very inventory allows for “scanning” all of the components of linguistic competence with reference to both speaking and writing. As each section is sub-divided into several parts, each corresponding to the language areas affected by fossilization, the table completion guarantees to foster the subjects’ awareness of fossilization. It can be attended to individually and outside the class environment, with no reference to any particular language course or instruction (in the form of a self-study), and/or in the learning context as it can easily be distributed by the teacher to his/her students. If this is the case, the students check themselves, and, consequently, the teacher records their observations practical to both the process of learning and teaching. Finally, the self-check should not be treated as a single-use means only. Solved on many occasions and at different time intervals, it can play the role of the measurement tool, revealing changes within one’s linguistic and/or frozen competence, changing, at the same time, language problems into language challenges, not the other way round.
Also, what matters a lot is teachers’ talk and behavior in the classroom, particularly when providing task instruction and feedback. As regards the former, it is believed that the target language, including paraphrase and reformulation serves to reduce the automaticity of instructions (Lardiere 2007). De-automatization of language is also suggested in the case of feedback. This implies getting rid of positive feedback, being a reaction showing comprehensibility of the learner’s interlanguage despite his/her erroneous performance, as this might send a confusing message not only to the learner, but also to other participants in the class who might have noticed the erroneous nature of the learner’s utterance (Han 2004). Instead, the teachers are to make use of corrective feedback offering explicit correction in the form of elicitation, meta-linguistic clues, clarification, repetition, etc. (Franceschina 2005). Since these are a part of communication and pedagogic strategies, it is worth mentioning a de-fossilizing influence of strategy-based actions. As far as communication strategies are concerned, the suggestion is to use a variety of options, though resorting to those facilitating language, such as approximation or circumlocution rather than the ones de-accelerating production like language switch or prefabricated patterns, not to mention topic or message avoidance bringing about classroom communication loss. Diversity and cautiousness are equally desirable in the case of teaching strategies. They can be arrived at when eliminating the strategy of routine, which draws on rigid lesson plans and tasks resulting in a repetitive and often patterned practice. Equally “dangerous”, as Franceschina (2005) has it, seems the teacher’s deliberate and repeated attempt to lower the group level, realised in the use of simple activities which prevent him/her from answering the subjects’ tricky questions, degrading, at the same time, the learners’ target language. The same can be true of the strategy of minimum language use and strategy of withdrawal, leading to the lack of feedback, and delayed reactions to any of the learners’ language performance in either case, multiplying learners’ problems rather than challenges then.

References

Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Age:  Sex: M/F  Nationality:  Education:

LEARNING HISTORY

Complete the following:

1. Length of learning Polish (in years) .............
2. Place of learning Polish / school, evening courses, private lessons, stay abroad /*
3. Reason for learning Polish / job requirements / family influence / free choice / other – ................................../*
4a. Number of hours spent learning Polish at school ........................................
4b. Number of hours spent learning Polish outside school ...............................

PART II: FOSSILIZATION AND INTER-RELATED ISSUES

FOSSILIZATION

Complete the following statements and/or answer the questions respectively:

1. Fossilization is ......................................................................................................
2. Symptoms of fossilization involve ........................................................................
3. Factors conducive to fossilization are .................................................................
4. Ways of preventing fossilization include ...........................................................
   ..............................................................................................................................
6. What symptoms of your competence getting fossilized have you noticed? Give 2-3 examples.
   ..............................................................................................................................
7. What measures do you take to prevent it? Give 2-3 examples.
   ..............................................................................................................................

FOSSILIZATION-RELATED ISSUES

Complete the following sentences:

8. In Polish I am particularly good at ........................................................................
9. In Polish I am particularly bad at ........................................................................
10. In Polish I feel confident about ..............................................................................
11. In Polish I do not feel confident about .................................................................
12. My success in learning Polish is ..........................................................................
13. My failure in learning Polish is ...........................................................................
English as a Second Language for young German adults: why it is studied and how cyber language might influence it

Biagio Aulino, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
biagio.aulino@gmail.com
Roberto Bergami, Victoria University, Victoria, Australia
Roberto.Bergami@vu.edu.au
Iris Guske, Kempton School of Translation and Interpreting Studies, Kempton, Germany
iris.guske@online.de

Abstract:
This paper reports on pilot studies conducted in Germany on the influence that the internet may be having on linguistic communities of young adults using virtual social networks, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. These studies focus on the use of cyber language and how this is developing in response to new technologies and channels of communication. Data were gathered through the administration of a voluntary written survey. The analysis of these data reveals a framework of linguistic strategies that adolescents use for online communications. The speech varieties revealed in these studies reflect the types of observations suggested in the literature by other researchers in Europe and North America. These researchers highlight the existence of a specific code developed by adolescents and young adults for use in communications with their peers. The paper suggests that cyber language appears to be exerting an increasing influence on young adults’ communications. The paper concludes that to make the curriculum relevant of interest to the learner of English as a second language, cyber language should be included in the teaching syllabus as part of the cultural component.

Keywords: Foreign Language Teaching, German Cyber Language, Adolescent Communication, Virtual Linguistic Communities

Introduction

This paper reports on an exploratory research study conducted in Germany with students pursuing English as a second language (L2 English) for specialized purposes at a private language school. The focus of the research is two-fold. The first focus is on the perceptual value of studying a second language in terms of cultural knowledge, tourism aspects and future career opportunities. The second focus considers the influence of the internet on young adults’ communications among L2 English students.

The paper firstly provides some background on cyberlanguage. This is followed by a discussion of a theoretical framework for studying adolescent cyberlanguage discourse. The methodology is provided next, before discussing the research findings and reaching the conclusion.

It should be noted that a formal literature review is not provided, preferring to use relevant literature as appropriate in the context of the analysis and discussion in the paper.
Background to cyberlanguage and a theoretical framework for studying cyberlanguage discourse

The phenomenon of ‘internet language’, also referred to interchangeably in this paper as cyberlanguage, appears to have a great influence on the way people, especially young people, communicate in the modern age. Internet language is evident in ‘cyberspace hangout’, or Virtual Social Network (VSN) sites, such as Facebook, My Space and Twitter. It is commonly accepted that the largest proportion of activity on these sites is generated by young adults, that is, people between the ages of 18 and 25, the research target age group in the study in Germany. Cyberlanguage is a unique speech variety constituting a particular speech discourse code that is changing the way in which young adults communicate among themselves.

Young adults’ verbal articulation is based on communicative competences, such as different forms of expression—gestures, vocal language, and the need to engage in shared action. The theoretical framework for studying adolescent cyber language discourse proposed in this paper is based, in part, on the Principle of Least Effort (PLE). PLE is used by historical linguists and dialectologists (R. Clivio, M. Danesi, & S. Maida-Nicol, 2011, p. 188) to explain the evolutionary phenomena more commonly known as Zipf’s Law. Zipf’s Law clearly reveals how language evolves, as many clipping phenomena in language could be explained as the result of an inborn tendency for humans to make the most of its communicative resources with the least expenditure of effort (physical, cognitive, and social) (Zipf, 1949, quoted in M. Danesi, 2008, p. 259).

Zipf (1929; 1932, 1935; 1949) revealed that languages tend to evolve economically, making progressively greater use of “compression strategy as abbreviations, acronymy, and the like” (Danesi, 2008 quoted in Nuessel, 2010a, p. 16).

According to Clivio, Danesi and Miada-Nicol (2011, p. 191) PLE is not a new phenomenon, as the miniaturization of language dates back over two millennia. Abbreviated writing was used by the Greeks as early as the fourth century BC, gradually evolving into a true shorthand code known “tachygraphy”. It was probably the slave Tyro who invented the first true shorthand system around 60 BC, after alphabets had become the norm.

The means and speed by which people have communicated over the centuries was drastically changed by the twentieth century information and communication revolution spawned by the internet and mobile devices. These new communication tools have contributed to the development of “textspeak” Danesi (2012, p. 225). According to Danesi (2012) textspeak is a form of shorthand found across all languages that makes it possible to carry out real-time written communication quickly and effectively.

Danesi (2012, p.226) claims there are five clipping patterns that are at work in writing systems such as “textspeak”. These are:

- **Abbreviations**: expressed as shortened words
- **Acronyms**: forms composed by the first letter of every word within a phrase;
- **Phonetic replacement**: certain letters and numbers replace entire parts of words because they represent their pronunciation more exactly;
- **Compounding**: separate words that are combined to make a new shorter word; and
Symbol replacement: the use of symbols, or letters with the value of symbols, in place of letters or words (Becker & Bieswanger, 2008; Bergami & Aulino, 2010; Marcel Danesi, 2008; Nuessel, 2010a, 2010b).

It should be noted that the discussion in this paper is limited to cyber abbreviations and phonetics replacements, online compounds, and different shortening strategies in the context of online communication. This discussion is provided in the section following the methodology.

Methodology

An exploratory study was conducted in Germany, with students pursuing L2 English for special purposes in a private post-secondary educational institution. Students between 18 and 25 years of age were selected because this is an age group described as “emerging adulthood” (Arnett, 2000, p. 473) and the relevance of this ‘stage of life’ in the context of this research project is considered below. A total forty-one responses were received: five males and thirty-six females.

Students were asked to complete a voluntary written questionnaire comprising a series of questions ranging from listing the most common words they use online, their level of interest and usage of Virtual Social Networks (VSN), and the reasons why they select to dialogue with peers online. It is argued here that VSN “offer a new set of tools to develop and maintain relationships and are thus of particular importance in emerging adulthood” (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008, p. 435) and are thus relevant to the choice of expressions used when communicating online in an L2 English context.

The study focused on the following questions:

i) Why do young adults choose to study L2 English and what benefits do they perceive to derive from it?

ii) What special code do German adolescents and young adults make use of both online and offline?

iii) What is the influence of English cyber language on German young adults’ social online dialogue?

iv) What internet based social networks are used for communicating with others and what is their frequency of use?

Research findings and discussion

The research findings are presented in three sections. The first section considers the value and perceived benefits of L2 English studies. The second section focuses on the use of language variations, such as cyber abbreviations, phonetic and symbol replacements. The third section focuses on VSN use and frequency.

Section 1: Value and perceived benefits of L2 English

Question in this were provided as statements that were scored on a 5 point Likert scale. A summary of the responses is shown at Table 1. It should be noted that a number of respondents did not fully complete the survey, consequently the percentages do not total to 100%.
It can be observed that there were only two responses indicating Disagreement and no responses indicating Strong Disagreement with the statements provided to participants for ranking. Although a number of Neutral responses were recorded. If the Strongly Agree and Agree responses are combined, ‘easier to communicate and do business’, ‘enhanced career opportunities’ and ‘increased job prospects abroad’ are, respectively, the first, second and fourth highest ranked statements. This suggests that the study of L2 English is not merely pursued as a ‘social activity’ rather it is pursued with a longer term economic goal, that is, enhanced employment prospects. This has pedagogical implications for curriculum design and development, an issue that will be discussed later in the paper. Being ‘able to understand the culture better’, ‘increased intercultural competence’ and ‘better understand communication differences’ were respectively ranked third, fifth and sixth. Further study at university was ranked seventh. Online communication opportunities, an important consideration for the context of this paper, were ranked last nevertheless these achieved a relatively positive score.

Table 1: Perceived value of studying L2 English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Responses (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easier to communicate and do business</td>
<td>SA 54, A 34, N 0, D 0, SD 0</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced career opportunities</td>
<td>SA 66, A 20, N 5, D 0, SD 0</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to understand the culture better</td>
<td>SA 41, A 44, N 10, D 0, SD 0</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased job prospects abroad</td>
<td>SA 44, A 34, N 10, D 2, SD 0</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased intercultural competence</td>
<td>SA 37, A 41, N 0, D 0, SD 0</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understand communication differences</td>
<td>SA 44, A 29, N 15, D 0, SD 0</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further language studies at university</td>
<td>SA 29, A 39, N 15, D 7, SD 0</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expands opportunities for online communications and learn new expressions</td>
<td>SA 32, A 29, N 24, D 0, SD 0</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Section 2: Language variations

Data relevant to language variations, such as cyber abbreviations, phonetic and symbol replacements are discussed in this section.

- Cyber abbreviations

The cyber abbreviations used by the German respondents are shown at Table 2. These reveal the use of a particular speech variety, used by adolescents in their daily online communicative exchanges. The responses evidence the use of cyberlanguage, and it is interesting to note that the majority of the abbreviations are borrowed from English language, evidencing the influence of the internet on communications in general and in particular on the younger generations who are the greatest user of the internet. Internet usage has been increasingly taken up by speakers other than English. According to Baron (2008), in 1996 native English speakers represented approximately 89% of all users, but by 2006, non-English native speakers accounted for more than two-thirds of those on the internet. Yet, as Crystal (2008) claims English remains the internet’s “lingua franca” (p. 18). It is therefore not surprising that English has seen increased usage across all languages, assisted by the
pervasive influence of the internet – this is especially so in chat-rooms where evidently the standard communication language is English. In fact, according to Danesi (2008):

the English language is clearly the default language of global communications. Enchanted by the lure of American pop culture, increasing numbers of young people throughout the world are embracing English, not because it is any better than their own languages, but because it is there --- everywhere (p. 264).

Additionally, it is generally accepted that English has become the international language for business and this aspect also assists in its diffusion and increased importance in the study of L2 English. This is an important consideration as, based on the responses from Table 1, employment considerations rank among the top reasons for pursuing L2 English.

