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Target Language Use and Teaching for Intercultural Competence in Novice Level Spanish Courses: Comparing Practices and Perspectives in High School and University Classrooms

Leah Shepard
College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

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TARGET LANGUAGE USE AND TEACHING FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN NOVICE-LEVEL SPANISH COURSES: COMPARING PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES IN HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS

Approved by: Angela Erickson-Grussing

Angela Erickson-Grussing
Instructor of Spanish, Department of Hispanic Studies

Department Readers:

_Nelsy Eschávez-Solano_

Nelsy Eschávez-Solano, Associate Professor of Spanish, Department of Hispanic Studies

_Allison Spenader_

Allison Spenader, Associate Professor of Education, Department of Education

_Elena Sanchez-Mora_

Elena Sanchez-Mora, Department Chair, Department of Hispanic Studies

_Tony Cunningham, Director, Honors Thesis Program_
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I. Introduction

World language education is an area that is constantly changing due to the sociological subject matter and connection to cultures around the world. Over the years pedagogy has changed from strict emphasis on translating and writing skills to communicative competence that encourages “real” and meaningful interaction (Brown, 2000). Therefore each instructor must establish their own purposes for teaching, and their hopes for their students. In this research, a few of the modern language realm’s current challenges will be discussed, but more specifically, the following introduction provides framework for the important questions that instructors are asking and the research that provides potential strategies.

The study of this paper focuses on culture, language use, and intercultural competence, and further focuses on the connections between them in teaching philosophies and self-reported practices of current language instructors. As in many subject areas, world language instructors also have the challenges of time and overall curriculum choice. The topics and objectives on which instructors choose to focus can vary, especially because there are no standardized, high stakes requirements for foreign language in the United States in the high school and university levels. With this challenge, language instruction has often been split into two or more-categories: language structure and grammar, and culture topics. This leaves instructors with the additional challenge to either integrate the two or find ways of incorporating one at the expense of the other, which is the heart of this research. Several scholars, including Claire Kramsch and Sandra Savignon, and organizations such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the University of Minnesota’s Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) have made significant efforts towards the promotion and study of culture in the language classroom and encouraging students’ cultural awareness. Additionally,
the concept of intercultural competence has appeared in recent years as an ideal end result of language education. The ability to interact successfully in other cultures is a skill to be desired through the learning of a second language. The studies and research on intercultural competence has only emerged in the last 20 years, but scholars such as Michael Byram and Milton Bennett have deemed the development of it as absolutely necessary for students, especially students of world languages. Both scholars state that intercultural competence is a combination of many facets, but specifically it combines the language skills and knowledge of the target culture in order to navigate and interact with native speakers of the second language or actively participate in the target culture (Byram 2002). Byram and Bennett have developed methods and frameworks for pedagogy of incorporating intercultural competence, and Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity approaches intercultural competence from a realistic and applications based approach for identifying students’ development and future growth (Bennett, 1993).

Despite this, there is little research that gives applicable classroom methods and materials, especially in relation to how instructors are using the target language.

The use of the target language and the increasing focus on the development of intercultural competence has an important relationship because the amount of input and production involves intentional planning at novice levels. However, when novice language is paired with a difficult concept of social and cultural awareness obstacles are seemingly natural. Janet Bennett and Karuko Ikeda developed a model, based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which displayed the positive correlation between language use and proficiency and intercultural sensitivity, which further proved the necessary instruction and scaffolding for students in this aspect of language learning (Bennett and Ikeda, 2008; M. Bennett, 1993). In Carol Wilkerson’s study entitled “Instructors’ Use of English in the Modern Language Classroom,” (2006) she speaks of the common challenges of exclusive target language
for Spanish instructors, but also identifies common trends when instructors revert back to the first language in the classroom. This study serves as a preliminary analysis and stepping stone as to how instructors use the target language, and further gives inclinations as to how instructors incorporate other topics in the target language. Throughout the debates of target language use in the classroom, virtual and maximal target language use have been the most prominent theories of best practice (Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain, 2009). However, Levine dispels myths about target language use in the classroom and promotes a multilingual approach that incorporates culture and reasons with the affective modes of students (Levine, 2001). His study contributed much to the research and the analysis of incorporating both intercultural competence and maximal target language use in the classroom, and transitions well to the overarching purposes of the study.

