
Review Article

**The Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning:
An integrated approach to language and culture pedagogy**

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Abstract

This paper uses Dynamic Skill Theory as a basis for creating an integrated approach to language and cultural learning pedagogy. It argues that language and pedagogy are difficult to integrate because learning goals are typically conceived of in different ways—with language learning thought about in concrete terms such as knowledge and skills, and culture learning conceptualized in abstract terms such as awareness. This work hopes to bridge this gap by offering a Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning (DMLL). It describes four levels of linguaculture learning: 1) encountering; 2) experimenting; 3) integrating; and 4) bridging. These reflect degrees of increasing cognitive complexity, as learners adjust to foreign linguistic and cultural patterns. As learners internalize these patterns, their experience of the foreign linguaculture is said to evolve, from something alien and uncomfortable to something more fully part of the self.

Key words

Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning, dynamic skill theory, linguaculture, language and culture

1. Introduction

It is widely agreed that language and culture learning go together. As far back as 1969, the Japanese Ministry of Education declared that English language education should “develop the basics of international understanding” (Uchibori, 2014, p. 23). Byram and colleagues explain that “it has been widely recognized in the language teaching profession that learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways” (Byram,

Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 7). Cultural learning is increasingly seen as integral to language education, and not simply “an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing” (Kramersch, 1993, p. 1).

Unfortunately, it is not always easy to bring cultural learning into the foreign language classroom. Teachers hoping to do so can find a body of academic work that explores culture in language teaching (Byram, 1997, 2008; Byram, et al., 2002; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001; Damen, 1987;

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Fantini, 1997a, 1997b; Kramsch, 1993, 2015; Moran, 2001; Risager, 2006). Such work emphasizes the importance of culture competencies in a globalized world. Yet there are still few pedagogical models to choose from. The best known—developed by Byram—focuses on *savoirs*: knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are said to be critical for intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2008; Byram, et al., 2002; Byram, et al., 2001). Learning goals are described in terms of: attitude (relativizing), knowledge (self and other), skills (interpretive and discovery) in the context of political education, and critical cultural awareness. Byram’s approach focuses on negotiation of social identities, a critical analysis of cultural “documents,” and seeks to help learners develop successful intercultural relationships.

The strength of Byram’s work is its level of detail and clear articulation of learning goals. At the same time, these goals have also been criticized for being overly abstract, difficult to apply, and not defined “in a way that can be mapped onto the mechanics of everyday practice” (Diaz, 2013, p. 7). Other conceptualizations of cultural learning goals also suffer from a disconnect with language teaching. These include intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009; Dinges & Baldwin, 1996; Fantini, 2001; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Spitzberg & Chanson, 2009), intercultural intelligence (Ang & Dyne, 2008; Earley & Ang, 2003; Gaston, 1984; Hanvey, 1979; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Tomlinson, 2000); intercultural awareness; and intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986, 1993; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere 1999). Diaz describes this as a “gap between theory and practice in language and culture pedagogy that seems unbridgeable at times,” and that “continues to mystify theorists and practitioners” (Diaz, 2013, p. xiii). It is easy to say that cultural learning is important for language

learners, but it is hard to integrate this with the nuts-and-bolts of everyday classroom teaching.

One reason for this is that culture and language have traditionally been considered separate domains of inquiry, e.g., anthropologists study culture and linguists study language. The linguistic anthropologist Farzad Sharifian argues that this has resulted in the “immature development of a unified sub-discipline for the study of language and culture” (Sharifian, 2015, p. 3). In recent years, however, this gap has been closing. In the field of language education, we find increasing use of the term linguaculture (or languaculture) (Agar, 1994; Diaz, 2013; Fantini, 1997a; Friedrich, 1989; Risager, 2015). Language and culture are increasingly considered to be two sides of the same coin—with linguistic meaning reflecting the cultural perspective of linguaculture communities. The notion of linguaculture is also being proposed as a way to bring cultural learning into foreign language pedagogy (Andersen, Lund, & Risager, 2006; Diaz, 2013; Risager, 2006, 2007). The present work aims to contribute to this trend.

2. An integrated model of linguaculture learning

This paper intends to help bridge the theory-practice gap in culture and language education. It argues that language pedagogy and culture pedagogy is difficult to integrate because learning goals are typically conceived of in fundamentally different ways. Language practice is traditionally thought about in terms of concrete knowledge and skills, such as vocabulary items or grammar structures, while cultural goals are thought of in abstract terms, such as global mindset or intercultural awareness. This results in teachers using incompatible mental frameworks for thinking about language and culture. In practice, integrating culture into language education “does not simply involve a revision of language curricula, but

a complete reconceptualization of the nature of language teaching and learning” (Diaz, 2013, p. 10). Teachers cannot simply add culture to language learning, they must rethink their approach to foreign language pedagogy.