Table 2: Cyber abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cyber Abbreviations</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| lol                 | Meaning: laughing out loud  
Borrowed from the English language |
| mdr                 | mordre de rire, Meaning: to die laughing  
Borrowed from the French language |
| lmao                | Meaning: laugh my ass off  
Borrowed from the English language |

It is interesting to note that German cyber abbreviations are either borrowed from the English or French languages. The use of PLE is evident in these abbreviations, with traditional language conventions dispensed with, in favour of quicker communications. Abbreviations such as ‘lo’ and ‘lmao’ are commonly used by ‘texters’ in other languages - a by-product of English language chat-room experience (Crystal, 2008).

The German data did not provide many examples of shortenings and this appears to be consistent with earlier research (Becker & Bieswanger, 2008; Doering, 2002) that discovered shortenings are more common in English than in German.

- Cyber phonetic replacements

Cyber phonetic replacements are a type of expression miniaturization commonly used in the internet environment. Phonetic replacement is the substitution of certain letters and numbers for entire words, or parts of words, to arrive at a more compact pronunciation (M. Danesi, 2008; Nuessel, 2010a). A summary of responses is shown at Table 3.

All the responses in Table 3 are phonetic replacements borrowed from the English language. The data suggests that German adolescents appear to be influenced by English counterparts and this is not surprising as there is a tendency for languages to borrow words from other languages Crystal (2008). Yet, similarities exist between German and English cyberlanguage expressions. The ‘logogram’ (a written symbol that represents part of a word) (Crystal, 2008, p. 11) equivalent to the English ‘2day’ and ‘b4’ can be observed in the German use of ‘acht’ in ‘gn8’ (gute nacht) for “good night”.

Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture

Issue 4, No. 1

Page 44
Table 3: Cyber phonetic replacements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic Replacement</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2l8</td>
<td>Meaning: too late</td>
<td>zu spaet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4u</td>
<td>Meaning: for you</td>
<td>fuer dich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cu</td>
<td>Meaning: see you</td>
<td>man sieht sich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b4</td>
<td>Meaning: before</td>
<td>Bevor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3n</td>
<td>Meaning: no way</td>
<td>nie, niemals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gn8</td>
<td>Meaning: good night</td>
<td>gute nacht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Compounds and initialisms

Compounding entails the “combination of separate words, or parts of words to make new word” (Nuessel, 2010a, p. 16) and “words in phrases or expostulations” (Crystal, 2008, p. 42). The reduction of words to their initial letters is known as “initialisms” (Crystal, 2008, p. 41). The online compounds and initialisms used by the respondents are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Compounds and initialisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compounds and Initialisms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>omg</td>
<td>Meaning: oh my God</td>
<td>oh mein Gott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>np</td>
<td>Meaning: no problem</td>
<td>kein problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afk</td>
<td>Meaning: away from my keyboard</td>
<td>weg von der tastatur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ttyl</td>
<td>Meaning: talk to you later</td>
<td>komme spaeter auf dicht zurueck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wtf</td>
<td>Meaning: what the f***</td>
<td>verdammt!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brb</td>
<td>Meaning: be right back</td>
<td>bin gleich wieder da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lamito</td>
<td>Meaning: laughing myself to death</td>
<td>lach´ mich tot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stfu</td>
<td>Meaning: shut the f*** up!</td>
<td>halt’s maul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borrowed from the English language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows elements of compound words and initialisms such as ‘omg’ (oh my God); ‘np’ (no problem); ‘brb’ (be right back) and ‘afk’ (away from my keyboard). It is interesting to note that most cyber abbreviations cannot be spoken offline due to their lack of vowels. However, cyber German shows a different pattern with shortened syllables that make pronounceable (offline) words, such as: ‘lamito’ (lach´ mich tot - laughing myself to death);
and ‘sofa’ (Sonntagsfahrer - Sunday driver). These findings are consistent with existing literature (Becker & Bieswanger, 2008; Bergami & Aulino, 2010; Crystal, 2006, 2008; Nuessel, 2010a, 2010b).

- Symbol replacements

Examples of common symbol replacements in German cyber language are summarised in Table 5.

The data show the use of graphic devices, referred to as ‘emoticons’, for the German word ‘lachen’ as a phonetic symbol “:-D” or as “xd”. These symbols are also known as a “pictogram” Crystal (2008, p. 38). Generally, younger teenagers make regular use of ‘emoticons’ or ‘pictograms”. These are seldom used by young adults for texting purposes. The German phonetic symbol ‘thx’ borrowed from the English language in Table 5 supports previous studies (Crystal, 2008, p. 129) that reported the use of “thx” surfacing in the majority of foreign languages and has been borrowed wholesale.

Table 5: Symbol replacements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic Symbols</th>
<th>Definition in German Language</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>:-D</td>
<td>to laugh</td>
<td>schallend lachen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xd</td>
<td>to laugh</td>
<td>lachen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thx</td>
<td>Meaning: thanks</td>
<td>danke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borrowed from the English language meaning
danke

Section 3: Frequency and reasons for using VSN

Participants were asked to identify the VSN they used and the approximate the amount of time they spent on these sites. The responses are summarised at Table 6. It should be noted that respondents were given the option of choosing more than one VSN and frequency of use.

Table 6: Frequency of VSN use – German responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VSN</th>
<th>Usage rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3+ hours per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Space</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Tumblr</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Livejournal</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be observed from Table 6 that, by far, the predominant VSN is Facebook. This was not unexpected as Facebook is currently the world’s most popular VSN. However, the overall frequency of VSN use was lower than expected by the researchers. The use of Twitter is quite low overall. A possible explanation for this may be the limited character length of Twitter messages that may be unsuitable for these young adults’ communications and they may prefer SMS texting instead. Indeed this was the case in a study of young adults in Norway where it was found that more than 85% of respondents used SMS daily (Ling, 2005).
Participants were also asked to identify the reasons for using internet-based communication, and the responses are summarised at Table 7. Unfortunately the respondents were not very disclosing in providing reasons, with a significant proportion providing no details at all.

It can be observed from Table 7 that the reasons for using internet-based communications are primarily social. Keeping in touch with friends/family was the highest ranked reason; second was the ease, fast and cheap options; and third was to see what was happening online/offline. For this cohort, it does not appear there are any links with business related reasons, with only one respondent indicating they would use internet-based communications for employment related reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for using internet communications</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To keep in touch with friends in other countries</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy, cheap and fast</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see what’s happening online/offline</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share photos/videos</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make new acquaintances</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share common interests</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn new words and expressions in the English language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business contacts/Employment/ internship opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

This paper has sought to provide additional insights into younger adults L2 English communications. Due to the sample size, care should be taken in interpreting the results of this exploratory study. The findings from this research suggest that, for this cohort, there is a high correlation between L2 English and future economic prosperity, that is, employment. However, there is also a desire to use internet-based communications to keep in touch with friends in other countries. The data from Tables 1 to 5 suggest there are two sides to pursuing English L2 studies. One side is related to business, in the form of future career opportunities through aspects such as enhanced intercultural competence and better understanding of communications. The other side is social, demonstrated by the desire to communicate with others, through VSN. If the curriculum is to be of relevance to young adults, both business and social aspects should be considered, yet changes to the curriculum may meet with resistance.

On the one hand the ‘purist’ approach, holding firmly to traditional curriculum content that teaches the ‘proper language’, seems to be prevailing. On the other hand, there is a ‘reformist’ view arguing that cyberlanguage is an additional form of language codification that cannot be ignored and, consequently, aspects of it ought to be included in the curriculum. After all languages are not static and in a globalised and highly internet connected world, new developments should be embraced. The reformists are not arguing for the suppression of traditional language content, rather they are trying to make a case for cyberlanguage to be incorporated alongside it.

There is scope for further enquiry into young adults’ L2 English teaching and learning to obtain richer data for further analysis. More studies could be conducted across Germany,
perhaps incorporating focus groups and individual interviews. Additionally, there is scope to add to current knowledge in this field by conducting studies in other countries to detect any common patterns across different nations.

References


The other side: the Caribbean slave trade as foreground for the neoliberal tourist industry

Howard D. Walters, Professor of Education, Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio USA
hwalters@ashland.edu

Abstract
This paper utilizes historical critical discourse analysis to consider the semiological consequence of modern signage and geographic location references to the historic enslavement of African peoples, and their descendants in the modern world. Under this discourse, the author considers the role of current practices in the neo-liberal tourist industry in the wider Caribbean basin and situates both the historic practices of global slavery, the modern tourist economy, and the semiology of geospatial text as metaphors for the construction of social space and culture for people in the marginalized world. Working with primary data (photographic, narrative and textual, and interviews), the paper evolves the constructs of place, identity, enslavement, culture, and semiology in a joint narrative of human social construction. The author eventually concludes that the intersection of history and text in the modern world is pregnant with cultural tension and the power for both change and personal freedom, and the continued marginalization of people groups.

Foretext

Figure 1: Arm and leg shackles used to stake slaves for holding and for punishment. Photographed by author at UNESCO World Heritage Site, Otrabanda, Curacao, May 17, 2012.

“A six and twenty years residence in the West Indies gave me a full opportunity of knowing the cruelties exercised there on the slaves, having in the way of trade frequented almost all the English islands, and some of the Dutch, French, and Spanish….I have many times seen with horror and deep concern…examination by torture, which is commonly made by thumb-screws, and lighted matches between the fingers, which occasions such exquisite pain, that many I believe have been thereby induced to accuse themselves falsely, and so suffered death in preference to the continuance of such extreme anguish. Previous to execution, in some parts, the condemned criminal is frequently carried on a fledge about the town, and at every public place burnt in the arm with a hot pair of crooked iron tongs, formed
to the shape of the arm; and so to the place of execution, where he is either broke on the wheel, or his hands, feet, or head chopped off, according to the nature of the offence. For trivial crimes, such as being absent from muster, petty theft, short desertion, or the like, the slave committing it is obliged to lie flat, with his belly on the ground, and naked; and if he offers to stir, he is so staked down that he cannot move. While in this extended posture, the executioner, standing at a considerable distance, and having a whip with a long lash, made of hide remarkably twisted and knotted, gives the offender as many strokes as he is supposed to deserve, and sometimes so severely applied, that everyone makes an incision. These cruel barbarities are exercised upon them under the sanction of laws which disgrace humanity. The mere recital of them, as committed by a people under the Christian name, is painful” (Letter from Harry Gaudy of Bristol to William Dillwyn of Walthamstow, July 26, 1788, in Benezet, 1968).

Historical Background

Figure 2: Unlabeled or attributed public art from Curacao, photographed by author in May 2012

In 1509, Christopher Columbus’ son, Diego Colon, rose to the governorship of Santa Domingo and Puerto Rico. Soon after, he wrote to King Ferdinand requesting that slaves be sent to support the mines of Hispaniola, as the local island inhabitants—through disease and death from conquest—had been decimated to the point of representing an insufficient population to meet labor needs in the New World (Thomas, 1997, p. 91-94).

On the 22nd of January, 1510, King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, authorized the transport of 50 African adult males to the New World as slaves, having granted Spanish citizenship and freedom from enslavement to the inhabitants of the New
World in the Caribbean region and South America. The importance of this sovereign act could hardly have been understood at the time. The reality was the shift of the European and African slave trade from the Moors and indigenous kingdoms of coastal Africa, to the European monarchy. Thus was laid the foundation for the Colonial Empires of Portugal and Spain, the Netherlands and England. And thus began the forced movement of countless millions of Africans to the New World, and the beginnings of what would become emergent cultures in the Caribbean islands and the northern and western coasts of South America (Benezet, 1968; Curtin, 1968; Diptee, 2010; Patterson, 1967). From freedom to enslavement, to eventual freedom again in a new world.

From the 15th to the 19th centuries, it is estimated that nearly 20 million human beings were transported from Africa, across the Atlantic, to the Americas, although estimates vary widely with respect to how many of these individuals survived the crossing. These enslaved people were dispersed widely across the Caribbean and Central American regions. The Island of Curacao, now an independent nation in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was a key location in the Dutch Slave Trade, serving as the debarkation point for approximately 1,000 slaves each week (the high water mark, not the average over the period) for the two hundred years beginning in 1660 and continuing until the mid-1800s. This approximately 8-10 million slaves finished the trip from Africa at Curacao, where they were initially assimilated or trained to work—essentially “broken.” From there, they were sold and transported throughout the region (Drescher & Engerman, 1998; Thomas, 1997).

Today, Curacao houses an important UNESCO cultural site, located in the city of Willemstad, which is also home to an important private museum and collection devoted to the African nations, the diaspora, slavery, and the movement of this people group post-colonization, as they were eventually freed (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3:** Authentic slave house, Curacao, displayed at the Kurahulunda Museum. Photographed by author, May 19, 2012
This current line of research incorporated photographic data, interviews, and site observations and field notes, collected in Curacao in three regions of the island: the wealthier historic region, preserved and dominated by the majority government, business and economic interests, and tourism; the neo-liberal tourist resorts that fringe the beach communities of the island; and the rural and city-fringe neighbourhoods that are home to the island inhabitants, most of whom are people of colour, many of whom descend from the slave communities, and many who are translocated (a term signifying a near perpetual human migration from island to island based on economic opportunity) from other islands for very low level employment. The guiding concerns in the research were: would semiologic text of various forms on the island demonstrate evidence of formal understanding of the history of slavery, colonization, and emancipation histories of the African diaspora in the Americas? Further, is it possible to discern or discover embedded theories of identity, governance, and self-liberatory activities in the symbols and language structures of current society? Additional data collection included select interviews with museum and cultural personnel, government officials, journalists and formal educators, to corroborate and interpret visual imagery and field observations.