This study investigates the relationship between multiple areas of foreign language education, but more specifically the relationship and challenges associated with incorporating intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom. Novice-level classroom environments (high school and university Spanish classes) were the focus of the study, as this is where students in the United States tend to receive most of their second language instruction if they choose to take a second language. Therefore, because many students in the United States tend to have limited experience or proficiency in a foreign language it seems integral that these novice level classrooms should be an environment that fosters the ability to communicate in a second language and develops the intercultural competence of the student.

**Statement of the Problem**

This research on pedagogical perspective and practices of intercultural competence and target language originates from my personal experience while transitioning from high school language programs to college language courses, and experience abroad, in which each proved to
have inconsistencies between one level and experience of Spanish education to the next. As a result of the personal experience and further scholarly research, the following discrepancy has become clear to me. Due to the ‘hybridized’ nature of modern foreign language classrooms and their need to teach both culture/intercultural topics as well as language skills, there does not seem to be widespread consensus on how to incorporate those two crucial components of the curriculum in a way that maintains use of the target language and develops intercultural competence in keeping with the cognitive development of the learner. This problem seems to be the most prevalent in novice language classrooms, as proficiency and exposure seem to be limited, but yet entertains the idea that students should be communicatively competent to a certain degree.

**Purpose of the Study**

As world language is a subject area that requires much time and optimal environmental factors to achieve success, and ultimately a certain level of proficiency, it is helpful that instructors are aware of the challenges and changing pedagogical theories and practices in order to better serve students, especially those at the novice levels. In general, the ideas of intercultural competence and learning a second language have emerged as beneficial concepts, especially in creating global citizens and for building global relations. As students (and being a student and future educator of Spanish myself), it is important to see a purpose and the lasting benefits of learning a second language. Therefore, this research not only seeks to investigate the relationship between target language use and intercultural competence, but to also investigate a further purpose for learning a second language, and then to project the benefits to future students.

**Objectives for the Research**

1. Gather and disseminate relevant research and applicable approaches regarding target language use and intercultural competence in the novice foreign language classroom.
2. Develop a survey that assesses and provides instructor perspectives and practices on the following topics, and then further analyze the relationship between intercultural competence and target language use in novice language classrooms. The survey serves the following purpose:

   a. Obtain philosophies from high school and university instructors about intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom.

   b. Obtain self-reported practices of instructors regarding target language use and intercultural competence in the classroom.

3. Be granted permission for human subject participation from the participating institution.

4. Gather two lists of potential participants: alumni from the selected institution with degrees/licensure in Spanish education, and university professors from the same selected institution that have experience teaching novice-level Spanish courses.

5. Arrange participation through email that provides information and consent and the online survey instrument.

6. Analyze and code data to find relevant connections, and reflect upon the results to make appropriate observations and conclusions.

**Research Questions**

1) How do Spanish educators view culture and intercultural competence in the novice language classroom?

2) How do Spanish educators formulate their views on language use and what difficulties are associated with exclusive language use?
3) What is the relationship between target language use and the learning of language, cultural, and intercultural concepts in the novice language classroom?

II. Literature Review

A. Introduction

The following review of literature is the result of studying the relationships between language, culture, and intercultural competence in the classroom. There is very little research that specifically focuses on target language use and intercultural competence so the research collected covered a variety of sources and topics surrounding language acquisition. Understanding the history of language instruction and the challenges that instructors face today was central to the research, and helped develop the study and any further research questions. This literature includes relevant history, theory, and practice regarding language instruction, culture, intercultural competence, and target language use. The information included in this research is representative of the background needed to investigate relationships and correlations within the data set. In smaller sections of the research, there are also methods and lesson ideas, as current research does not provide significant applicable approaches for the integration of intercultural competence and use of the target language.