The model presented in this paper, hereafter referred to as the Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning (DMLL), is intended to help educators conceive of language and culture learning as a single integrated process—as *linguaculture learning*. DMLL argues that, from the neurocognitive perspective, both language and culture learning are fundamentally similar—they involve the integration of foreign patterns into (largely unconscious) processes of embodied cognition. DMLL proposes that there are four levels of linguaculture learning: *encountering*, *experimenting*, *integrating*, and *bridging*. As we will see, these represent increasing levels of cognitive complexity—learners’ mental processing of foreign patterns becomes increasingly sophisticated. As this occurs, the learning experience evolves. What starts out seeming alien—something that may provoke resistance and frustration—becomes more integrated into the psychological territory of the self.

This model uses the term linguaculture, which refers generally to the idea that language and culture are best thought of as an integral whole (Agar, 1994; Diaz, 2013; Risager, 2015). From the perspective of social cognition, language and culture can both be conceived of as ecosystems of shared meaning (Fantini, 1997a). A discourse community shares a sense of what words mean and how language should be used, just as members of a cultural community share notions of how to interpret behavior and make sense of the world. Linguaculture communities emerge from complex interaction between many individuals, and thus language and culture have no clear boundaries or essential qualities. Linguaculture is an emergent property; thus, there can be no singular

English language, for example, or French culture. Such terms are simply labels that represent patterns of meaning and behavior, and are not intended to imply any singular or essential quality.

This model is built upon a deep culture perspective, which emphasizes ways in which intuitive cultural knowledge shapes our perceptions outside of conscious awareness (Shaules, 2007, 2014). Shared linguistic and cultural knowledge provides frameworks for interaction, or as Agar puts it, “the fence around the territory, and then sets individuals loose within those limits” (Agar, 1994, p. 39). In this view, participating in a linguaculture community does not mean that everyone acts in the same way; rather, they share patterns of interpretation. Just as speaking a particular language does not determine what you will say, sharing in a cultural community does not determine behavior. Instead, linguaculture knowledge allows you to understand how others in a discourse community will interpret what you say and do. Linguaculture is a creative medium that each individual uses in their own way.

DMLL is described in terms consistent with cognitive neuroscience—it describes learning in terms of complex networks of embodied knowledge. Yet its primary focus is not technical, and it certainly does not seek to reduce learners to a set of neural processes. While the processes described are complex, what emerges from a neurocognitive perspective is a holistic view of the learner. As we integrate foreign linguistic and cultural patterns into our minds, we experience growth and potentially transformational change. This model aims to help make sense of and encourage that process.

3. Adjusting to foreignness

To bridge the gap between language and cultural learning objectives, DMLL proposes that the goal of both language and culture learning is the adjustment to, and internalization of, foreign patterns of embod-

ied meaning (Lund, 2001). The foundational insight of this approach is that linguistic and cultural knowledge (the ability to speak a language fluently and appropriately, intuit the intentions of others, and follow unspoken cultural expectations) are primarily intuitive. While such abilities may feel natural to us, they involve complex, deeply rooted cognitive processes that are out-of-reach of conscious introspection (Kahneman, 2011; Kihlstrom, 1987; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Wilson, 2002). Modifying this hidden cognitive architecture is difficult because these processes are so foundational to the self. When we succeed, however, we experience growth and possible transformation.

Central to this model is the notion of foreignness—the gap between linguaculture patterns encountered in the outside world and the patterns of unconscious cognition within the learner. Openness to novelty is not the default setting for most living things (Zajonc, 2001). Like any organism confronted with a foreign stimulus, learners face a stressful/rewarding adjustment challenge. They must defend themselves against perceived threats and remain open to potential benefits. This view of learning as an adaptive challenge can be found in research into intercultural adaptation (Kim, 2001). Within the field of traditional Second Language Acquisition (SLA), however, such cognitive adjustment is often discussed simply in terms of linguistic “interference.” This refers to linguistic patterns in the L1 getting in the way of using the L2. DMLL argues that cognitive patterns of language are deeply rooted and intertwined with cultural patterns as well. Larsen-Freeman (2011, p. 57) refers to these cognitive habits as a “neural commitment” to the L1. She points out that constructing new linguistic knowledge is not easy because “language learning is not just about adding knowledge to an unchanging system. It is about changing the system” (Larsen-Freeman, 2011, p. 57).

Describing something as foreign can sound pejorative in English. To call someone a “foreigner” emphasizes that person’s outside status and smacks of intolerance. “Foreignness” implies intrusion, lack of acceptance, and a threat to the functioning of an organism. For better or worse, however, foreignness is at the center of linguaculture learning. Learners must experiment with new sounds, new ways of organizing and expressing their thoughts, and new ways of being and acting. This process of internalizing and adjusting to foreign patterns is difficult and often stressful. It is no accident that learners may speak of being traumatized by negative experiences with language learning. Similarly, culture stress and culture shock are a common reaction to extended stays in a foreign place (Bennett, 1998; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Oberg, 1960; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). The model presented here treats the psycho-cultural stresses of learning as a primary concern for educators.