All of this historical work, as described above, unfortunately exists within a post-modern, neo-liberal environment where multinational and global corporations devoted to entertainment and tourism are displacing self-sustaining and indigenous small communities in the tropical and subtropical zones, to accommodate a visitor or tourist economy from the western world. Additional research questions related to this observation include: does the 16th-17th century slave trade serve as an appropriate metaphor for the current utilization of island peoples in service to neoliberal tourism? And if so, what emergent, emancipatory activities might we anticipate or even support, as concerned global citizens?

The Grand Harbor: Two Worlds Divided

From the beginning, the attraction of Curacao was its harbor. With a natural, deep water harbor in the South Caribbean, on an island approximately 56 kilometers north of the Venezuelan coastline, the island held a natural attraction for the Spanish, and eventually for the traders of the Dutch West Indies Company (DWIC). In 1634, the DWIC established the city of Willemstad, of which the grand sea walls stand at the harbor entrance to this day. Approaching and entering the harbor from due south, the city of Coro, Venezuela is to your back, as you face Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic to the north. After capturing the island from Spain, the Dutch established the town of Punda on the east side of Saint Anna Bay (the entrance to the harbor) in 1634 (see Figure 4). In 1707, Otrabanda was established on the west side of the bay. The name “Otrabanda” is derived from the island’s indigenous Papiamentu language, and means literally “the other side.” The semiological significance of this name assumed great importance over time, as this “other side” became associated with the larger numbers of and poorer African descendants who were settled more solidly in those neighbourhoods.
To connect the labour force from Otrabanda to the more commercial districts of Punda, the Queen Emma Bridge was constructed in 1888 (see Figure 5). It remains an architectural wonder: a bridge floating on pontoons, it is a true swinging bridge that opens on the hour to allow boat traffic into the harbor.

At its opening, it was both a footbridge for pedestrian traffic, and also a toll bridge. An early and interesting example of economic rights awarded through the self-interest of the monied class, pedestrians wearing shoes paid the toll; if one was barefooted, one was exempt from the toll. The logic being these barefoot pedestrians were crossing the bridge to work as servants for the wealthy.

In modern times, Punda and Otrabanda have come to represent two very different worlds that are separated by much more than a harbor. Punda has a Euro- and western-centric focus on commerce and tourism. Significant financial resources have been committed to ensuring the
buildings are well kept and clean, to meet the expectations of the tens of thousands of cruise ship passengers from the United States, Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands who frequent its alleys and thoroughfares in the tourist season (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: A typical, western high-end department store in Punda

![Image of a high-end department store](image1)

The Other Side is quite a different world. To be sure, the front edge of Otrabanda which faces the harbor and its outdoor cafes is beautifully preserved. But a single street back into the neighbourhood reveals a far different world (See Figure 7). One of overgrown weeds, collapsing buildings, dilapidated structures. Abject poverty. It is a world forgotten—the home of the people who are left behind from the supposed end of the European and western slave economies. A people employed by the tourist world, but not part of the tourist world. It is as profound a difference as that between the Hilfiger Store on the east bank and the Maria Store on the west. Two economies. Two currencies (island guilders and Euros). Two languages. Two lives lived on a single but divided planet.

Figure 7 A typical local shop in Otrabanda, which is more typical of local shoppers

![Image of a local shop](image2)
The Neoliberal World: Global Tourism

As profoundly as socioeconomic, architectural, and geographic structures define and describe Punda and Otrabanda, so to do the influences of the neoliberal tourist world that has captured Curacao and other islands like it across the Caribbean Basin. Bermuda, Aruba, Bonare, St. Martin, the Virgin Islands. All are “destination” islands for upper middle class and wealthy westerners, and stop overs for the cruise industry. All are home to destination resorts with white sand beaches, palm thatched palapas hosting bars, saunas, massage tables, beachfront food and beverage services (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: One of many, created beachfronts at a resort hotel on the southern side of Curacao

This tourist economy has certainly changed the face of the original Curacao beachfront. Originally mangroves and marsh, the coastal zone was uniquely capable of filtering the nutrient enriched runoff from the island (primarily from seabirds nesting on the exposed coral rock). Tourists, however, do not travel generally to sit on a chaise lounge overlooking marsh and mangrove. The large hotel chains have destroyed these natural beaches in favor of the white sand that tourists enjoy. Consequently, sea water quality has declined, and algae now threaten the health of the coastal coral reefs. As reef quality deteriorates, we observe a declining cycle of decreasing water quality and visibility, which decreases the fishery and the desirability for divers and swimmers. Local, sustainable fisheries and recreational fisheries decline, as does tourism. Over time, the artificial beaches that lured tourists to these Caribbean destinations become the authors of their own deaths (Angell, 2004; Hoegh-Goldburg, 2007; The Coral Reef Alliance, 2012; World Land Trust, 2012; World Wildlife Federation, 2012). It is the island people who are left behind with the residue.

Recollections and Reactions from the Islanders

Professor Dr. Henrik Jentesen (pseudonym) came to Curacao nearly four decades ago. From a quiet backwater, he has seen the island grow to host a major gasoline refinery, the redevelopment of the inner harbor area to host an international cruise ship operation, and now the emergence of resort hotels and golf courses to compliment the reef diving operations which initially made the island famous. A former member of the Dutch government executive staff on the island, he remained after independence to manage a small, environmental education facility near Otrabanda. He comments on the recent history of the island:
The late 70s were a period of awakening here. Many locals were aware of the global recession in the developed countries. Many seasonal residents of the island were impacted in their travel because of high petrol costs. The blacks were even worse off. It seems to always be that way. A bit of pressure on the high end curtails travel. That pressure rolls down and is devastating to the poor....Sure. Everyone understands that part of this island is for the rich, part is for the rest, the poor, the blacks. There are wealthy blacks, but they are not island blacks. They are Europeans or South American. Punda is for the cruise passengers. It is a shopping experience for the wealthy. For the euro and dollar economy. That is not the island economy. That is the white economy. I never really thought about “the point” and the “other side” but it is really true, isn’t it. Everything critical on this island commercially has sat in the Punda until the resorts started developing. In some ways, the development—while short term positive for the island economy—is only going to destroy the only thing of value on this island anyway—the coral reefs. The “other side” is interesting. That really is for the other people, the people that don’t matter. The locals who are cut off from the economy of the neoliberal world.

Maria owns a small apparel shop in Otrabanda. Her establishment would not be mistaken for one of the marquee Euro-shops of Punda. Celebrities do not make their way to her wares. Cruise ship shore directors do not distribute fliers directing passengers to the weed-filled alley where her shop is housed, in a moderately collapsing, tin-roofed coral building. Locals search the discount racks at Maria’s looking for deals to stretch the island guilders they earn cleaning houses or waiting tables during the tourist season. She reflects on her life on the island:

*It is a good life. A rich life. My favorite times are during festival when the church carnival fills the square with the smell of roasting meat and fried dough. The children run and squeal with joy over the long summer evening. It is hot, but the winds make it bearable. No one is excluded, everyone is welcomed. We don’t really mingle with the tourists. They walk through, sometimes into the shop. They leave the museum and get lost, or walk through taking pictures of the locals for photo album collections of blacks. They ask directions to Hilfiger or Gucci. We don’t shop there, but after a while, we can direct the whites without thinking about it too much. It isn’t our world.*

Henry tends bar at a resort hotel on a beach approximately 6 km from Punda, on the Otrabanda. He finished secondary school, and a corporate post-secondary training program to prepare him for customer service in the hotel industry. He is Jamaican, but he moved to Curacao with his grandmother when he was twelve years old. She moved from Jamaica to obtain employment in the same resort hotel, which was recruiting in Jamaica for the Curacao hotel. He hopes to eventually move into hotel management, but understands that those positions are generally held by the Dutch, and require a college education. There are no blacks in management at this resort hotel. Henry remains optimistic:

*I started work here when I was 17, as a cabana boy. I would change the towels in the beach cabanas for the guests. When I was 18, I finished the training program and was hired to work in the dining room, clearing tables. I am 26 now, and this is my first summer tending the bar. My wages are not as good, but I can keep a percentage of my tips from customers. Sometimes I hold back some of the tips from short-term guests and make a little extra. And there are always Americans or Germans who will pay me to find marijuana for them. I try not to dream about*
being a manager. My grandmother says that dreams are for the whites and we are better off learning to be content with our lives. Dreams are for Punda, not for Otrabanda.

Comments on the Critical Method

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) provided a concise and helpful description of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in a seminal work:

Critical discourse analysis sees language as social practice and considers the context of language use to be critical...Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned—it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects—that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (1997, p. 258).

Such an understanding treats observable phenomena in a social context as text in the sense developed by the critical theorists in the Frankfurt School tradition, where text is broadly construed as any conceptual vehicle that communicates consciously or subconsciously the culture of a person or social group. As Van Leeuwen wrote (2005) “I believe that all discourses are modelled on social practices and that our understandings always derive from our doings. But discourses transform these practices in ways which safeguard the interests at stake in a given social context” (p. 104).

Thus, the identification of the two shores of St. Anne Bay in Curacao as “the point” and “the other side”—reinforcing the othering of African descent populations in both geography, architecture, and language, is an acknowledgment of a structural understory to the fabric of the social system in Curacao. This substructure is rooted in history, and reflects unresolved historical tensions. These historical tensions, beyond the pretense of modernist, liberal assertions to the contrary, remain as long as the texts themselves remain active. Granted, the overlay of the UNESCO labelling, the language of museum exhibitry and so forth creates the appearance of progress. Nevertheless, the remaining attributes and signs of poverty, i.e. weeds, overgrown buildings, collapsed buildings, faded signs, graffiti, evidence the angst of passive marginalization.

The current research is not positivist or empirical, in the sense of establishing causal connections or linkages to actual oppressive forces in an objective or particularistic sense. The point is to acknowledge that texts exist that likely function to constrain and construct civil discourse (as with Van Leeuwen), and to acknowledge most certainly that civil discourse, and at the least the civil economy in service to the values and choices of a power elite in society serve to perpetuate historic inequalities and disequilibria concordant with, or vis a vis, the linguistic, geographic, and architectural texts.
Living and Learning Around the World: New Perspectives for New Challenges

The 2012 Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture adopted as its annual theme the phrase *Living and Learning Around the World: New Perspectives for New Challenges*. As authors and presenters, we were encouraged to consider this theme from the perspectives of our various researches, and to consider the implications to this theme from our work.

In that vein, my work in Curacao and consideration of the discursive history of the Punda-Otrabanda language elements as structural dialectics has great implications on living and learning in the new world. While clearly the promise of the neoliberal economic system has nearly collapsed due to ethical underperformance and positivistic overreach since 2009, there remain strong centers of neoliberal orthodoxy and ideology in the global system. Global tourism and international education are manifestly strong, and the enhanced communication infrastructure afforded through the internet, as well as cultural interest in travel and study abroad among younger generations contributes to this wellspring of global growth and development. In conclusion, I want to focus, not on the *in situ* effects of these neoliberal centers on the island people of the Caribbean, but rather on the emerging theoretical and discourse concerns that emerge from viewing Curacao as a case at hand. Following this, I will return to the pictures of island life painted by Henrik, Maria, and Henry in the narrative I have cited above.

The emerging challenges, consequently, to living and learning across the globe—which suggests interactivity among disparate and sometimes contradictory cultural systems and social groups—can be delineated around historic and emergent discourse texts as follows.

1. Existing discourses (i.e. Punda and Otrabanda) actualize or contribute to social structures, relations among people, distributions of political and economic power, that challenge the provision of basic living resources to people groups around the world and within nations; Where are the “pundas (the points)” that center power in the world/nations/communities? Where are the “Otrabandas—the other sides” that foreground “otherness” and disconnection from power, economic status and access in the world/nations/communities? These centers and positionalities will be challenged. We must collectively—and I posit particularly as social scientists—seek opportunities to build bridges between “the points” and the “other sides” by encouraging dialogue, cultural sharing and valuing, and international and cultural experiences, particularly for the young, but also for those in active power clusters, i.e. government workers, teachers, professors, finance industry professionals.

2. Historic discourses and their related structures, are observed to be unraveling around the world, whether in the deconstitution of the colonial empire states, such as in the Dutch Netherland Antilles, or the western state boundaries of the post-WWII middle east, or in Detroit, Michigan, USA—where local governments are literally deconstructing, through demolition, one half million derelict homes and businesses left vacant by the death of the urban commons. We are in need of new discourses to describe the relationships between and among people groups, social communities, and racial/ethnic/economic groups around the world. These discursive texts can be harnessed toward human rights, social justice, economic stability, political stability, and peace, or toward their antipoles. Where historic discourses disintegrate, they cannot capture or explain social reality, and so grow unhelpful. These must be reconstituted through the development of new textual forms and contents.
3. The digital world renders geographic distance and discourse incommunicative. We require emergent discourses and textual forms to both describe and create new social relations, government structures, economic interrelationships, and ideologies. The emerging community of 15-24 year old adults in western countries are increasingly mediating real world social structures and presence through digital space. This process changes the form of social structures, and their potential, by affording greater access and utilization of real space. It further arbitrates a positionality and stance shift with reference to geographic space that threatens national, state, and historic cultural boundaries. This creates angst that expresses in terms of social unrest, political upheaval, indigenous justice movements, economic disruption, and even existential threats to historic institutions and nation states. Discourse boundaries for this generation are emerging in digital space, but we seem to lack a concerted effort to integrate and reinterpret historic material discourses into digital contexts and vice versa. I add as an example of this the Facebook phenomena of “tagging” oneself by where one is from and where one lives—a tacit acknowledgment of the migratory society where it is not a given nor an expectation that one lives where one was born. Further, the location selections are easily editable, as easily as using Google to find a “cheap ticket” to the next destination, by plane, train, ship, or rental car—to a hostel, a hotel, or a “shared couch” where one can set up residence. Regardless of geographic space, one’s “address” remains rooted to the www provider of choice. Skype without borders. Skype nation.