B. Relevant Theory of Second Language Teaching, Acquisition and Learning

The history of second language teaching, acquisition, and learning is relevant as a foundation to this paper as the general focus is on target language use and building intercultural skills through teaching practices. Brown’s Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (Brown, 2000) provides a comprehensive insight into the development of language instruction and thought over the last century and touches on the important concepts faced by language instructors today, specifically with theory related to the research of this essay. His research and outline of basic linguistic theory is consistent and covers a variety of topics to encourage instructors to find their own approaches that
serve the needs of their classroom. As the author of several editions of this book, his research continues to reflect some of the best practices and ideals of language instruction; therefore, his book was an excellent resource to provide overview on the history of language instruction and learning. The mentioned information and theories will not be explained in detail, but rather allude to the influences that may contribute to the perceived relationships between intercultural competence and target language use.

**Contemporary Theory and Thought**

Today the developments in language acquisition theory and pedagogy do not point to one best practice for teaching and learning a foreign language. Rather, instructors are encouraged to develop an approach combined of various methods and schools of thought to better suit the needs of their learners. However, there are several important methodologies and theories that are worth mentioning because of their popularity in language classrooms today. The following three concepts will be discussed as they relate well to contemporary thought, but also connect well with intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom. Communicative competence, Long’s Interaction Hypothesis (Gass, Madden and Long, 1985) and the Whorfian hypothesis as a part of sociocultural theory, are concepts that prevail in language teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. We find instructors using various methods from these in their instructional approach, especially with decisions made regarding intercultural competence and target language use.

**Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence developed in the second half of the twentieth century as the focus of language education shifted from individual language development to interactions with others. The term “communicative competence” was created by Dell Hymes (Hymes, 1972), and Brown presents two definitions that explain the concept of communicative competence. First,
Hymes refers to this as the “competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts.” Brown also uses the definition of Sandra Savignon (Savignon, 1997, p. 9), another leading scholar in second language acquisition research, who states, “Communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved.” Brown further notes the contrast between this and Noam Chomsky’s viewpoint in that “it is not so much an intrapersonal construct… but rather a dynamic, interpersonal construct that can be examined only by means of the overt performance of two or more individuals in the process of communication” (Brown, 2000, p. 246). Brown’s reflection on the subject provides an additional interpretation that alludes to the true purpose of language, meaningful and authentic interaction between individuals, with instruction that supports “real” communication in contexts not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom.

The distinction between communicative competence and linguistic competence emerged in the 1970s, which seems to be important in understanding the proficiencies of students and teachers, and further instructional approaches. Prior research that has supported this includes James Cummins, a professor at the University of Toronto who works on language development, who developed the terms cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) and basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS). He originally developed these concepts for English as a Second Language classrooms, but they were also found to be applicable for foreign language. CALP focuses on the individual proficiency with a focus on form, and is often seen in classroom tests and exercises. BICS focuses on the “communicative capacity” that all language learners need to function in “daily interpersonal exchanges.” Cummins later expands his definitions to include that CALP is classroom oriented language that is “context reduced” and BICS focuses on daily face-to-face communication that is “context embedded.” This is relevant because ideally, to achieve communicative competence, students would succeed at the BICS level language, not solely at the
CALP level (Brown, 2000, p. 246; Cummins, 1979). The differences between BICS level language and CALP contribute to the cultural knowledge and intercultural competence necessary to participate fully in society. BICS emphasizes the skills needed the most for basic intercultural competence and communicative competence, but CALP is a support for deeper and more abstract understandings.

Though this previous work provided an initial basic insight into the definition of communicative competence, Brown uses the work of Michael Canale and Merrill Swain as the primary reference point on the subject for second language teaching. Canale and Swain (Canale and Swain, 1980) developed four different subcategories of communicative competence, which cover the linguistic system and the functional use in society: grammatical competence, discourse competence (the ability to connect sentences and phrases), sociolinguistic competence (the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language), and strategic competence (the verbal and non-verbal use and knowledge of strategies that may be necessary for discrepancies in communication due to performance and competence factors) (Brown, 2000, p. 246-247). All of these subcategories aid the in the upcoming definition and application of intercultural competence and target language use in that these two concepts derive from the abilities and knowledge of being communicatively competent and all three have a very close and correlative relationship in language learning.