As a way to understand how learners manage the deep-rooted cognitive changes necessary for linguaculture learning, this model borrows from *dynamic skill theory* (DST)—an approach to understanding learning and cognitive development. Developed by educational psychologist Kurt Fischer, and grounded in Piaget’s cognitive development stages, it seeks to understand the steps involved in learning new skills (Fischer, 2008; Fischer & Yan, 2002; Fischer, 1980; Fischer & Bidell, 2006). DST describes cognitive development as a series of stage-like shifts of increasing complexity, each level being built from simpler skills at a previous level. It describes transformational rules that “specify the particular developmental steps by which a skill moves gradually from one level to the next” (Fischer, 1980, p. 477).

DST is intended as a common framework for understanding learning throughout many domains—cognitive skills, socio-emotional skills, language, and motor skills. While typically used to understand

the developmental learning processes of childhood, DMLL applies it to linguaculture learning. DST has been applied to foreign language education by scholars such as Murphy (Murphy & McClelland, 2011; Murphy & Sin, 2014), and is part of the emerging field of educational neuroscience (Cozolino, 2013; Fischer, 2009; Sousa, 2010; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2014).

DST is a multi-tiered model, in which new skills are built upon existing skills in a sequence that repeats itself at higher degrees of complexity (Fischer, 1980; Fischer & Bidell, 2006; Rose & Fischer, 2009). The present work focuses on four levels of learning: 1) *single set*, 2) *mapping*, 3) *system*, and 4) *system of systems*. The four levels of learning elucidated by DST provide a simple but powerful framework for understanding how linguistic and cultural knowledge builds on itself, how it reaches exponentially higher levels of complexity, and how the experience of learners changes as their knowledge becomes more sophisticated.

According to DST, complex skills start through an accumulation of single sets—skills learned in relative isolation from each other. Next, there is a process of mapping, as those individual bits of knowledge are connected to each other in meaningful ways. At a certain point, these interconnections start to work together as a unified whole, or system. Systematic knowledge functions holistically, so that it is no longer experienced as a collection of sub-skills, but as a single higher-level skill. Such systematic knowledge can be built upon as well: one system can be learned in relation to other systems, until a system-of-systems level of knowledge emerges (Figure 1). According to DST, this final level is not the end point of development; it builds onto another tier of even more complex functioning. (Fischer, 1980; Fischer & Bidell, 2006).

To get a sense for this, consider the collection of abilities required to learn to cook—or at a smaller

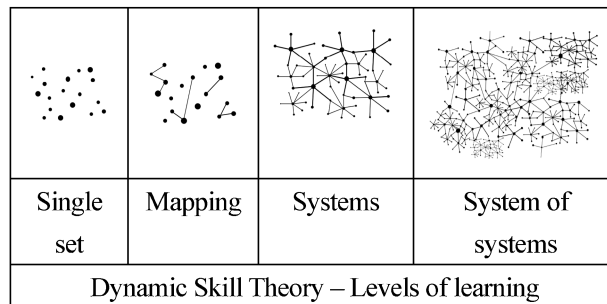


Figure 1. Levels of learning

scale, to prepare an omelet. Cooking an omelet is not simply a single skill—it is a collection of other skills that must be combined in a meaningful way. It requires, first of all, a set of individual skills (single set), such as the ability to crack open an egg, turn on the fire, or grate cheese. It also requires that those skills be connected together (mapping), as when one cracks open an egg, whisks it in a bowl, heats up the pan, and then pours the egg into the pan. Once these different skills are mastered, one starts to see making an omelet in holistic terms (system)—as one dish that you know how to make. This is the point at which creativity truly comes into play. Systematic knowledge allows for self-expression and individual variation—you may create unique omelets that differ from the omelets of others, even as they conform to the expectations of what an omelet is. They have a predictable structure yet are individualized.

For all its complexity, the ability to make an omelet is only one sub-set of a much broader skill—the ability to be a good cook generally (system-of-systems). Being a skilled cook requires more than the ability to follow many different recipes and make a variety of dishes. Good cooks are able to create new recipes and “play” with food in many ways. They are aware of how ingredients interact, have an understanding of cooking processes, knowledge of different types of cuisine, and so on. This system-of-systems’ understanding of cooking is exponentially more complex than the ability to create a single

dish. There are so many factors involved in cooking at this level as to allow for an infinity of creative possibilities. At this higher level of complexity, knowledge of cooking is experienced at a meta-level, i.e., concerns reach beyond the success or failure of any individual dish.