Conclusion

Henrik, Maria, and Henry, the bureaucrat, shop-owner, and bartender with whom I interacted in Curacao, live in the tension of modernity, but a modernity shaped by historical texts. These texts, the socio-geographic labels of Punda and Otrabanda, both reveal and shape the past and future, as a nexus of constructed identity and culture. Island life and culture is bifurcated, as surely as the St. Anne Bay divides those who are the Point and those who are the Others.

Henrik, living on the other side, but of majority culture, has choices. He has a pension. He chooses where to live and for whom to work. He demonstrates freedom as a first world citizen. Maria and Henry are the cultural remainder of the enslaved people who managed to find freedom of a sort, but continue to serve a majority community.

Maria is nearly invisible to the tourist world and economy. She is a source of directions to a better world. She is a signpost, a tool. Her shop an oddity for photographs, memorialized to the future as a black woman in a white family’s souvenir photographs from the Caribbean vacation.

Henry is the nice black man who mixes the “fruity blue drinks” at the simulacra palm-roofed palapa on the simulated sand beach—South Pacific movie life writ large by Hilton or Marriot or Disney or Hyatt. Another cold one by a safe black who has been trained to be friendly, to make eye contact, to enunciate clearly. His accent the only novel or exotic element to his character. He only enjoys his life and work because he is paid to enjoy his life and work. He performs his work, his role, his life. His work is to be an exotic but safe black man in a fake palm roofed bar on a fake beach—and so to provide an authentic simulation of a Caribbean island experience for American upper middle class whites from Cleveland or St. Paul or Manhattan, or German, Dutch, or South African whites on holiday to see a simulated, real world.
The neo-liberal world succeeds only by selling a simulated reality to a majority population. This simulacra requires actors, and the sons and daughters of the enslaved perform this role perfectly. An exercise in economic power in a very disproportional world.

References


Reading poems in foreign language learning contexts – an educational option

Liliana Piasecka, Opole University, Pl. Kopernika 11, 45-040 Opole, Poland
elpia@o2.pl

Abstract
McDonald’s, Dr House, Game of Thrones or Lego blocks have integrated millions of inhabitants from a variety of geographical locations. The world has expanded but also shrunk as people get information about human achievements, wonders of nature, great disasters and revolutions instantly, because of the quick and cheap access to the Internet. Working for international companies, more and more frequently people feel reduced to small gears that can be easily replaced when they do not work effectively. Overloaded by duties and information, do people still have time, energy and will to reflect on the world they live in? Do educational contexts invite reflection on this extremely interesting world galloping through time though its orbit is the same?

This paper addresses a very specific role that reading poetry can have in foreign language education, both in terms of language development, the development of reflective thinking and intercultural understanding. Literature, film, and other media not only challenge imagination but also allow people to notice “alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding things”, and to learn “critical language awareness, interpretation and translation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception” (Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007, p. 4). Foreign language learners are whole persons for whom “literary texts are suitable because language is learned by human beings, and the interest and love of literature for its various qualities is a human characteristic” (Paran, 2008, p. 469). Learning a language and discovering its literature enriches and expands the minds of learners and the society which they belong to.

The paper also reports a small scale study that focused on foreign language learners’ responses to two poems that refer to the tragic events of the 11th of September 2001, one by Wisława Szymborska, a Polish poet and a Nobel Prize Winner, and the other one by Zara Houshmand, a representative of Iranian-American community in the United States. The study shows that such poems allow foreign language learners to experience the unique use of language to express various perceptions and experiences of the events that have shattered the world. They also support sensitivity to, and reflection on human diversity. Reading poetry brings both linguistic and cultural benefits as it develops the learners’ awareness of language, supports the use and growth of many language skills, engages feelings and emotions, and enhances cultural and intercultural awareness and understanding.

Keywords: foreign language learning, reading poetry, language growth, reflective thinking, intercultural understanding

Introduction
For some time people have been living at an increasingly faster rate in the world which is at the reach of their hands. If they wish, using the Internet they can find information about anything that is of concern to them. They have become more mobile, travelling has grown cheaper, and the chances for communicating with people worldwide have also increased. This
is one of the many faces of globalization, the one conveyed by the metaphor of the "'global village' which speaks to the interconnectedness of cultures and the increase in international migrations" (Sleeter 2003 in Gibson, 2010, p. 132).

Living in the 21st century, marked by “increased economic, cultural, environmental, and social interdependencies” and “new transnational financial and political formations arising out of the mobility of capital, labor, and information, with both homogenizing and differentiating tendencies” (Blackmore, 1999, p. 33), people have not stopped the quest for their own place in life, for the roots of their identity as well as for relations with other people using various languages and living in various cultures. Understanding these complex issues develops in many ways, for example through reading various texts, literary texts included.

Although literary texts have always been used in foreign language education, literature and language teaching had been following separate paths, but currently many second/foreign language teaching specialists argue for integrating language and literature teaching across proficiency levels (e.g. Hanauer 2003a, 2003b, Hanauer 2010, Kramsch & Kramsch 2000, Paesani 2011, Kern & Schultz 2005, Paran 2008, Widdowson 2003). Collective and individual realities that inhabit literary texts are rendered by a wide range of language forms and functions which are anchored in specific social, historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts. Not only do the texts use standard and conventional language forms but they also invite “the imaginative and individual exploration of meaning potential that is characteristic of literature” (Widdowson 2003, p. 89). Literary texts, then, do not have a fixed interpretation (Paesani 2011) but multiple interpretations that result from the unique, individual interactions with them.

Moreover, literature, film, and other media not only challenge imagination but also allow people to notice “alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding things”, and to learn “critical language awareness, interpretation and translation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception” (Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007, p. 4). Foreign language learners should not be approached as “language learning machine[s]” (Paran, 2008, p. 469) but as whole persons for whom “literary texts are suitable because language is learned by human beings, and the interest and love of literature for its various qualities is a human characteristic” (ibid.). Learning a language and discovering its literature enriches and expands the minds of learners and the society which they belong to.

Apart from addressing the human characteristics of the learners who might be concerned about “fundamental human issues” (Collie & Slater 1987), literary texts provide authentic language input that plays a crucial role in the development of language proficiency. In addition, literary texts may be motivating, interesting, enjoyable and therefore personally involving (Collie & Slater 1987, Maley & Duff 1989). They contribute to the development of cultural knowledge and understanding (Kramsch, 1993). Reading such texts, poems in particular, is beneficial for language learners who pay attention both to the linguistic form and meaning (Hanauer 2001). According to Collie and Ladousse (1991, p. 3), “People enjoy poetry and have always done so. With its strong oral element, its musical quality, its emotional and imaginative impact, it is a basic form of human communication”.

Reading poems in language courses, albeit challenging both in linguistic and conceptual terms, involves human communication and, at the same time, is conducive to the
development of language proficiency, cognition as well as emotional and aesthetic sensitivity.

**Poetry in (foreign) language education**

According to Hanauer (2004), people are surrounded by poetry which accompanies them at home, at work, in church, in the streets, or when they watch television. People have been using poetry “to make ... significant statement[s] ... that have communicated thoughts and feelings on the whole spectrum of the human life, from love to war and from the personal to the societal” (p. 8). These significant statements take the shape of poems and have many forms, for example Shakespeare’s sonnets, romantic ballads, rhymes for children, limericks, song lyrics, or rap songs written by recognized and amateur poets, as well as language learners. This variety of poetic expression is particularly relevant to the educational context which has to meet the needs and abilities of learners across age and language proficiency levels. Such richness of forms makes it possible to choose appropriate texts for students to read and learn about important (“significant”) issues concerning human life and experience in different times and various cultures.

Poetry, then, can be viewed as a literary text that presents the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that creates for the reader and writer a new understanding of the experience, thought, or feeling related to in the text (Hanauer, 2004, p. 10).

Discussing the above definition, Hanauer insists that language is crucial for the new understanding because it both “directs and mediates” it. Most important, however, is the fact that “the language of the poem is the author’s message” (2004, p. 4). Reading poems, language learners naturally focus on the choice of words, their form – written and spoken – and meaning. Such reading is demanding both in the native (L1) and a foreign/second language (L2) context (Hanauer, 2001) because it engages phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic processing levels along with the readers’ broadly understood knowledge and experience (Grabe, 2009).

The unique character of poetic expression and individual realities it represents are inseparable from reading poetry and thus they underlie the unusual character of this experience. Reading poetry brings both linguistic and cultural benefits as it develops the learners’ awareness of language, supports the use and growth of many language skills, and enhances cultural and intercultural awareness and understanding. It is also a deeply emotional experience.

**Linguistic benefits**

 Appropriately selected poems can be used with any age group. They provide a strong support for the development of spoken language skills, not only in the native but also in the second/foreign language contexts. Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2001) convincingly argue that poetry is an appropriate vehicle “for providing practice and pleasure in oral language skill development” (p. 796) in a comfortable and stress-free environment. The authors list the following benefits of using poetry with L2 learners:

- fluency in language use develops due to reading aloud and choral repetitions of poems;
reluctant or struggling learners are encouraged to work with poems because of the short lines that are “manageable” (p. 799);
- rhythm, rhyme and repetitions assist beginning learners in discovering the meaning of poems. This oral quality of poetry is particularly relevant to the needs of L2 learners;
- poems pave the way for further encounters with longer literary texts and introduce ideas that pertain to the learning content (“concepts and content across the curriculum”, p. 799);
- contents of poems (characters, scenes, stories) may encourage learners to produce their own narratives;
- a variety of poetic forms may prompt the development of writing skills.

Moreover, poetry contributes to the development of critical reading skills (Schultz, 1996).

With respect to fluency, Faver (2008), for example, notes that repeated reading of poems or short passages of fiction and non-fiction improves the readers’ fluency which is determined by accurate word decoding, automatic word recognition and the use of “the appropriate oral expression” in reading (p. 350). Rasinski, Padak, Linek and Sturtevant (1994) provide empirical evidence on this phenomenon, reporting positive effects of repeated reading on reading fluency in the L1 learning context. Since reading poetry in L1 and L2 requires the reader to focus on the formal properties of language (cf. Hanauer 2001), it can be hypothesized that repeated reading of L2 poems will increase reading fluency in L2.

As poems are both to be listened to and read, the learners may also listen to them being read by the teacher and other learners, thus practicing their listening skills and also paying attention to how stress and intonation may affect the mood and emotional overtones of the text. Rhythm, rhyme and melody make poems enjoyable so the learners may memorize sections or whole poems, learning chunks and phrases that expand their linguistic repertoire and improve their communication skills.

Reading poetry together encourages people to share personal views and opinions that the text refers to. When foreign language learners read poems in the classroom, the teacher may prepare activities that elicit personal responses, experiences and emotional reactions. Poems allow multiple interpretations so the learners have ample opportunities to argue, persuade, disagree or accept diverse viewpoints and thus also practice their negotiation and speaking skills.

**Cultural benefits**

Apart from indisputable linguistic gains that are connected with reading and listening to all kinds of poems, there are also cultural benefits that cannot be ignored in the educational context. Poems have been created in diverse socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts by people representing varied philosophies of life, experiences and attitudes. Through poems learners can enter this unusual world of individual experience, and develop a deeper understanding of their own culture, history, and society. Moreover, reading poems in L2, they have a unique chance to take part “in the memory of another speech community” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 130), which may contribute to the enhanced awareness not only of the learners’ own culture but also to their understanding of other cultures, thus supporting the growth of cross-cultural or intercultural communicative competence. (Byram, 1997). Literature plays a specific role in this context as literary texts “stimulate affective as well as cognitive understanding of otherness and the use of students’ literary imagination” (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001, p. 3).
The experience of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) shows that working with literary texts is an important step towards the development of intercultural competence. Burwitz-Melzer (2001) argues that learners reading literary texts for aesthetic reasons interact with them on many levels to arrive at the meaning. They make predictions, put forward hypotheses, and show emotions in their responses. Burwitz-Melzer reports a case study conducted with German EFL learners who read a short story about Mexican immigrants working illegally in the U.S. Apart from reading the story, they also carried out such activities as suggesting a new ending to the story, proposing a title, and re-writing or adding some scenes. This way the story became a part of the learners. The author explains that Fragments of values and opinions they hold from their own cultural experience seep into their discussions and written contributions, thereby creating a ‘Zwischenwelt’ (a kind of ‘in-between world’), a kind of third or ‘inter-’ culture, or simply an anxiety-free zone where foreign cultures can be freely discussed and explored (Burwitz-Melzer, 2001, p. 42).

While Burwitz-Melzer used a short story, Niżegorodcew (2011, 2012) turned to Miłosz’s poems translated into English in a workshop for teacher trainees at Vilnius University. She observes that working on poems through the medium of English as a lingua franca places numerous demands on the instructors who should be aware of the role that the participants’ linguistic and general knowledge plays in the process of text interpretation. Experiencing different cultures through reading their poetry, albeit linguistically and conceptually demanding, opens a door to new intercultural experiences.

The above considerations provide convincing reasons for engaging foreign language learners in reading poetry taken from various cultural backgrounds. The status of English as the lingua franca of the 21st century makes access to poems from diverse languages possible. In the study reported below, poems by a Pole and by an Iranian American were used.