**Long’s Interaction Hypothesis**

Instructor perspectives and best practices most often include the idea that meaningful interaction is essential for language growth. A theory that has long been used in classroom practice is Long’s interaction hypothesis. This viewpoint derives from a social constructivist model, and focuses on the interaction between learners, peers and their teachers. This approach is associated with current approaches to second language teaching and learning. Long defines the interaction
hypothesis in that “comprehensible input” (language and concepts that are mostly understandable to the learner) “is the result of modified interaction (modifications made by the native/proficient second language speaker to create comprehensible input” (Brown 2000, p. 287). Long views interaction and input as two essential components for language acquisition. He further states, “conversation and other interactive communication are the basis for the development of linguistic rules” (Brown, 2000, p. 287).

This hypothesis has pushed language instruction into a new “frontier” in that “the language classroom is not just a place where learners of varying abilities and backgrounds mingle, but as a place where the contexts for interaction are carefully designed” (Brown, 2000, p. 288). The mention of this hypothesis speaks to the intentional planning and interaction within the classroom to bring learners closer to proficiency and producing authentic language. The theory therefore proposes that creating an “optimal environment” is the first step to building a communicative classroom. Along with its relation to intercultural competence and target language use, the theory advocates that high standards of teacher preparation and increased and meaningful interaction with learners are key to language learning. This is pertinent to this essay as intercultural competence is a difficult subject, and involves the thoughtful and active student and teacher. As well as this, it also speaks to the relationship of using the target language to interact in the classroom, proposing that interaction in the target language is necessary for success (which would also require that teachers are comfortable and able to use the target language in a variety of contexts. With teacher preparation and increased interaction, students have the potential to be more active in the target language when instructors intentionally plan and differentiate instruction according to the language needs. This is important because the theory has a distinct relationship with intercultural competence and target language use in that indirectly, it promotes an integrative approach that maximizes the competences in both areas.
Sociocultural Theory and Whorfian Hypothesis

The Whorfian Hypothesis is used as a support for the relationship between language, society and culture. These connections are important to recognize as students come from a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints, but interpretation of their world and others’ ability to understand it is largely determined on their linguistic competence in the language. And therefore, understanding multiple languages builds understanding and the ability to shape the world through multiple perspectives. Brown elaborates that the hypothesis should be considered as a base hypothesis for understanding how language can “shape world-view” (Brown, 2000, p. 199). Whorf’s own comprehensive summary of the hypothesis (summarized) is as follows:

The background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual’s mental activity… The world has to be organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds… We cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data… (Brown 2000, p. 199; Whorf, 1956, pp. 212-214)

Whorf’s Hypothesis summarizes the history section of this research as he concludes that language shapes society and it is the base of almost everything that is communicated and presented in our work. Therefore, in closing the history section of this essay, language teaching is tangential into giving others another opportunity to experience and participate in the world around them, and instructor perspectives and practices reflect these opportunities for students.
C. Culture in the classroom

Culture in the classroom has always been a point of pedagogical debate, and definitions of culture differ among educators in the language community. The ambiguous definitions and broad range of content makes it nearly impossible for instructors to know what to teach and how to incorporate it into the language instruction. According to Milton Bennett, the challenge comes in what type of culture should be taught, “Big C” culture (objective culture) or “little c” culture (subjective culture) and whether or not teachers know the distinction and how to integrate the two (Bennett 1999; 16). There is already limited time and curriculum constraints in most language classrooms, which should be taken into consideration, but knowledge of the variety of culture and how to apply it in the classroom can transcend to the learners and their future perspectives and uses of the target language. As (all) culture is the base of intercultural competence, it must be discussed first in this essay, especially as it is an area that challenges language instructors in their curriculum. Furthermore, before any research on intercultural competence education can be presented and utilized, instructors must have a definition and clear idea of what is culture and the pedagogical objectives of its inclusion into the language curriculum.