The key element of these four levels is their increasing level of *complexity*. Complexity theory, which has gained increased attention in SLA, aims to “account for how the interacting parts of a complex system give rise to the system’s collective behavior” (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p. 1). From the perspective of complex systems, the levels of DST are not simply a linear progression, in which one skill is built upon another in a mechanical way. Each level represents a new level of complexity and a higher level of functioning. New skills emerge from the interaction of lower-level skills as a complex whole that is more than the sum-total of its parts. For example, the skill involved in being a creative chef involves much more—it is more complex—than the ability to follow many recipes. Similarly, being a fluent speaker of a language is more complex than being able to form correct sentences. And knowing how to read people’s intentions in a foreign environment is more complex than having knowledge of etiquette rules. Dynamic skill theory, then, is a way to make sense of these increasing levels of complexity.

There are some other key features of complex skills as described by dynamic skill theory. Complex skills require a certain mastery of lower-level skills. One cannot make an omelet without knowing how to crack open an egg. But simply accumulating lower-level skills may not be sufficient to reach a higher level of cognitive complexity. Higher-level skills are not simply learned, they emerge from the interaction of lower-level skills. Emergence refers to the idea that a complex system reaches a new, higher state of organization. The new behavior “has some recogniz-

able ‘wholeness’ ” extending beyond previous levels of functioning (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p. 59). We experience emergence when we have an “a-ha” moment of realization or insight; a young child experiences emergence as standing, balancing, and taking steps simply become “walking” ; and the complex patterns of a school of fish emerge from the simpler interactions of individual fish.

Emergence is not an automatic result of adding more elements to a system. It requires a critical mass of increased complexity and self-organization. For example, some cooks may be capable of following the steps required to make an omelet from start to finish (mapping), yet never reach the point at which they start to experiment with different types of omelets (system). Higher-level skills require experimentation, and the ability to go beyond the previous level of cognitive sophistication. In addition, it is not necessary to completely master every sub-skill to reach higher levels. One can be a creative cook in spite of having limited experience with particular dishes or knowledge of only a few ingredients. The key to becoming creative is not simply accumulating experience, it is the ability to get comfortable with the ingredients at one’s disposal and learn to experiment in one’s own way. In cooking, as with linguaculture learning, creativity is a key indicator of advanced levels of learning.

4. Four levels of linguaculture learning

This work uses the cognitive levels described by DST as a conceptual starting point for the Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning. DMLL is intended for educators wishing to integrate both language and cultural learning into a single learning framework. It hopes to go beyond the “skill vs. awareness” dichotomy found in language and intercultural education. It proposes a roadmap of cognitive development—one that describes how language and cultural knowledge become more sophisticated

over time. As that happens, the way that learners experience a foreign linguaculture evolves. This evolution results not only in increased linguistic ability or cultural understanding, but also in an expanded sense of self. The ultimate goal of DMLL is not linguistic or cultural knowledge for its own sake. The four levels of DMLL represent a path towards personal development through language learning and cultural exploration.

DMLL assumes that as knowledge emerges at higher levels of complexity, it is integrated more fully into one’s cognitive systems in a process of neuroconstructivism (Sirois et al., 2007). This cognitive reconstruction happens primarily at the level of unconscious cognition. From the learner’s perspective, this process is experienced as an increased familiarity and comfort of foreign linguaculture patterns, which become a more natural part of the self. DMLL proposes that linguaculture learning is experienced at four different levels: i-1 (encountering), i-2 (experimenting), i-3 (integrating), and i-4 (bridging). The “i” is representative of “identity” and refers generally to the expanding sense of self that can accompany language and cultural learning. This should not be confused with the “i” in i+1, which Krashen (1987) uses to refer to foreign language input. The lower case is chosen because a capital “I” can be confused with a lower-case “L,” i.e., “l.”

Each of these levels represents a different way of processing the patterns of a foreign linguaculture. They are based on the idea of increased levels of cognitive complexity and the four levels of learning found in DST. These four levels are summarized in Figure 2.

The circles represent changes in the learner’s subjective experience of the foreign linguaculture. For inexperienced learners, foreign languages and cultures are experienced as something alien to the self. Such foreignness is not necessarily experienced in negative terms—it can also engender curiosity or