The study

The aim of the study was to find out how Polish EFL learners’ respond to two poems (see the Appendix) concerning an event that has changed the course of history at the beginning of the 21st century – the terrorist attack of September 11th, 2001. One poem, entitled “Photograph from the 11th of September” was written by Wisława Szymborska, a Polish poet and a Noble Prize Winner in Literature (1996). The other – “Another day and counting” – was written by Zara Houshmand, a poet, writer and translator residing in the U.S. who has experienced living in various cultural contexts. The poets from entirely different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds, and with diverse life stories, both write about the event that has shattered the lives of many, allowing the reader to share their own, unique personal perspectives. Since “sharing emotions [...] is a crucial social activity” (Dewaele, 2010, p. 1), the poets share their emotions with the readers who, then, share their emotions with other readers and with the researcher and thus can cope with difficult and demanding situations.

The two poems were read by Polish EFL students who responded to them on the basis of their own experience, knowledge and sensitivity. Reading these texts was definitely an intercultural activity.

Thus, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Do EFL learners show concern for fundamental human issues while reading poetry?

---

1 Czesław Miłosz (1911-2004) – a Polish writer and poet, a Nobel Prize Winner in Literature (1980).
2. Are EFL learners sensitive to language used in the poems?
3. Are EFL learners emotionally engaged while reporting their reflections on what they have read?

Participants

Graduate students (14 females and 2 males), 23 years old, from the Institute of English at one of Polish universities, took part in the study. At the time of data collection (autumn 2001) they had just started their M.A. studies and their proficiency in English was at C1 level. As students of English philology they had read many literary texts during the course of their studies. At the time of the terrorist attack they were 11 years old and some of them admitted they had personal recollections of the day.

Procedure

Before reading the poems, the participants were asked what they associate the date of the 11th of September 2001 with. They were informed that they would read two different poems about the event. The data were collected on two separate meetings. During the first one, the participants read the poem by Szymborska (in Polish, their L1) and responded to it in writing. They were asked to write in either Polish or English about their impressions, feelings and opinions that the poem evoked. The same procedure was followed during the second meeting when they read the poem by Houshmand and reported their responses in writing. The responses varied in terms of length and languages used: the responses to the poem in Polish were in Polish while the responses to the poem in English were in English, with phrases in Polish occasionally interjected.

Since the study was qualitative, the participants’ texts were read by the researcher to identify themes and ideas from the poems. Then the participants’ statements (both in Polish and English) were grouped according to the frequency of references to these themes and ideas. The responses in Polish were translated into English.

Results

The responses to the poem “Photograph from the 11th of September” were provided by 14 females and 2 males, while “Another day and counting” was read by 12 females and 1 male (the other male was absent on the second session).

As regards the “Photograph ...” poem, the analysis of responses shows that the readers were concerned with the motifs of time, life, death, and making decisions. Below, there are some of the participants’ statements concerning the themes.

Time: the poet “stops the time”, “stops the flow of time”.

Life: in the poem “the people are still alive” ; “they will always be alive in this photograph”; “the photograph keeps the people alive and individual - with their faces, hair, contents of their pockets”.
Death: the poem "concerns the inevitability of death"; "losing personal things that fall out of their pockets means that they are losing everything"; "the poet has made them immortal".

Decisions: the poem is about “the dramatic decision of the people: to burn alive or to jump”, “Their last decision about how they want to die”.

The participants also expressed their appreciation of the language used in the poem They wrote that using so few simple words, the poet was able to express deep feelings and emotions and to engage their imagination. They could see the scene in their mind’s eyes and feel the wind blowing in their hair.

Commenting on “Another day ...” poem, the participants observe that one month after the tragedy people perform everyday activities, and wonder whether life returned back to normal, pondering if returning back to normal would ever be possible. Most frequently they report feelings connected with the tragedy, writing about ”confusion and anxiety”, “despair and sadness”, “depression”, “disappointment”, “regret”, “shame – even the sky is ashamed”.

One student observes that “the poem sounds as if there was no hope for the future, but the truth is that there is hope, however the speaker hasn’t noticed it yet”. Another participant adds that the poet “realizes that safety, stability and pride are only imaginary and there is nothing in this world that one can be sure of and put faith in”.

According to yet another reader, “the poet may feel ashamed because of what her ‘peers’ have done but she may be angry with the American public for blaming ALL the Muslims for the attack. [...] not all the Muslims are terrorists (in fact, only a few of them are) and, moreover, there are a lot of people of Arabic descent in America who feel strong connections with their new home country”.

They are also impressed by the metaphor of dust. For them, “this dust is death. Death of hopes... homes .. humans...”, and “the future has been upset, hopes and promises have been destroyed”.

**Discussion**

As regards the first research question, the participants’ responses to two poems about the traumatic event of the 11th of September, 2001, reveal that they are concerned with such fundamental human issues as life and death as well as the importance of making decisions about how one’s life is to end. Reading Szymborska’s poem they realize the poet’s unique ability to stop the time, and to show people who lost their lives when they are still alive. This, actually, is a characteristic of photographs – they freeze the time, and so does the poem. Although watching photographs and reading poems the people are outside the depicted event, yet they show emotional involvement and sensitivity to human issues.

Having read Houshmand’s poem, the respondents identify a wide range of feelings and emotions that overwhelm the poet during her routine, daily activities such as driving her son to school, listening to the news, or having a cheeseburger at a restaurant. They realize that truth – another fundamental human issue – is neither simple nor obvious. The feelings of shame and confusion mingle with dust and mist that obscure otherwise beautiful views of the Pacific coast. Moreover, dust, mist and despair envelop the present and the future, the hopes of the poet and her son. The poem has also made the students ask questions about the author’s identity (“Does she cry because the country she comes from was involved?”) along with
questions about causes of human behaviour (“How could have people done all that?”, “Why do people kill one another?”).

With respect to the second research question, the results reveal that the participants are sensitive to languages used in the poems. They appreciate the power of poetic language which, using simple words, evokes “strong emotions and deep reflection” that are not simple at all. They also recognize the power of metaphoric expression that envelops Housmand’s poem. The metaphor of dust evokes thoughts of death and destruction in the readers. Interestingly, they are aware of the power of poetic expression both in their native language (Polish) and in the foreign one (English).

Moreover, the participants have also shown cultural sensitivity to diverse experiences of the event, as well as the ability to reflect on what they have read, learned and lived through. Awareness of individual and collective responsibility is present in the comment on the relations of people of Arabic descent with their new home country. The results of this small scale study support the claim that the poems stimulated “affective as well as cognitive understanding of otherness and the use of students’ literary imagination” (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001, p. 3). This quotation is linked to the third research question that concerns affectivity. Two observations can be made in this context. First, the EFL learners notice the immense emotional load of both poems, reflected by the linguistic means used to express them. Second, reflecting on the poems, they describe their own feelings and emotions that the texts unlocked, in particular the poem by Housmand. The mood of shame and depression made them express feelings concerning the elusive nature of stability (“stability and pride are only imaginary and there is nothing in this world that one can be sure of and put faith in”). Although hope seems to have been destroyed, it is noted that it still exists in spite of confusion and anxiety.

The strong emotional response to the poems may be interpreted from the gender differences perspective. The majority of the data were provided by females who are more emotional and tend to talk about emotions more than men although this tendency may be “more indicative of particular cultural ideologies of language and gender than [...] of existing reality” (Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2002, p. 275).

The study itself has several limitations. First of all, the majority of the participants were females and the opinions reported above represent primarily female frames of reference, as noted above. A larger male sample might provide the data about gender differences (if such could be identified) in the perception and attitudes to issues that lie at the roots of humanity. Second, the participants read and reflected on two poems only. Another possibility might be to read poems on a selected issue (e.g. love) written by more than two authors from different cultures. Third, the study was qualitative and the categories identified for the analysis of the participants’ responses were based on the researcher’s approach and knowledge. Last but not least, due to a small sample, the findings cannot be extended to other educational contexts, although the effort connected with linguistic processing of the texts may support the development of language skills in any situation.

**Conclusions**

Using poetry in foreign language learning contexts is a promising educational option. Working with poems, the learners are exposed to authentic language that conveys important messages, and is the message itself (Hanauer, 2004). They not only develop their language
skills, learn to process texts loaded with meanings and metaphors, but they also have an unusual opportunity to discuss and to reflect on basic issues concerning human condition, thus practicing oral skills (in discussions), writing and critical thinking (in written reflections). Reading poems from other languages and cultures allows the learners to look at apparently obvious and accepted values and beliefs from a different perspective(s), to appreciate otherness, to critically approach their own language, culture, history, and society as well as their identities. Since poems are anchored in specific linguistic and sociocultural realities of their authors, their readers “can inhabit plural identities, invest ... [them]selves in other kinds of being, indulge vicariously and irresponsibly in thoughts and feelings normally kept in check, and co-exist in contradictions which would normally need to be resolved” (Widdowson, 2003, p. 95).

Reading the lines, between the lines, and behind the lines, (foreign) language learners – primarily human beings – discover the worlds they have never visited and bring them into the world they live in. A cheeseburger from Houshmand’s poem is not the cheeseburger the reader has ordered at McDonald’s. Understanding poetry is also about asking questions (as was the case with the participants of the study). During her Nobel Prize lecture on the poet and the world, Szymborska said that all the knowledge that does not produce new questions dies very quickly. Reading literary texts is a way for the knowledge to stay alive and for the readers to remain sensitive and responsive to the worlds they inhabit.

References


Appendix

Wisława Szymborska

Fotografia z 11 września
Photograph from September 11th

Skoczyli z płonących pięter w dół –
They jumped from burning storeys down

jeden, dwóch, jeszcze kilku
one, two, some more
wyżej, niżej
higher, lower

Fotografia powstrzymała ich przy życiu,
The photograph has kept them alive
a teraz przechowuje
and now it keeps them
nad ziemią ku ziemi
over the ground towards the ground

Każy to jeszcze całość
Each is still a whole
z osobistą twarzą
with a personal face
i krwią dobrze ukrytą.
and blood well hidden.

Jest dosyć czasu,
There is enough time
żeby rozwały się włosy,
for hair to blow
a z kieszeni wypadły
and for keys and small coins
klucze, drobne pieniądze.
to fall out of the pocket.

Są ciągle jeszcze w zasięgu powietrza,
They are still within the reach of the air
w obrębie miejsc,
within places
które się właśnie otwarły.
that have just opened.

Tylko dwie rzeczy mogę dla nich zrobić –
I can do only two things for them -
Opisać ten lot
Describe this flight
i nie dodawać ostatniego zdania.
and not add the last sentence.

(translated by Liliana Piasecka)

Another day and counting

It's routine now:
I drive my son to school,
the sun just breaking through Pacific mist.
Driving home, I listen to the news
and quietly cry.

My son won't listen anymore:
"All opinions, hot air. Call me when they find some facts."
Proud and fragile privilege of youth:
demand the truth.

The sky recedes, ashamed.
What passes now for truth on this cold ball?
The sky is pink with shame
beyond the concrete ribbons where commuters crawl.
What's in that microscopic dust
that bends our light to post-card pretty pinks?
Dust of concrete hopes exploded,
dust of homes of sun-baked brick,
complex chains of human dust
and dust of promises to youth.

Tonight my cheeseburger arrives
with a flag poked proudly in the bun.
The tiny paper stars and stripes seem far away,
victory through the wrong end of the telescope,
moon-landing on the circle of my plate.
The waitress smiles broadly,
but the food tastes bad,
or maybe I've just lost my appetite.

October 22, 2001
The Iranian
Reaching the unreached: Philippine distance education and dislocation

Hazel T. Biana, Assistant Professor, The Philosophy Department, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, hazel.biana@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract
Distance learning, or distance education’s goal is to improve access and equal opportunity in education to a huge amount of students. Significantly, critics claim that distance learning will never compare to actual learning in a conventional learning center. Given the situation of Philippine education, can distance learning indeed transmit values and culture in a virtual classroom? What are some of the pressing issues in Philippine education right now? Can postfeminist cultural critic bell hooks provide a solution to these issues through distance education? hooks asserts that the world is her classroom! Through commitment and progressive learning, hooks proposes the concept of dislocation, wherein the familiar “formal” social order of a classroom is challenged. After all, distance learning’s goal is to make education available to those who do not have access to it, to make education reach the unreached.

Keywords: Philippine Education, Filipino learning, bell hooks, distance learning, dislocation, Engaged pedagogy

Introduction
One of the basic issues of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) is curbing the number of student dropouts in the country. Due to various factors such as natural calamities, lack of funds, disabilities, sicknesses, and location, roughly more than 7% of Filipino students have given up the privilege of education in 2012. This is why the DepEd has partnered with NGOs for a number of distance education programs that may hopefully reach these unreached students. Unfortunately, distance learning is not always smooth-sailing. It has a few issues resulting from its non-traditional classroom set-up. This article tries to take a look into some of the solutions that feminist cultural critic bell hooks proposes. The world is a classroom after all and dislocation encourages a progression of thought. Through an enumeration of some of the DepEd programs and a critical look at them through bell hooks’ concept of dislocation, this paper seeks to show that distance education may not be that problematic after all.

Education in the Philippines
In a recent keynote speech by the Philippine Department of Education, Culture and Sports’ cabinet secretary Br. Armin Luistro (2012) shared the state of basic education in the Philippines. Through the cooperation and integration of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Philippine education is supposedly gaining ground. Respectively, each of these departments focus on the following areas: basic education, post-secondary middle-middle level labour training and development and higher education.

With regards to the existing resources of the Philippine public education system, from
Luistro’s report, there is still a huge shortage of classrooms, teachers and sanitation facilities. Based on Table 1, only textbooks and school seats are without shortage.

