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SECOND LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION: BELIEFS ABOUT INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION



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Second Language Socialization: Beliefs about Intercultural Communicative Competence and Foreign Language Acquisition

Synopsis:

Language and culture are intricately linked, and the process by which learners acquire a language impacts the way that it is used. Over the past 60 years, research has encouraged policy on language education to shift from one of "grammar" centered to "communication" centered. However, the literature reports that practice and research remain largely out of sync. This poster session aims to explore why this gap between research and practice continues to exist.

Second Language Socialization:

Beliefs about intercultural communicative competence and foreign language acquisition in the language classroom

Language and culture are intricately linked. Within the world of linguistics and language education, there has been a discovery about the most effective ways to acquire and teach language. Through his work on *the Ethnography of Communication*, Hymes uncovered that comprehension and language learning cannot take place outside of context, and as such cultural context should be the primary concern when learning to communicate in a new language (Saville-Troike 1989). Moreover, he argued that language in and of itself is social interaction, and as such the ability to use language in a group setting, to understand speech events and registers are necessary to participate in a given speech-community (Saville-Troike 1989; Celce-Murcia 2007).

As Dell Hymes's theories became largely accepted, Canale and Swain were some of the first applied linguists who brought these theories into the educational literature (Saville-Troike 1989). As this pedagogical discussion evolved, new policies were developed with regards to how language learning and instruction were to take place (Saville-Troike 1989; Celce-Murcia 2007; Aguilar 2007). For this early time period, language education in the United States began adopting these new concepts in linguistics into language pedagogy, curriculum and policy including the concept of "intercultural communicative competence" or the ability to use one language in many speech communities and successfully communicate (Bartram 2010; Bailey 1996). For instance, the ability to use Spanish and adapt based on cultural contexts, Spanish spoken in Spain vs. Spanish spoken in Argentina. Essentially the underlying understanding that language learning cannot be perfected due to its ever changing nature and the presence of varied human cultures that influence the process of communication.

Due to these discoveries and the shift in research focus, new policies were implemented by the American Council for Foreign Language Teaching. These policies led to the development of new curriculum and standards for what a language learner should look like. Aguilar reports that the authors of the report, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2015)*, state that

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in pluralistic American society and abroad. (2007, p.6)

As such, these policies emphasize that the aim of today's American foreign language classroom should be developing communication skills and cultural competence so that learners can interact in a variety of speech communities, rather than grammatical competency as being the main measure of student success.

However, in spite of these discoveries, and implementations of policy, the literature on this topic reports that foreign language continues to be taught using methods that emphasize grammar and rote memorization (Busch 2010; Bangou 2010; Chaudron 1988; Byram 1997). Celce-Murcia (2007) states, "foreign language instruction is still done with word lists to be memorized and sentence patterns to be practiced using meaningless exercises and drills" (p. 51). Moreover, culture is often taught as a separate entity from the language learning itself, which not only underlines the language as a structural form, but also reduces culture to the form of "food, flags, and festivals" (Aguilar 2007; Celce-Murcia 2007; Holmes 2014). While the research arguing for the communicative shift in the foreign language classroom is overwhelming, why is instruction continuing to take place in the older, more grammatically focused, format? What is the role of the teacher's background in making decisions about transmitting intercultural communicative competence? How do educator beliefs about foreign language acquisition influence the transmission of intercultural communicative competence?

Patricia Duff's (2011) discussion of second language socialization and language teacher identity, Bertram's (2010) evaluation of attitudes and beliefs about language communities, and Celce-Murica's (2007) analysis of second language instruction, all offer a starting point for examining these questions. This poster presentation aims to highlight the context wherein theories of language socialization, teacher identity, and school socialization become avenues to understanding second language instruction and the social norms that govern pedagogical decision-making.