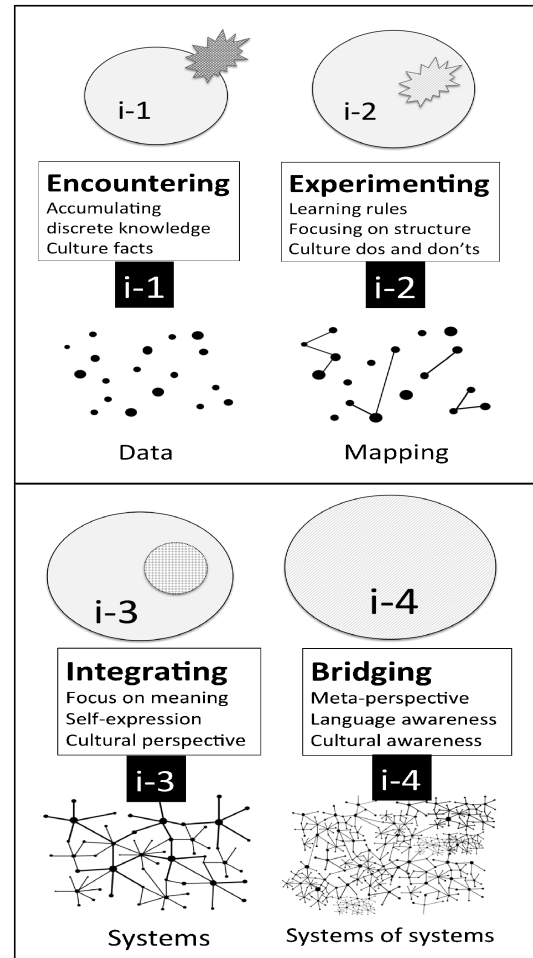


Figure 2. Four levels of linguaculture learning

interest. In either case, however, a new linguaculture is felt to be outside of the self—something associated with foreign people and places, rather than something that is familiar and natural. Helping learners have a constructive relationship with the foreignness of new linguaculture patterns is a central concern of this approach. Learning involves the development and expansion of the learner’s *foreign language self* and *intercultural self* (taken together—*linguaculture self*). An important goal is that learners can “be themselves” in foreign linguistic and cultural contexts. As part of this, educators help learners understand the four levels of linguaculture learning to encourage *linguaculture awareness*.

Levels of cognitive complexity are task and situation dependent. It is not the case that once learners function at a higher level of cognitive complexity, they never return to the lower levels. Learners go back and forth between these levels depending on the demands of the current situation and task. A learner may be able to make small talk effortlessly (i-3—integrating), but struggle to put together complex sentences when talking about politics (i-2—experimenting), or need to use a dictionary when talking about an unfamiliar topic (i-1—encountering). Some tasks (such as translating an article from one language to another) may require processing at every level, as the translator learns new words (i-2), constructs sentences (i-2), reads for overall meaning (i-3), and reflects on different ways of translating something (i-4). Skilled learners learn to switch smoothly between different levels of processing.

The following section will explore these four levels of linguaculture learning in turn. The descriptions delineate the ways in which how we experience language and culture learning reflects the level of cognitive complexity we bring to a task. In other words, a beginning language learner is not only incapable of performing higher level skills in a foreign language but their way of experiencing the foreign language is fundamentally different from learners at higher levels of cognitive complexity. In this view, there is no automatic correlation between the amount of new knowledge acquired, and the level of cognitive complexity a learner attains. Learners may study thousands of vocabulary words or memorize countless cultural facts, yet never put that knowledge to use in more sophisticated ways. When this happens, not only will they have trouble accomplishing higher-level tasks but their experience of the foreign linguaculture will not evolve.

For learners who make steady progress and reach high levels of proficiency, there may be a natural

and uninterrupted progression to greater cognitive complexity. Such learners are, however, relatively rare. Many learners get stuck or discouraged when the efforts made do not seem to correspond to any feeling of progress or increased ability. The four levels of complexity described by this model provide a developmental roadmap that can help learners understand what they need to do to make further progress.

i-1: Encountering

The linguaculture learning process can be understood as an evolution in the learner's relationship with the foreign linguaculture. The first step in learning is an *encounter* with foreign patterns—a process of discovery and initial contact with something that was previously unknown. At this i-1 level, learning is experienced as a process of accumulating individual skills and pieces of knowledge, such as memorizing phrases, practicing sounds, remembering lists of words, and so on. At this level, it is difficult for monolingual learners to imagine what it might feel like to speak a foreign language. Learners may feel overwhelmed by a seemingly endless list of things to learn. They may not be able to see that higher levels of learning await—levels involving not just memorization and repetition, but also creation and self-expression.

Learners with little experience of foreign people and places typically see them in simplistic or stereotypical terms. At the level of encountering, cultural knowledge is experienced as discrete and factual: *Paris is the capital of France; in China people eat rice; or Italians are passionate*. For such learners, learning about culture is experienced as knowing or not knowing—learning the facts about a particular place or cultural community. Such facts are fundamentally experienced as foreign to the self, either in positive terms (foreign people and places are seen as exotic, i.e., foreign in an interesting way) or nega-

tive terms (foreign people and places are seen as something to resist and denigrate). Regardless, such thinking involves seeing things in absolute terms, namely, as how things are, or as the facts on the ground in a foreign place. There is little relativistic thinking at this stage, and if negative judgments are reinforced through bad experiences, prejudicial attitudes may be entrenched.

i-2: Experimenting

As learners accumulate linguaculture knowledge, a new pattern of cognition and experience emerges. They start to make connections through a process of cognitive mapping—they start to feel they can experiment in the foreign linguaculture. At this level, learners combine knowledge in new ways, as when making sentences using vocabulary words together with sentence patterns. Their learning incorporates more structural elements of language, such as verb tenses or sentence structures. The learner begins producing language on her own. Still, patterns have not yet been mastered and integrated into a larger whole. Learners often consciously construct a sentence in their head—their attention is often taken up by a focus on linguistic form, rather than communication for its own sake.