Table 1: DepEd Resources, Inventory and Shortages (Luistro, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Inventory</th>
<th>Shortage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>516,946</td>
<td>5,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>598,609</td>
<td>11,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation Facilities</td>
<td>353,763</td>
<td>98,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>Php 62,441,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Seats</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>0 (Excess of 1,200,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, a change in curriculum is one of the newest concerns of the DepEd nowadays. For the past few years, the Philippine government and its schools have been preparing for a new education system. Although not new to the rest of the world, the K to 12 program is finally being implemented in the Philippines. According to the Policy Brief of the Philippine’s Senate Economic Planning Office, institutionalization of kindergarten and an addition of two more years to high school is imperative to improve the quality of education in the country. Consequently, the implementation of the K to 12 program may curb the continuous deterioration of current education standards. The new program should effectively spread out the current compressed curriculum, equip the students for higher education and the labor market, and make Philippine education at par with global standards. (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2011) This curriculum revision would supposedly improve teaching methods and mediums of instruction. It would also reduce the jobs-skill mismatch, a common occurrence in the country wherein the labour force demands do not match the skill of graduates. Having additional eleventh and twelfth grades in high school would ensure that the students get to engage in academic, technical-vocational or sports and arts specializations. If students are introduced early on to topics traditionally discussed in college education, there is a higher possibility that they may be employable right after high school graduation (Luistro, 2012).

As the K to 12 program is gradually being implemented all throughout the country, the student dropout rate can be a source of uneasiness given this new policy. The student dropout rate is one of the biggest problems faced not only by the Department of Education but by students and parents alike. Primarily, in a country with a high rate of poverty incidence, especially in rural areas, more years of study would mean more expenses for parents. Although public education is subsidized by the government, parents still have to spend for food, allowances, transportation and miscellaneous expenses. (On the other hand, public university education’s tuition fees are bracketed based on parents’ monthly incomes.) Adding another two years of high school is perceived as a burden to parents and a predicted effect is an eventual higher student dropout rate. In 2011, elementary education had a 6.29% leavers or dropout rate. Secondary education yields a higher school leavers rate with 7.79%. To address the issue, the Department of Education came up with the following programs to address the dropout rate through a modified in-school/off-school approach, electronic instructional management (eIMPACT), an alternative learning systems (ALS), drop-out reduction program (DORP) and blended learning or an open high school (Luistro, 2012).

With the implementation of the K to 12 and other programs mentioned earlier, how else may the aforementioned issues on resources and dropouts/leavers be addressed? The current
Initiatives for the improvement of the state of education in the country include partnerships with other stakeholders such as NGOs, policy intercession to tap indigenous peoples, and "reaching the un-reached" (Luistro, 2012). The "un-reached" are children who are in conflict with the law, in areas of conflict or disaster, with disabilities, out-of-school, in indigenous communities. Along with these efforts is a huge budget allocated to the Department of Education's Internet Connectivity Program. The strategy is to focus on the improvement of access to basic education and quality of learning (Luistro, 2012). In summary, the Department of Education seeks to address the dropout rate and shortage in resources through joint efforts with non-government organizations and intervention through distance education programs. What are some of the distance education programs in the Philippines? In order to fully understand these programs, a working definition of distance education must first be established.

**What is Distance Education?**

The main feature of distance education is that the students are not within a conventional classroom set-up. Distance education “reaches out to students wherever they live or wish to study” (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005, p. 469). The characteristics of distance education is that 1) the learner and the instructor are physically separated from each other (not only by place but also by time), 2) students have specific and distinct needs, and 3) it gives access to a broader group of learners (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). Distance education provides students with opportunities to learn even if they have difficulties attending classes in an actual campus. Whether they are working, limited by family obligations, in prison or in the hospital, or with disability, they will have access to education wherever they may be. This also means that education will be within reach to a bigger number of people. Distance education has the "ability to broaden access to higher education by providing economies of scale" (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005, pp. 472-473). The main benefit of distance education is that it decentralizes education and increases the student base. The flexibility gives students more freedom to participate in learning (Edge & Loegering, 2000).

Distance education is a method that enables students to study and learn in their own time and place. Without necessary face-to-face contact with a teacher, it is an alternative means of providing education if one cannot be present in the actual school (Bates, 2005). Students learn even if they are separated from their instructors by space and/or time. Through space, they are separated physically (Edge & Loegering, 2000). For example, an instructor in Metro Manila may be communicating via email to a student in the provinces. Through time, on the other hand, the student may not be necessarily learning in “real time” or simultaneously with her teacher and other classmates. For example, the teacher might have uploaded a video of the lecture on YouTube yesterday and the student watches the said video tomorrow. It should be clarified though that E-learning and distance education are distinct from each other. E-learning would be the new technologies employed on education.

**The Issues of Distance Education**

Generally, two main points have been raised in the discussions of distance education, the issue of social integration and peer culture and the possibility of transmission of values in a “virtual” classroom. There is a lack of human interaction in the learning process and students are feared to learn less in the said set-up as opposed to those in the traditional classroom (Edge & Loegering 2000). Unnaturalness, questions the “conditions in which teaching and
learning naturally take place” (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006, p. 570). The lack of human interaction in the distance learning space and process appears disconcerting to the educators and learners. The aforementioned dilemmas of social integration, transmission of values and the lack of interaction are not generally perceived as the main problems of distance learning in the Philippines.

Since distance education is most often than not tied with E-learning, it is expected that the Internet be used as one of the main mediums to employ distance learning. In the Philippines, due to the “digital divide”, teachers and students’ lack of access to the web is definitely an issue. In 1997, the Philippine government asserted that every school, agency and home should have access to information technology by the year 2000. Unfortunately, this remains to be realized. Some far-flung areas don’t even have roads or electricity, how can potential students have access to computers or the World Wide Web? Given the developing infrastructure in the Philippines, Internet access is limited to the urban areas. Specifically, more than just access to the net, other issues include technology limitations, budget constraints, and the lack of know-how to implement such educational measures (Ramos, 2007, p.214).

**Distance Education in the Philippines**

In a study done on distance education in the Philippines, the following recommendations were pinpointed: the student should have ample technical support, the curriculum and content of the learning modules must be personalized, technology limitations should be acknowledged, and user-friendly and enjoyable materials should be created (Ramos, 2007).

For distance education to be effective, the approach must be learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. This encourages the students to be active in learning. Baggaley (2008) asserts that distance learning should not be limited to Internet-based methods. As successfully done in Pakistan, teachers and students use cellphone and texting (SMS) methods rather than relying on the inadequate access to Internet-based media. Baggaley (2008) refers to the Open University of the Philippines’ pioneering work of making curricular, extracurricular and administrative information made available through the use of a cellphone. The supposed unnaturalness of distance education can be overshadowed by the use of appropriate methods that reflect the current communication cultures of the students. Baggaley (2008) asserts that if education cannot be accessed through the Internet, educators must find a way to circumvent this issue, “it will be easier to create an effective and uniform style of distance education delivery in parts of the world where existing technologies are not yet firmly rooted” (pp. 47-48).

As stated earlier, the main vision of the Philippine government is to make education accessible, to reach the unreached. Incidentally, the government has partnered with other government and non-government organizations in trying to achieve this dream. Listed below are some of the programs explored and implemented in the country.

**Dunong Gulong**

The Dunong Gulong program (Learning on Wheels) is a mobile school initiated by Xavier University-Regional Center of Expertise in cooperation with the UNTV-Dating Daan Group, Department of Education, Knowledge Channel and the Child Fund program. It is a bus that...
contains learning materials, chairs and tables, a sanitation and sleeping facility. It is, in essence, a mobile classroom that seeks to bring education to children who are displaced and out-of-school. Rather than focusing primarily on out-of-school and marginalized youth, the target students of Dunong Gulong is now the youth who are displaced by typhoons. As of 2012, Dunong Gulong caters to 145 students. Materials of the mobile school include videos and learning modules from the Knowledge Channel (Aguilar, 2012).

**Kindergarten-on-Wheels**

Due to the classroom shortage in Philippine urban areas, Bagong Henerasyon (New Generation) Party List Representative Bernadette Herrera-Dy came up with a project known as Kinder on Wheels. It is an alternative classroom equipped with a blackboard, whiteboard, television and DVD player. With four shifts a day, it can accommodate up to a total of 100 kindergarten students per day (Lapena, 2012).

**Kariton Klasrum**

In 2012, the Department of Education adopts the Kariton Klasrum (Classroom on a Cart) alternative learning program pioneered by 2009 CNN Hero Efren Penaflorida. With the help of Penaflorida’s Dynamic Teen Company, the Kariton Klasrum uses a pushcart system as an alternative learning program to reach the unreached street children. The target market of the said program would be street children who are aged five to twelve. Through a six-month basic literacy program, kids who are out-of-school due to poverty, who have a lack of interest in studying or negatively influenced are introduced to an unconventional learning experience. Not expected to replace formal schooling, the Kariton Klasrum is expected to persuade children to go back to school (Quismundo, 2012).

The Kariton Klasrum does not only offer an alternative classroom but it also provides healthcare and feeding platforms. The program is student-centered and it has a special curriculum for street children. The needs of the students are evaluated so as basic education is tailor-fit to certain lessons such as proper way of taking a bath or a healthy diet (Quismundo, 2012).

**DepEd Order No.11 s. 2011 Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework (NIPEPF)**

The framework asserts that the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the Philippines have limited opportunities available to them. Therefore, when it comes to learning, education should be culturally responsive to the IPs needs in order for them to be able to fight for their rights and explore choices available to them. Existing models of best practices for IP education should be consolidated for a unified IP Education program (Rimando, 2013).

**E-Impact Learning System (Enhanced Instructional Management for Parents, Community and Teachers)**

The E-Impact learning system is a peer-led approach wherein students are immersed in an alternative delivery mode of learning which is technology-enhanced. Similarly, the parents, teachers and community are involved in the learning process so that the educational system can be continued in the home enabling the reduction of dropouts. This system also benefits
the masses and supposedly transforms the community where it is being implemented. The effort is pioneered by the TaosPuso Foundation (2011), in cooperation with SEAMEO Innotech and DepEd, to support public elementary schools in the country.

Effective Alternative Secondary Education (EASE)

High school students who cannot come to school regularly or those who have to take a leave of absence have the option to enroll in the Effective Alternative Secondary Education program. Relatedly, students who find the traditional learning system boring may proceed with studying on their own at their own time. However, to ensure compliance with the program, students and parents/guardians enters into a learning contract. The student must complete her lessons based on the agreed contract. Likewise, the parents or guardians are also briefed of their roles in the learning process of their children. The student guides and learning materials are turned over to the parents of the student (Project EASE: Effective and Affordable Secondary Education).

Open High School Program (OHSP)

The Open High School Program is made for students who cannot attend secondary school due to reasons that include disabilities, work engagements, lack of funds or distance to school location. Through the use of multimedia materials, the OHSP uses approved modules from the DepEd-Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE) (Cruz, 2012).

When it comes to the perceived issues faced of these Distance Learning programs, each system faces a unique set of issues based on their design. The Dunong Gulong, Kindergarten on Wheels and Kariton Classroom, because of their unique classroom setups face the problem of an unnatural learning setting. Traditionally, students are expected to sit within the four walls of a classroom building rather than study within the confines of a bus or a cart. Similarly, EASE and the OHSP may undergo the same barrier as the student undergoes education in a place that may not be conducive to study. A lack of human interaction with peers and mentors maybe foreseen with EASE and the OHSP as well since the student is expected to complete tasks alone and during her own time. Both the program for the IPs and the E-Impact, on the other hand, may encounter the limitations of the digital divide since technology and the IPs’ locations are not easily accessible. In a nutshell, see Table 2 for a summary of the distance learning characteristics fulfilled by each program and the perceived issues.
Table 2: Department of Education Programs, characteristics and perceived issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Distance Learning Characteristics</th>
<th>Perceived Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physically separated Learner and Instructor</td>
<td>Students with specific and distinct needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunong Gulong</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten on Wheels</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariton Klasrum</td>
<td>Basic Literacy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework</td>
<td>Culturally Responsive Education</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Impact Learning System</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Alternative Secondary Education</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open High School Program</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bell hooks and Dislocation

An Engaged Pedagogy

bell hooks, or Gloria Jean Watkins, is a cultural critic who can pose a probable solution to the woes of distance learning. As a feminist cultural thinker, hooks delves into various aspects of society and culture and draws theories and recommendations from her observations. Three of her more than twenty books discuss the topic of education and pedagogy. Culling her insights from Paulo Freire, hooks proposes an engaged pedagogy wherein the teacher encourages the student to self-actualize and build the community.

---

2 Gloria Jean Watkins decides to use pseudonym bell hooks so as to keep her reading audience’s focus zeroed in on her ideas rather than on herself. Apparently, this move signifies her serious commitment to the development of the intellect and the exchange of ideas. (hooks, 2004, p. 107)
Although hooks does not explicitly discuss distance learning in her works, she comes up with a theory of dislocation that encourages alternative methods of teaching within or without the walls of the traditional classroom. A specific example of this method is her conducting of classes in an auditorium rather than a classroom without actually being paid for it. She claims that this practice has restored her faith and joy in teaching (hooks, 2003, pp. 23-24).

Before delving further into the theory of dislocation, one must first revisit an important aspect of hooks’ proposed pedagogy, which is the teaching of critical thinking. Critical thinking is a place where both thought and actions collide. Understanding life happens when one thinks critically. This type of thinking begins in childhood. Interrogation is inevitable when a child is thirsty for knowledge and answers. However, this thirst for knowledge ends when the child begins formal education. She is expected to conform and obey. Independent thinking is not encouraged in school. This is seen even more once the students begin their college education. Consuming information and repeating them at the right times give them good grades. However, there are a few professors who encourage the “practice of freedom”. hooks calls this teaching strategy – engaged pedagogy (hooks, 2010, pp. 7-8).