Defining Culture

In Trujillo Saez’s “About multiculturalism: reflections on culture and language teaching” [my translation], he reflects on the ambiguous nature of the word culture and the many facets of information that this word signifies and therefore, that a clear definition will help educators further implement an intercultural awareness into their curriculum and this also inhibits quality intercultural education. What is classified as culture includes geography, society/social class, and particular elements such as art, traditions, and personal beliefs. Because all of these things can be considered culture, it is difficult to give a clear definition of culture for the use of intercultural education
(Trujillo Saez, 2005, p. 2-3). Several other scholars also note this discrepancy within language education. An area that lacks clarity for many language instructors is “Big C” Culture and “little c” culture. Language instructors must know the difference between the two. “Big C” culture is objective; it is the art, history, music, politics, geography, and other seemingly stagnant concepts. “Little c” culture is subjective and dynamic; it is the culture that is framed by personal beliefs, personal viewpoints, and everyday communication, such as verbal and non-verbal language. With these differences, a concrete definition is hard to achieve, because it is nearly impossible to refute that certain aspects of a person’s life or larger society are not culture, everything that surrounds and integrates itself with people is culture. Culture also changes over time, and hence educators have to take extra time and energy focusing on what remains important in that society, even if they haven’t had direct contact at all or for an extended period of time. Culture is ambiguous by nature, but again it seems that educators must find a way to include it in the curriculum and agreeing upon a definition that is applicable for the entire language learning process and curriculum that an institution or department has established. For the purposes of this paper, culture signifies more than “Big C” culture, and it is the “little c” culture that really influences perspectives and “real” language use in context. The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota, an organization that has promoted much development and research on the topics of culture and intercultural competence in the language classroom, uses a definition that fits the parameters of this research:

Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group (CARLA, 2012).
Using this definition, culture is brought outside of the realm of objects and “Big C” culture, but rather, it focuses on the varying sociological elements that form “Big C” culture and allows for a development of authentic language outside of the classroom context. Through instructor professional development and understanding of this definition of culture, students can develop a core cultural knowledge and skill set that promotes further development at various levels of intercultural competence. Furthermore, this is not to say that “culture” is a concept that can be fully mastered or learned. Bennett mentions that the popular language resource used for curriculums, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, focuses on culture as a key component of language education, but still references culture as a “body of knowledge to be explored and mastered—as opposed to an interactive process between learners and cultural contexts” (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 1999, p. 17). Upon analyzing this text, it is clear that it provides a wealth of information for language teachers regarding culture and even objectives for intercultural competence, but does not use a definition or objectives that are easily applicable for the language curriculum. It further expects that students’ intercultural competencies and cultural knowledge have been attained on a level/yearly basis in that student will have achieved and comprehended certain knowledge and know how to readily use it within the target language culture/context in order to move on to the next level of their language. With these definitions set out by *Standards* students are given a seemingly impervious task to know and apply information without a standard definition of culture. With lack of definition we see that even those that are named experts in culture have a difficulty making culture tangible and incorporating a parallel framework to follow. However, there are several scholars that have developed the pedagogical methodology and theory with cultural content, and this area of teaching as central to the language curriculum is not a new concept.

**Culture Pedagogy**
Kramsch, one of the most respected and published authors on culture teaching and cultural identity in the classroom discusses Nelson Brooks’ work, of 1983, *Teaching Culture in the Language Classroom*, (Brooks, 1983), when speaking about revising the way educators think about cultural pedagogy as more than a body of knowledge to be acquired:

As long as we provide our students only with the facts of history or geography, economics or sociology, as long as we provide them only with a knowledge of the sophisticated structures of society, such as law and medicine, or examples of appreciative comments or artistic creations, such as poems, castles or oil paintings, we have not yet provided them with an intimate view of where life’s action is, where the individual and the social order come together, where self meets life (Kramsch, 1983, p. 438).