As learners gain foreign cultural experience, they also begin to relate to cultural patterns in more sophisticated ways. Whereas encountering focuses on cultural information and facts, experimenting is more contextualized and situational. Learners start to think of foreign cultures in terms of rules—dos and don'ts, etiquette, social expectations, and so on. They assume that there is a “right way” to do things in foreign places, and that foreign people act as they do as a direct result of their foreignness, e.g., “Japanese bow because they are respectful.” This represents a level of complexity above simple factual thinking. It recognizes that there are reasons for people's behavior and attempts to make sense of

foreign patterns. Yet this type of thinking can also lead to overly broad generalizations or stereotypes, such as “Americans are friendly because America is a land of immigrants.” Such reasoning is not necessarily wrong, per se; rather, it is limited because it does not incorporate the complexity of cultural communities. Foreign behavior is viewed in rather superficial terms, as though people's actions can be understood by learning what is causing them.

At both the i-1 and i-2 level, learners feel that they are objectively judging foreign behavior, yet may in fact be projecting their own unconscious cultural judgments—a reflection of unconscious ethnocentrism. At this level of learning, ethnocentrism is a normal—though not necessarily desirable—part of social cognition (Amodio & Mendoza, 2010; Bennett, 1993; Dreu, Greer, Kleef, ShalviMichel, & Handgraaf, 2011). Learners may also believe that behavior can be explained by individual variation, and that cultural difference is thus unimportant—what Bennett refers to as *minimization* (Bennett, 1993). What they fail to notice is that individuality is most fully expressed in the context of shared community. In an unfamiliar cultural setting, we will have trouble judging whether behavior is a result of individual personality or cultural background. Behavior that appears pushy in one cultural community may seem normal in another. We have to understand what “normal” behavior is in order to fully appreciate individual difference. Getting beyond this point requires a quantum leap in understanding—learners must see that culture is a complex and evolving system of meaning, and not simply a factor in determining behavior.

i-3: Integrating

As learners integrate linguistic patterns more fully into their cognitive systems, they reach a point at which they start to use the foreign language more holistically, i.e., as a functioning whole system. No

longer are they constructing utterances piece-by-piece. Rather, language forms have become internalized and have coalesced into systematic knowledge (a functioning interlanguage) that goes beyond the sum total of its parts. Language use becomes less focused on form and more focused on meaning. The system itself becomes a medium for creativity and self-expression, rather than something that must be practiced piece by piece. At this point, learners may lose themselves in the act of communicating. In a similar way, there is a quantum leap when someone learning tennis gets good enough to forget their practice strokes, and starts focusing on simply playing the game. At the level of integration, language learners finally get a sense for using language to communicate, as opposed to simply practicing its forms.

At the i-3 level, learners finally begin to feel more fluent and that they can be themselves and use the foreign language in a creative way. This is true of any complex skill—as it is integrated into our cognitive systems, it is experienced more as a natural extension of the self. Even the way we talk about it changes. For example, someone learning tennis may begin by saying that she is “learning tennis,” but then refer to “practicing tennis” as skills improve. Finally, skills start to coalesce such that she is simply “playing tennis”—she is one with the game. With further progress and reflection, this player may learn to help others and start “coaching tennis.” In these shifting statements, we can catch a glimpse of increasing levels of cognitive complexity. Similarly, as language learning progresses, the experience of the language evolves. Rather than “studying English” or “learning English,” learners may feel like “an English speaker.”

For language learners, reaching the integration stage is associated with gaining fluency, an increased level of confidence, and the ability to express themselves more freely. This does not happen

all at once, of course. Learners may reach i-3 when discussing simpler topics but struggle with more challenging content. Some learners manage to operate at i-3 even with relatively limited vocabulary, while others may have lots of knowledge of words and forms, but not reach the critical mass of functioning needed for i-3 processing to emerge. These learners may feel stuck, since learning more words, or studying language structures, may not help them make the quantum leap to this higher communicative level. In Japan in particular, where grammar translation and rote learning are often emphasized, it can be hard for English learners to reach the point of cognitive critical mass required for fluency to emerge.