An engaged pedagogy seeks to remind students of the importance of thinking (that which they lost from when they were children) and the goal to self-actualize. By trying to find the answers to the questions of a child, the student discovers what is most important to her. (hooks, 2010, pp. 8-9) This leads to a “self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective” (hooks 2010, p. 9) way of thinking.

Some other characteristics of an engaged pedagogy include interactivity (interaction between teachers and students) and discernment. hooks contends that discernment brings about the understanding of not only superficial and visible truths, but underlying truths as well. (hooks 2010, pp. 9-10) Interaction between student and teacher begins with the teacher getting to know the student, this leads to the building of a community within the classroom. Once a community has been established, integrity is exhibited by the teacher and demanded from the students. When students do not fear the classroom, they are honest and they voice their conflicts. This is empowerment for the students because teachers recognize their unique voices and opinions even if they feel that they are unworthy to contribute anything to the community. hooks also stresses the importance of the dialogue, this ensures that there is a full participation of the students in the classroom (hooks, 2010, pp. 19-22).

In more concrete terms, this pedagogy may also be referred to as the DPE (Dialogic, Participatory and Experiential) approach. In a focus group discussion conducted in an unnamed American university, the researchers claimed DPE’s effectiveness in expanding opportunities in students’ learning. However, the approach is not without risk. Risks include “institutional pressures on teachers, student discomfort, resistance to change, and more” (Chow, Fleck, Fan, Lyter & Lyter, 2003, p. 269). It is imperative then that teachers and students contextualize the DPE approach so that the classroom becomes an open, safe space for education (Chow, Fleck, Fan, Lyter & Lyter, 2003, p. 274).

The World as a Classroom

hooks’ framework for an engaged pedagogy may be applicable even through “dislocation”. hooks claims that the entire world is a classroom! Despite distance learning issues such as technology hindrances, impersonal nature and a non-traditional set-up, hooks encourages a
challenge to the formal classroom social order. Sitting inside a classroom for five hours a day is not the only way to learn. Incidentally, hooks asserts that “dislocation is the perfect context for free-flowing thought that lets us move beyond the restricted confines of a familiar social order” (hooks, 2003, p. 21). The unfamiliar social order is seen as an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Stepping out of the ordinary set-up encourages a more critical mindset. Since the classroom is dislocated either due to time or space, there may be a bigger possibility that students are fully committed to the shared learning experience and that they really come to “class” to learn.

To claim one’s space in the classroom is essential to a student’s learning experience. Generett (2009) has observed this process in Spelman College wherein the student is expected to be responsible for her own learning. Significantly, hooks’ influence in Spelman’s curriculum encourages students to voice their own lived experiences thereby developing their critical consciousness, their self-actualization (Generett, 2009). Likewise, Jaramillo and McLaren (2009) evaluate hooks’ pedagogy as a dialectical practice primed by human experience, this in turn makes the praxis considerably critical and reflective.

Since hooks challenges the notion of a “formal” classroom social order or “formal education”, distance education should indeed be encouraged. As long as the teaching community is engaged, there should be minimal issues with distance education. hooks proposes the following aspects for an engaged teaching community: interactivity, discernment and dialogue. Interactivity or interaction between teachers and students begins when the teacher makes an effort to get to know the student. If the teacher is aware of the student’s needs, Personalized interaction between the teachers and the students builds a culture of trust. This leads to the fostering of a community within the classroom, virtual or otherwise. When it comes to discernment, on the other hand, the student is encouraged to practice critical thinking. This encourages an understanding of not only superficial and visible truths, but underlying truths as well (hooks, 2010). Finally, just like any other dialogue, a dialogue in the classroom ensures a full participation of the students (hooks, 2010).

Although it may seem too ideal in the education setting, hooks talks about the dialogue as something that is coexistent with love. Accordingly, love is the foundation of dialogue. Commitment delivers one to liberation, and this can only be done through loving which is primarily dialogical. (hooks, 1984) If a teacher seeks to create a loving and dialogical classroom setting then she is instigating a change in the consciousness and action of the students. hooks claims that engaging in a dialogue is where teachers, scholars and critical thinkers should simply begin.

Along with love, the ethical consideration for a dislocated classroom is that it should have integrity. Once a community has been established, integrity is exhibited by the teacher and demanded from the students. When students do not fear the classroom, they are honest and they will voice their conflicts. This is empowerment for the students because teachers recognize their unique voices and opinions even if they feel that they are unworthy to contribute anything to the community.

**Reaching the Unreached**

Akins, Check and Riley experiment and apply hooks’ transgressive pedagogy on their distance learning art class. They term distance learning as a “technological lifeline”. Their
conclusion based on the ethnographic/biographic study is that “technologies can serve as transgressive spaces, where learning, pleasure, passion and excitement can subvert traditional pedagogical authoritarian models” (Akins, Check & Riley, 2004, p. 34). Distance education that uses an engaged pedagogy is a viable alternative teaching format that motivates students’ participation and interaction. The joy of learning is intensified and the classroom space urges truthful dialogue (Akins, Check & Riley, 2004).

Given the DepEd’s distance learning programs and main goal of lowering the student dropout rate through reaching the unreached, how can hooks theoretically solve the issues of distance learning? How can distance learning be a “lifeline” to those who do not have access to education in the Philippines? Since most of DepEd’s programs make an effort to bring education closer to those who have limited access to it, Kindergarten-on-Wheels, Dunong Gulong, and Kariton Klasrum go the location of the students. Rather than having the students search for access points (e.g. Internet shops or libraries), the classroom goes to them. This approach presupposes the digital divide. Unfortunately, one perceived issue for these mobile classrooms is the unnaturalness of the learning setting. The Kindergarten-on-Wheels bus is parked outside schools wherein students are exposed to the sun and heat (although the vehicle boasts of a shaded area). Similarly, since the Kariton Klasrum is a cart on the road, education happens on the street. Through the fostering of an engaged community though, the unnaturalness of the setting may be overruled. The unfamiliar classroom order challenges both students and teachers alike to improvise through progression.

With regards to the EASE and OHSP programs, the issues on the lack of human interaction may be addressed through interactivity, discernment and dialogue. Since the EASE presupposes the involvement of parents/guardians in program implementation, the lack of human interaction is somewhat curtailed. As for the OHSP, if the teacher understands and knows the student, and creates a personalized curriculum to address the need of the student, learning is still ensured despite distance and reduced human interaction.

Addressing the issue on the digital divide however may be done through discernment as well. Understanding the capabilities of students may determine the proper alternative mediums for learning. If students who undergo the E-Impact and OHSP have problems with Internet access, how can they get ahold of the modules of information through a medium that is readily available? In Pakistan and the Philippines, the cellphone has also been used as a vehicle for learning for those who have no access to the Internet. In summary, see Table 3.

Table 3: Issues of distance learning and dislocation’s proposed solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues of Distance Learning</th>
<th>Dislocation and Engaged Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less student learning vs. traditional classroom</td>
<td>Students are “susceptible” to learning Students come to class because they are committed to learning and they want to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of human interaction</td>
<td>Interactivity, Discernment and Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnaturalness of the learning setting</td>
<td>Fostering of an engaged community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Divide</td>
<td>Determine an alternative medium readily available to students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite all these proposed solutions though, one must remember that hooks espouses a culture of love. Remembering the original goal of distance learning, reaching the unreached, is a way to give a voice to the marginalized, those have limited access to education. Creating
an environment filled with love and dialogue empowers the non-traditional classroom social order of dislocation.

**Conclusion**

Despite the Philippines’ various efforts to make education accessible, so much has yet to be done. It is notable though that the government and the NGOs push to make the distance between the student and education lesser through creative means and productive collaborations. By keeping in mind bell hooks’ proposed solutions of openness, discernment, dialogue and an engaged community, dislocation may indeed encourage educators to look beyond the four walls of the traditional classroom. After all, education is not only for those who have ready access to it, it is also for the unreached.

**References**


Baggaley, J. (2008). Where did Distance Education Go Wrong? *Distance Education, 29*(1).


Developing a Classroom Cultural Exchange at Portland Community College

Melody McMurry, Sociology Instructor, Portland Community College, Portland, USA
mmcmurry@pcc.edu

Cynthia Thornburgh, ESOL Instructor, Portland Community College, Portland USA
cthornbu@pcc.edu

Abstract
This paper describes the classroom cultural exchange developed by instructors at Portland Community College (PCC) in the Pacific Northwestern U.S.A. in which students from an introductory sociology class were conversation partners with ESL students for one hour each week for one academic term. Portland Community College’s ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program is an eight level pre-college program for LEP students from a variety of cultural and language backgrounds with curriculum to develop English language skills and prepare students for regular college (General Education) courses. Students discussed topics related to the sociology curriculum such as learning of cultural values through parental socialization, immigration experiences of families and ancestors, common elements of culture such as food, festivals, holidays, chores and work of family members, gender roles in the family and community. At the end of the term Sociology students completed a twenty item evaluation survey which summarized their educational experience. The majority of students (over 90%) indicated they enjoyed the conversation partner experience, and the conversations increased their awareness of cultural diversity. A further number of students indicated that the experience would be beneficial to their career as well as personal development. Some responses additionally indicated that the experience contributed to friendship with other students from other cultures on campus.

Key Words: Culture Exchange, Internationalizing Curriculum, faculty development,

INTRODUCTION
This paper describes an ongoing project at Portland Community College (PCC) Rock Creek Campus in Portland, Oregon. Through a series of classroom exchanges, faculty have sought to arrange for their CLD students in the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program and several different lower division transfer courses (Communications, Psychology, Sociology, Women’s Studies), an exchange of information and skills of mutual benefit to both groups of students. To the faculty who coordinate such exchanges, this project has had the support of the college through the following:

1. A college initiative to internationalize curriculum and enhance instruction in diversity for students in line with the college mission of providing a global educational experiences for all students. Internationalization is defined as “a process that transforms the curriculum and the campus community by advancing intercultural competence, deepening comparative knowledge of peoples and cultures, and encouraging global learning as essential to understanding the complexity of issues in the world today.” (see www.pcc.edu/resources/international).

2. Administrative support for faculty collaboration, in curriculum innovation or pedagogical experimentation, as well as implementing the training of faculty through professional development opportunities of the PCC “Internationalization initiative.” These include:
a. The Summer institute of International Communication (SIIC) held each summer in Portland, Oregon (see www.intercultural.org/siic).
b. CIEE (Council of Education Exchange) overseeing faculty selection and attendance at international institutes or workshops during summer breaks (see www.CIEE.org)
c. Study /travel abroad for study of language and culture such as the Oaxaca summer program (see www.icomexico.org.)
d. Asian Studies Curriculum Infusion through the East West Center in Hawaii (see www.eastwestcenter.org)
e. BIE Grant International Business Seminars to China (for business faculty)

Faculty who wish to collaborate because of the training received at these opportunities, and the belief in the value of experiential education for their students’ career and personal development. Further, to increase their instructional skills in providing students with enhanced learning experiences in mastering English acquisition as well as exposure to both American culture, and the great number of CLD students at the college registered for ESOL courses. And finally, to learn from each other through sharing syllabi, teaching techniques, and curriculum.

In this particular classroom exchange, LEP students registered for a Level Three Integrated Skills course in ESOL met with a group of students in Introductory Sociology, “The Sociology of Everyday Life” for one hour per week for a twelve-week term. They were instructed to have conversations geared toward the basic cultural concepts and values that are included in an introductory course, as well as discussions of assignments such as “Ancestor Mapping,” which is a group sharing exercise of students collecting data on their personal family immigration stories. Further topics included socialization of children, chores and gender roles assigned to or expectations of children, activities such as sports and leisure for young people, as well as fun, food, festivals, holidays. Conversations took place for an hour each week for a total of twelve weeks in the term, and consisted of splitting the group into two classroom of students from both courses, concluding with a combined potluck brunch sharing family foods and continued conversations about the class. These courses always involve a student evaluation of the experience, but because this exchange involved an entire class commitment of time taken from other classroom activities, the survey evaluation instrument became a learning experience for the Sociology students who were also learning research methods and processes of data gathering. Students worked in groups to contribute items for the survey, and they wrote in groups the description of the class sample.

This evaluation was focused on the Sociology component of the classroom culture exchange inasmuch as previous presentations/study highlighted the evaluations of the learning experiences of the ESOL students (see Crossing Classroom Borders: Internationalizing Curriculum and Building Cultural Bridges at Portland Community College, presentation at the 9th Annual Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture in Rome, Italy 2009).

Methods

A twenty-item questionnaire was distributed to and completed by twenty-nine Sociology students during the last week of the term. Completion (although anonymous) was a required element for a grade, although the quality of the items completed was not a requirement; names of the students who completed the questionnaire were separate from the survey results. Students also worked in groups to suggest items for the questionnaire. Each groups’ responses were incorporated into the final questionnaire as were questions of the instructors/observers of the conversation exchanges. The twenty items of the questionnaire
included the demographic related such as age group, number of credit hours completed at the college, and major course of study. Sex/gender was not a question on the questionnaire, but the group had nearly equal numbers of men and women. Students were specifically asked to agree or disagree on items related to Ancestor Mapping such as: “Ancestor mapping was a useful tool to begin talking with ESOL students,” and ancestor mapping was a useful tool to learn the diversity of our class.”