This quote alludes to the discussion about intercultural competence to come, but also that culture again is more than “Big C” culture and factual knowledge, and hence culture-teaching methodology should reflect this. Kramsch believes that culture teaching should involve more than facts, but also the affective and cognitive process of interpreting these facts. And further, that methodology is first, rather than specific content objectives (p. 438). The National Standards for Foreign Language Education have also been a large influence on second language instruction in the United States. The emphasis on distinguishing the relationships between “products, practices and perspectives” of the target culture has been a base for language instruction, and with this the “The 5 Cs: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons and Communities” (ACTFL) have been the standards for second language instruction. As result of this culture-general focus, the range of resources and research on culture methodology is immense. Using the CARLA definition of culture and the intercultural focus of the paper, this definition of culture was used as the basis for analysis in the survey, and furthermore the methodologies for teaching culture based on a sociological
framework and the inclusion of intercultural perspectives will be presented as suggestions for teaching culture in this manner.

**The Difference between Culture and Intercultural Competence**

To further continue with this discussion and transition into intercultural competence, intercultural competence and culture must first be briefly defined in relation to each other. This is a hard distinction to make, as the two concepts are incredibly dependent on each other and often subtly intertwined in language classrooms. However, this is necessary, as a competence in one does not signify a competence in the other. Traditionally, having a cultural competence is being knowledgeable of one’s own culture and interacting successfully within that group (Gervais, 2011). Many students already have this competency. But, students may also have a knowledge base of the target culture; this could be considered a cultural knowledge competency as well. Culture knowledge is gained in the classroom, but its application and discussion are what tend to be important objectives in second language production. In general, having a knowledge of a culture does not necessitate the ability to bridge two cultures and have appropriate dialogue and interaction, which is a broad definition of intercultural competence. In just talking about target culture, we lack the ability to relate and apply first-language culture as well to aid authentic and meaningful interaction in the target culture. Upon review of the information presented in this research, a strong cultural base in the curriculum is needed to move towards an intercultural competence. However, it is only when the knowledge and language skills of both cultures are integrated in an authentic context, using “real” culture materials and simulating intercultural interaction, that this intercultural competence is achieved and distinguished. In any case, the most significant difference is that students use the cultural knowledge and competencies they possess to develop and interact appropriately within intercultural contexts, which truly distinguishes cultural knowledge from an intercultural acquisition.
D. Intercultural Competence

Definitions of Intercultural Competence:

Intercultural competence has recently emerged as an important framework through which to consider how successful learners are in terms of language learning and culture learning’. The concept can be defined in various ways, and include specific objectives and tasks that a person must accomplish in order to be considered “interculturally competent.” Ultimately, intercultural competence must be tied to language, as language is the means of interacting and understanding others at one of the deepest levels. Many scholars define this concept similarly, but there is little literature that actually speaks of developing the concept in the classroom and fully preparing teachers to incorporate it, and furthermore, to create interculturally competent learners as well as proficient language users. However, there is one scholar, Michael Paige, who lists language as a factor that heightens the intensity of intercultural experiences, especially when one does not know the language of the target culture, which can increase feelings of isolation and a lack of understanding. Therefore making language an integral component of developing intercultural competence and a starting point for further research (Paige, 1993, p. 4).

The purpose of learning multiple languages and building intercultural competence is being able to positively engage in intercultural dialogue. The Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs proposed a discussion about intercultural dialogue in the context of the European Union promoting unity within the societies and cultures. This discussion focused on the objective of Council of Europe: “promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Council of Europe, p. 8).” With this, the council of Europe recognizes that intercultural competence and language is something that is directly correlated to the function of society. Intercultural dialogue is defined as the following:
Intercultural dialogue is a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society. (Council of Europe, p. 8)

The Council of Europe seems to establish what is desirable for a larger world community—“integration and cohesion of society,” and that intercultural competence is not just learning about a culture through outside context such as a textbook, but is based on deeper knowledge and willingness to understand. Without this dialogue, the world would be susceptible to “frozen conflict” (p. 17). So with this we see that intercultural dialogue is a necessary element of society and the combination of language skills and the process of intercultural competence are starting points in this dialogue.