Cultural learning too, can reach the level of systematic understanding associated with i-3. Perceiving foreign cultural patterns in terms of a system, as opposed to a collection of rules or facts, represents a paradigm shift in cultural understanding. At i-3, learners see that other worldviews have an internal logic that is all their own. They represent a different standard of what is normal. Going from i-2 to i-3 permits learners to make a shift to a more ethnorelative view—the ability to suspend judgment and understand foreign cultural communities in more relative terms. They may also adapt their behavior to better match these new ways of looking at things. At the i-3 level, it is understood that there is no contradiction between sharing a culture and being a unique individual. Learners do not expect everyone from a particular cultural community to act in the same way. At the same time, they recognize that everyone is influenced in important ways by her cultural background.

The i-3 level of cultural understanding tends to be marked by cultural relativism. One sees that culture affects our view of social reality, and that multiple perspectives—all of which are normal to those who are habituated to them—are possible. This helps

learners see that their own cultural perspective is just one of many. In some cases, perspective shifting may involve a cultural identity dilemma, in which learners feel caught between contrasting cultural worldviews. In order to go beyond this, they need to reach an even higher level of intercultural understanding, namely, bridging. When learners are making progress with both linguistic and cultural patterns, they find that becoming comfortable switching between languages goes hand-in-hand with switching cultural points of view.

i-4 Bridging

The i-4 level of learning is exponentially more complex than i-3. It is the level at which a tennis player becomes a tennis coach, a cook goes beyond recipes, and a language learner becomes a language teacher. It involves a broadening of perspective beyond one's individual experience—a system-of-systems view, which incorporates more of a meta-perspective. While i-3 thinking is focused on the particulars of a particular system, i-4 thinking involves principles that can be applied more widely. A language teacher at the i-3 level, for example, may give advice based on personal learning experience, since that is how they themselves have found success. At the i-4 level, however, a teacher understands that there is too much variation in language learning to define a “best” approach. Rather, they look for principles or guidelines that describe effective ways to approach learning challenges more generally.

The i-4 level of cultural awareness goes beyond the comparison of any two contrasting cultural worldviews. It seeks organizing principles to understand cultural patterns at a meta-level. While this may include making generalized statements about patterns of cultural difference, it avoids cause-and-effect thinking. For example, at the i-2 level, someone might think that patterns of cultural difference

are the “cause” of behavior, and say, for example, that “Japanese act that way because they are collectivistic.” At the i-3 level, learners realize that labels like this are only meaningful when used to compare patterns to those found in other places. At the i-4 level, learners extend their learning beyond the patterns found in a particular community. At the i-4 level, learners may consider different ways of constructing the concept of collectivism, for example, to see which conceptualization has the most explanatory power.

While this system-of-system level of understanding is described as a form of meta-cognition, DMLL assumes that such knowledge is often intuitive, and may be hard to articulate. Complex cognition can involve a greater ability to explain one's own knowledge, but as new knowledge is internalized, it becomes more automatic and may actually sink beneath conscious awareness. Highly skilled language users may forget the grammar lessons from when they first started studying. Similarly, experienced interculturalists may not have a ready definition for the concept of culture, yet be highly competent interculturally. The complexity of their knowledge is evidenced by their *expert intuitions*—their ability to manage complex patterns creatively and without a need for conscious calculation (Klein, 1998). Such intuitive knowledge feels natural not because it is simple, but because it functions so smoothly at a high level of complexity (Shaules, 2014).

5. Implications

This article has given a brief overview of the Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning. This final section will briefly consider some of the implications of this model, set out a conceptual framework to implement this approach in the classroom, as well as suggest ways in which this model could serve as a starting point for research.

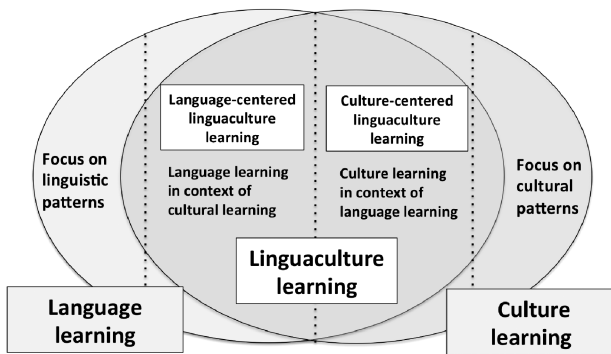


Figure 3. Four zones of linguaculture pedagogy

Language-centered vs. culture-centered pedagogy

The DMLL allows for pedagogy that is focused on learning goals related to linguistic mastery, and also pedagogy focused on cultural awareness. The difference is one of emphasis. This is represented visually in Figure 3, which shows overlapping circles of linguaculture learning. Language-centered linguaculture learning (LC-LL) puts language learning in the foreground, with cultural learning in the background. Culture-centered linguaculture learning (CC-LL) emphasizes cultural learning in the context of foreign language learning. This approach is appropriate when course goals are focused specifically on cultural awareness or understanding. Focusing on both equally would imply alternating learners' attention between the two different elements.