Open-ended items followed asking students how they had changed over the course of the term. Specific items about the conversations about what countries had been represented in the partners throughout the term, what topics they had covered in the conversations, their favorite conversations, and their most difficult conversations. More personal items progressed throughout the twenty items related to what conversations indicated most cultural diversity, and finally, how they believed they had benefitted through the experience, and how the conversation partners had benefitted. Most specifically toward conclusion were questions related to what they had learned and how this might relate to their career goals or college lives. Students were allowed to take the questionnaire home and return the final class session to permit the most complete or thoughtful responses.

Sample

In-class questionnaires were completed by twenty-nine Sociology students at the conclusion of a twelve-week course. This class represents a diverse group of students in terms of age, academic programs and cultural ancestry. The individual assignment, and group sharing of the “Mapping of ancestors” assured validity of the assumption of a multicultural sample. CLD students’ origins included China, Colombia, India, Tibet, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Somalia, Thailand and Vietnam. Additional students indicated bi-racial, multicultural identities with ancestor origins in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America.

Findings

The demographic items in the survey indicated that 55 per cent of students fell in the earliest age range of 16-22 (considered the traditional college age), 21 per cent were in the 23-30 age group, 10 per cent were in the 30-40, 10 per cent were in the 40-50, and 3 per cent were in the 50-60 age group. Of the students completing the survey 7 per cent had completed 5 hours at the college, 11 per cent had completed 6-15 hours, 39 per cent had completed 16-36, 18 per cent completed 36-50, and 25 per cent completed 50-70 (nearing graduation from a two-year associates degree program). The majors of these students included: 2 undecided, 2 in education, 2 in business or accounting, two in psychology, three in general science, engineering, or computer science, three in organic gardening, environmental science, or biology, four in general studies, five in medicine or nursing, and 6 in the associate of arts transfer. This was perhaps our greatest surprise; generally speaking close to half of the students attending this Sociology class were headed toward degrees in the sciences.

Binary items of agree/disagree results were as follows: While 93 percent of students found the “ancestor mapping” exercise a useful tool for learning about diversity in the class, a smaller percentage (65 per cent) believed the ancestor mapping was a useful tool to begin talking with ESOL students in beginning conversations. A large majority of students (97%) enjoyed participation in the conversation partners project. The small number of students (n = 4) who indicated they did not enjoy the project believed they had previous experience in this
activity (perhaps at home as second generation immigrant students). One indicated enjoying the project but felt too much time was devoted to the project each week. Some students were observed coming to class late, so these may be the same who did not enjoy the length of the weekly conversations, and/or the effort it took to understand conversation with limited English speakers.

When asked how many countries were represented in terms of the ESOL students, a smaller number of students recalled five or more countries of origin for these students (41 per cent). A greater number remembered only two-four countries (59 per cent). Conversation topics remembered were about parental expectations, gender roles in growing up, food and holidays, leisure activities. The topic most often chosen regarding sociology was related to sex or gender roles, with equal numbers of students surprised by similarities and differences among cultures. Some mention was made of difficult conversations taking place related to “Coming to America” stories of immigrant students, or religious differences.

What students related about their own behavior changes throughout the term of conversations involved personal development in communication or interaction such as:

- I am overcoming my shyness with other people,
- I have a different perspective on immigration and go out of my way to talk to them.
- I became more outgoing with other ethnic groups.
- When I see them on campus I say “hi!”.
- It became easier to talk throughout the term.
- I am more understanding when I talk to people.
- I became a more open person.
- I enjoyed it more each week.
- I learned I am fortunate to live in the U.S.
- I became more cautious of other cultures.
- I did not change since I have already lived in other cultures.

When asked how the sociology students perceived change in the ESOL students throughout the term most stated the following:

- They gained confidence.
- They enjoyed talking and being encouraged.
- They were more comfortable and outgoing with us.
- They improved in terms of grammar, tenses, etc.
- Their language improved.
- They asked more questions.
- They understand more than you think.

The responses of students when asked what they gained from the experience of conversation partners fell into two categories. The first set of responses is what could be labeled as “minimal cultural literacy:”

- I learned more about other cultures.
- I learned to respect other cultures.
- I learned a globalized approach.
- I learned to understand and appreciate other cultures.
- I learned about religion, food, social life in other cultures.
- There are many similarities and differences between cultures.
• We are living in diverse cultures, but we can communicate and respect others.
• How to relate within our differences in cultures.
• How to enter into small talk with limited English speakers.
• Really in the end we are all the same.
• Treat others as you wish to be treated.

The remarks that met what was labeled “cultural literacy plus” included a greater learning experience on the part of these students. Many responses were similar to those you might hear after a student returned from a study abroad experience in terms of communicating, listening, observing other cultures:
• I learned patience and skills for talking with people from different backgrounds.
• I learned to have compassion and understanding for learning a language.
• I gained respect for those who come from places where it is not easy to have a happy life.
• I have a better understanding of the difficulties people have coming to a new country, and I have gained patience and a better communication style.
• I learned not to let a potential language barrier stop you from getting to know someone.
• I learned a more positive understanding of people integrating into a different society.
• I learned how to interact with people from different cultures and about world conflicts from those fleeing them.
• We are all the same on the inside’ sadness & happiness are part of our daily lives.
• I enjoyed this and think they did too. This enriches my life.

Students were further asked to explain how the conversation project could contribute to their career skills. Responses were as follows:
• Health care needs people who can speak to unfamiliar people.
• In nursing I will be more accepting and understanding.
• In the medical field it will help to understand patients from diverse backgrounds.
• To have a more global perspective in my profession (unspecified)
• In Psychology I will treat people from other cultures.
• In Engineering I will work with people from all over the world.
• In Engineering I will work with a lot of different ethnic groups.
• In teaching it will help me embrace students from many cultures.
• In social work it will help to know it takes courage to come to a new country.
• To be more creative.
• How to overcome obstacles.

Finally, in response to the item regarding the term-end potluck students responded as follows:
• 4 thought the potluck a great idea or experience
• 4 loved the potluck
• 2 found it made for easy comfortable conversation
• 2 found it lots of fun
• 3 remarked on the great and amazing food
• Some indicated it as an interesting way to observe culture, and a fun way to say good bye.
Conclusions

Students who attend our nation’s community colleges tend to be a varied lot in terms of economic background, status and privilege, occupations and careers, ages and ethnicities. While we would wish for all students the opportunity to travel the world and experience the awareness and efficacy gained through educational travel, few community college students can afford the time and expense away from family and work. While we learn through teaching at the community college the many cultures students can have exposure to through students pursuing international education from other nations, or those who are seeking asylum through immigration, most of these students find themselves in different classes than the typical community college students due to language limitations, or program and course requirements. Eventually students move from ESOL classes to the general education curriculum, and fortunately many of the Sociology students in this sample were from that category. These students make the cultural diversity of the general education courses a more enlightening learning experience.

Through administrative and faculty encouragement to internationalize curriculum, what has been common interests in providing cultural exchange opportunities for students has become more of an institutional priority at Portland Community College, thus instructors are encouraged to work together on committees and to coordinate curriculum reform. While instructors have worked together previously to provide students with “extra-curricular” exchange opportunities through student activities, now they have the incentive to formally develop cultural exchanges through classroom activities. Although we had partnered our students in previous classes on a voluntary basis, this project represented a more comprehensive exchange for all the students in the classes (rather than reaching out to the students who volunteer participation, which is often referred to as “preaching to the choir”). This type of project requires more coordination in scheduling faculty, in coordinating topics related to other class activities and content. It requires more time and trust on the part of faculty working together. The outcomes, however, are well worth this effort if instructors can see the value of the effort. Through many of the different curriculum experiments instructors anticipate outcomes that match their intentions. In the case of this the classroom cultural exchange, the additional effort made to collect data from the students who participated helped them understand the value of the project, assisted the ESOL students to gain English skills and experience a preview of the general education classes they may be pursuing in the future. This is particularly so when they meet general education students who have completed ESOL and have moved on to Sociology as happened in this course of students from so many other countries. Finally, it encourages faculty to try new things they imagine will be educational for their students. This is positive for all who participate.

References

http://www.ciee.org/ifds/
http://www.eastwestcenter.org/edu/
http://www.pcc.edu/library/classes/internationalization.htm
http://www.pcc.edu/resources/international
http://www.osea-cite.org/class/SELT_Reading_Krashen.pdf.
Appendix A:

Sociology of Everyday Life Conversation Partners Evaluation Questionnaire

1. I have earned the following number of credit hours at PCC (approximately):
   0-5 hours____ 6-15 hours____ 16-36____ 36-50_____50-70_____

2. My age group is:    16-22____23-30____30-40____40-50____50-60____

3. What is your major or course of study at PCC?______________________

4. I enjoyed participating in the conversation partner weekly groups:
   \textbf{circle one:} Agree  Disagree

5. The Ancestor mapping was a useful tool to begin talking with ESOL students:
   \textbf{circle one:} Agree  Disagree

6. The Ancestor mapping exercise was useful tool to learn the diversity of our class:
   \textbf{circle one:} Agree  Disagree

7. The Ancestor mapping exercise was useful to me because:

   __________________________________________________________

8. The conversation partners I talked with were from the following countries:

   __________________________________________________________

9. The conversation partner topics we discussed included:

   __________________________________________________________

10. My favourite conversation partner discussion was about:

   __________________________________________________________

11. The most difficult conversation I had during conversation partners was:

   __________________________________________________________
12. The conversation I had that most related to sociology concepts was:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

13. The conversation I had that showed me how similar people from all cultures was:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. The conversation I had that emphasized differences between cultures:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

15. I noticed the following changes in my behaviour throughout the term:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16. I noticed the following changes in my partner’s conversation skills throughout the term:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

17. What I learned or gained from this experience was:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

18. How this experience will be useful in my occupation or career plans?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
19. In what way will you be able to apply what you learned from this experience with family or friends?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

In your community?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

20. Please comment on ending the project with a potluck for both classes.

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Many thanks!!
Appendix B: ESOL Conversation Partners Evaluation

What students related about their own behavior changes throughout the term of conversations involved personal development in communication or interaction such as:

- At the beginning of the term, I felt worried and anxious about this assignment. I felt like there was no tomorrow and I thought that I couldn’t do it. Now that I completed it I feel awesome and strong.

- It taught me to be confident that I can do it, and helped me to overcome shyness.
- I was concerned as to how I could understand those lessons because I can’t understand even these ESOL classes completely. I thought it was very difficult assignment for me. Now, it is still a very difficult assignment for me. But, I think that it is a good chance to experience American classes in advance.

- I think the Conversation partners project came at the right time, because next level we are going to regular classes, so that gave us an example about American students. I think ESOL students are now more familiar about college than they were before; it helps the college community by making it more open for students to get together.

- In the beginning, I didn’t want to do it, and I tried to be late as much as I could. By the end, this assignment answered many questions I was wondering about it such as how I’m going to feel in the regular classes, and whether I could understand these classes or not.

- I felt uncomfortable and unhappy, and I was thinking about this assignment all term, and I thought it’d be very difficult. Now that it’s done I feel very comfortable and I'm happy that I finally did it ; I'm very excited to do my speech and I hope to have this experience again.

ESOL students were asked how the Conversation Partner Project benefits them, the native English-speaking students, the college and the community. Here are some responses:

- I definitely think this project is helpful for ESOL students for three reasons. First, ESOL students will have some experiences regarding their future courses. Secondly, ESOL students will learn how they fit in regular classes after ESOL. Last, many ESOL students think they can’t fit in regular classes because it’s hard and they’re not as smart as native speakers, which isn’t true. This project is a gateway for ESOL students those who thinks Native speakers are better, smarter and more active than us. I absolutely think this project benefits the class, the college, or the community purpose. First, the class will benefit some negative and positive experiences regarding this project. Another is this project will help many ESOL to continue their college education. This project definitely helpful for community for having different culturally diverse groups learning from each other.

- It helps me to understand more cultural differences inside other classrooms, and to overcome fear.
• Lots of non-native speakers are afraid to start their major maybe because they think that they can’t understand or can’t be in one class with native speaker. So, this project will help us to face our problems. I think it helps the community most of all. When non-native and native speakers meet each other, they can understand and learn more about the culture. I think some American students never meet people from different countries, so they don’t understand that there are different cultures and judge our behavior in the wrong way.

• For ESOL student like me I think it is best opportunity to gain a positive attitude about ourselves to attend a regular class. This project will help lots of students to learn how it feels to be in a class with native speakers. This project in my opinion is the best way to teach a nonnative speaker to learn how regular classes are. I think it is a great opportunity for them to be part of a regular class before taking these classes in the future. This way they know what to expect in the future.

• In my opinion the students from these classes that came to visit us had the opportunity to know other cultures and to learn about other countries. For us it helps us feel more confident and beat the fear of participation in regular college classes. This project benefits the college in that it advances different groups into higher levels. By having this project our communities get the benefits of having people with better understanding of the professional fields and more opportunity for better jobs.

• I think that PCC benefits from the conversation partners project because there aren’t other colleges doing it. And it’s a reason for more foreign students to be interested in attending Rock Creek. The community benefits from this project because if more people are feeling capable about finishing a career, then we would have more educated people.

• The Conversation Partners project benefits the students, the college, and the community. I think this Conversation Partners project offers a good opportunity for international students. In my case, I am going to graduate from a university here in Portland, so I need to take regular classes very soon. Therefore, it was a very good experience for me because I learned about U.S colleges’ education style, and American students’ ways of study. Also, this project provided a great opportunity for all the ESOL class students who are taking her communication class to develop their English skills. If PCC accepts this project officially, then many international students will join that project because taking regular classes is an uncommon opportunity for international students, and many international students will come to PCC. Therefore, I think this project is win-win because it is good for students and PCC. Last of all this project will affect Portland which means our community because if many international students come to Portland because of this project, then it will good for Portland's economy, and Portland will become international city.