Before the actual definitions of intercultural competence can be discussed, there are components of intercultural competence and language teaching that can be assumed and can further promote the concept in the classroom:

1. Diversity is a fundamental characteristic of life in society.

2. Communication is the tool of construction of society through the negotiation of meaning.

3. There is space for communicative success even though the communication also means misunderstandings as it is based in inference, the allocation of communicative tendencies and interpretation. Without these cognitive processes, that are able to provoke anxiety and uncertainty, there is no communication.

4. Communication is not a neutral process, but it is laden with social relations, that are relations of power [my translation] (Trujillo Saez, 2005, p. 34).
Trujillo uses these to convey the point that intercultural competence is simultaneous social and individual process in that which these processes are constantly interconnected and scaffold off of the other. With knowing these components and the imperfection of communication, we can define intercultural competence in various ways, but still recognize that it is the involvement and interaction in society that propone this development.

The various definitions of intercultural competence are broad and vast, but specifically there are a number of scholars who work with and study intercultural competence and foreign language development. Byram is one of the pioneers in studying and publishing information specifically about this subject. His definition of intercultural competence is as follows:

[It is the] ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality. (Byram, 2002, p. 10)

Similarly, Jane M. Bennett, Milton Bennett and Wendy Allen further expand the definition in saying that:

Intercultural competence refers to the general ability to transcend ethnocentrism (a focus on one’s own culture) appreciate other cultures, and generate appropriate behavior in one or more different cultures (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 1999, p. 13).

Rico Martin, who describes intercultural competence in the following way, presents another useful definition:

[It is] the capacity to establish one’s own identity in the process of mediation between cultures, and to help other people establish their own. (Oliveras, 2000, p. 38)
All of these definitions show a trend: that intercultural competence is an interactive process and something that cannot be attained strictly by individually studying the linguistic structure of a language, but only through intentional interaction with others and an acceptance of cultural differences. Hence, there is a goal of personal awareness within this process (Bennett, 1993, p. 22). Though, just knowing these definitions does not mean that the second-language/foreign language instructor is prepared to incorporate this concept into the classroom. They must first understand the concept on a deeper level themselves and be aware of their own intercultural competence as well.

The following two models have been considered as the most significant in relation to the research regarding intercultural competence. For purposes of this paper and further analysis, only one model will be referred to throughout the results. The two models are important and widely recognized among interculturalists around the world, but the second Bennett model provides a more applicable basis for classroom implementation.

The Byram Model

As Byram is a leading expert, his work must at the least be introduced, although for the sake of this paper his model will not be the primary element of comparison and analysis to the study presented. However, his research provides a solid foundation to the specific components of intercultural competence. His work proposes that the attainment of intercultural competence is connected to these components: knowledge, attitudes, and skills, which are also “complemented” by one’s values in belonging to a particular social group.

Byram states that “attitudes” are foundation that which intercultural competence can progress, as the willingness to reflect and interact is integral to competency. Along with “attitudes,” the “knowledge” of “social groups and their practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction, are additional
components within intercultural competency” (Byram 2002, p. 10). Byram clearly states that teachers do not need to be the sole source of this information, they can learn and discover along with their students. This must be reiterated again, for it is seemingly impossible for a teacher to be fully aware and knowledgeable of all cultures’ practices. Those that wish to acquire and promote intercultural competence must simply be aware of the conceptual framework, processes and methods on how to develop oneself. This aspect will be discussed more at a later point, as teacher development, involvement and curriculum are ultimately the most influential factors of introducing and encouraging the student to intercultural exchange and reflection.

“Skills” are the last component of intercultural competence and seem to be the most physically and visually apparent in learners. Byram relays two sets of skills within this component: skills of interpreting and relating and skills of discovery and interaction. The first set means that a person can interpret a “document or event from another culture and relate it to their own culture” and then the second set means that a person has the ability to acquire new knowledge about a culture and then “operate” with this new knowledge (Byram, 2002, p. 13).