6. The linguaculture classroom approach

Implementing DMLL in the classroom encourages an approach to pedagogy that frames learning in terms of development, growth and complexity, rather than knowledge, skills and mastery. While a detailed description of such an approach is beyond the scope of this article, a Linguaculture Classroom Approach (LCA) could be based on the metaphor of linguaculture learning as a journey—one leading to higher-level learning and an expanded sense of self. Such a conceptualization is consistent with existing

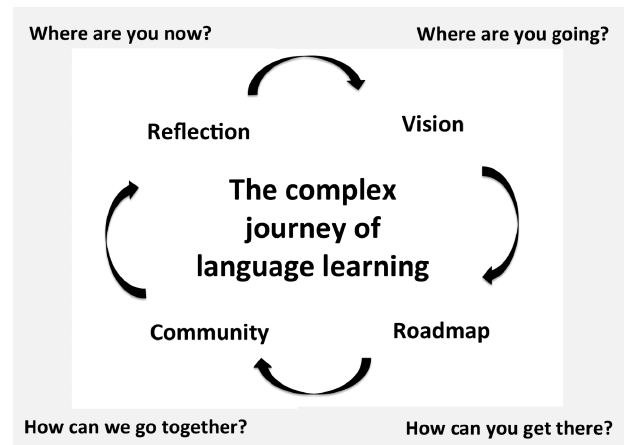


Figure 4. Reflection-vision-roadmap-community

approaches to pedagogy—in particular, the idea of Backward Design, which focuses on defining objectives, and then identifying the evidence that will show progress towards those objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). A linguaculture classroom approach to pedagogy can be structured around four key elements:

- 1) Reflection (“Where am I now?”)—raise awareness of the learning process, identify resistance, and help learners reflect on their relationship with the foreign linguaculture.
- 2) Vision (“Where am I going?”)—help learners envision a future linguaculture self. Learners need to reflect on the inner qualities they would like to develop as part of the linguaculture learning process.
- 3) Roadmap (“How do I get there?”)—provide learners with a developmental roadmap including the four levels of linguaculture learning. Help them gain awareness of their own learning processes.
- 4) Community (“How can we go together?”)—create a learning community that shares a vision for growth and development through linguaculture learning. Individuals take responsibility for supporting the group, and vice versa.

As shown in Figure 4, these elements, taken together, would constitute one version of a Linguaculture Classroom Approach—one that conceives of the classroom learning space as a zone in which to experiment with foreign linguaculture patterns, an expanded foreign language self, and the development of a more intercultural self, i.e., one that can act as a linguistic and cultural bridge in intercultural contexts.

This model has been introduced as a way to organize pedagogy. In that sense, it is primarily designed for educators. At the same time, students may benefit from understanding different levels of learning, as a way of empowering them and encouraging autonomy. Many learners may feel stuck in their journey of learning—trudging along, lesson after lesson, with no sense of where they are going or why they should expend so much effort. As they learn to engage with foreign linguacultures at higher levels, they will see that language and culture learning are much more than a set of skills or a way to get a job. Linguaculture learning can lead to a transformative experience and an expansion of the self. In that sense, this model is designed for anyone who sees language and culture learning as a form of cultural exploration and personal growth.

7. Growth versus mastery:—a research agenda

Learners at the first two levels of linguaculture learning (encountering and experimenting), tend to experience learning as a need for “mastery” of specific knowledge and skills. The latter two levels (integrating and bridging) tend to be experienced more in terms of growth—as learning that is a dynamic, never-ending process. One area of possible research would test whether an understanding of the levels of linguaculture learning can help learners develop a more growth-oriented view of learning. Pedagogy could focus on helping to reframe students’ understanding of learning itself, so that they are able to see

language and cultural learning in terms of growth and development, rather than as simple mastery of knowledge and skills. Research could then measure the impact of this perceptual shift. It could also test whether learners who tend to see learning in terms of growth experience less cognitive resistance to foreign patterns of linguaculture.

Another area of research could explore whether increased language awareness has an influence on cultural awareness, and vice versa. At issue is whether increased levels of cognitive complexity related to language should be seen as relatively separate or as relatively integrated with the cognitive complexity of cultural learning. Is language awareness fundamentally separate from cultural awareness, or are they different elements of a largely integrated cognitive whole?

8. Conclusion

This article has sketched out a developmental model of linguaculture learning from a theoretical perspective. These ideas are currently being applied to classroom practice in university language education in Japan. Future publications will present the results of these efforts and provide more guidance for teachers interested in this approach. In addition, DMLL will need to be elaborated in more detail. There is a need to clarify the theoretical foundations upon which this model rests and to relate this conceptualization to existing approaches. To make this model of further value, a body of practice must be developed that demonstrates that DMLL can be of use to classroom teachers. Learning outcomes must be compared to existing educational approaches. As with any educational model, the proof is in classroom outcomes, and growth in the minds of learners.

Contact

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