And finally, within the base of Byram’s theory, he expects that the person will strive for critical cultural awareness, meaning that one can evaluate “perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 2002, p. 13). With this as the base theory of intercultural competence, Byram expects that teachers are not only teaching linguistic content and cultural facts, but above all encouraging awareness, reflection and critical thinking in the language classroom.

Byram’s theory is convincing, but still poses problems in that he doesn’t provide as much applicable classroom curriculum (in examples of being able to provide actual lessons versus simply broad topics to be discussed in the classroom) and it seems to be geared towards older language
learners, especially as his research was based mostly in the scope of schools in the European Union and not in the United States, where curriculum and pedagogy can be very different. There also seems to be a lack of connection between age, language proficiency and the development of intercultural competence, which is an important factor to consider, especially as not all levels of development will be ready to use these higher-level thinking skills, which is something that the following Milton Bennett model includes. His theory does not permit an emphasis on the process of developing intercultural competence, but rather the end goal and characteristics of intercultural competence—which is unhelpful for any realistic application. However, Byram does provide the conceptual framework for the multiple levels of intercultural competence and gives comprehensive information as to what is intercultural competence in general.

The following Bennett model differs from the Byram model, and provides an extension of Byram’s theory in that it uses many of the skills and knowledge available to second language learners, and further discusses developmentally appropriate concepts for further intercultural development.

The Bennett Model

Milton Bennett’s definition of intercultural competence alludes to a process of intercultural development in learners. To further describe the process of intercultural competence, Bennett developed the “Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS).” This model and his definitions will be used for purposes of the paper, as they seem to be most applicable to language learners and their instructors. His definition of intercultural competence, stated as the following, is succinct, but still broad enough to allow for variety within applications and learner profiles. Bennett defines intercultural competence as “the ability to relate effectively and appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 1999, p. 21). With this definition Bennett takes a
dual intrapersonal and interpersonal approach to intercultural communication and competence, which aligns much more effectively with the sensitivities and needs of novice language learners. He states,

Education and training in intercultural communication is an approach to changing our natural behavior. With the concepts and skills developed in this field, we ask that learners transcend traditional ethnocentrism and to explore new relationships across cultural boundaries. This attempt at change must be approached with the greatest possible care. We should understand why people behave as normally as they do in the face of cultural difference, how they are likely to change in response to education, and what the ultimate goal is towards which our efforts are expended (Bennett, 1993, p. 21).

This statement displays the challenge of intercultural competence, and the need to become better educated and aware as an instructor. The complexity of this topic affects all areas of instruction, from instructor training, topics in the classroom, amount of target language use and overall pedagogical strategies to creating a welcoming classroom environment. Therefore, a continuous developmental awareness is a necessity and Bennett’s model supports this conscious effort.

This model displays how learners (and instructors) can move past their own ethnocentrism and move into ethnorelativism. Bennett explains that this model can help educators assess the development of intercultural competence and select and plan appropriate lessons accordingly (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 1999, p. 21). Bennett’s research is based in the idea that ethnorelativism is completely valid, and that people must understand this in order to become interculturally competent. According to him, ethnorelativism is defined as believing that there cannot be a value assigned to a particular culture over the other, simply that different is in fact just different and that
one’s own culture is not more “central to reality” than another (Bennett, 1985, p. 27). He relates this to the Whorfian hypothesis and also supports a constructivist view of language learning and intercultural competence, that language shapes the world around us. His theory seems to be sound in that much of this is based on observable behavior and verbal discourse that first identifies a level of competence, and then as these “worldview constructions” become more sophisticated, the higher level of competence is achieved (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 1999, p. 23).

In taking a look at the below model we see the spectrum from denial to integration that is process in acquiring intercultural competence. In the beginning stages of development the learner denies that there are cultural differences, until they movie through defending their culture, minimizing the other culture, accepting the other culture, adapting to other cultural norms and, finally integrating that culture into their lives. This seems to be the logical progression of intercultural competence and is parallel to an increasing knowledge of the culture and language.

Table 1.1

*Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (Bennett, 1993)
The DMIS model has many advantages, but the one that Bennett spoke of seemed to be the most applicable to the language classroom—it is a “culture” general model. This means that we can take this model to use in any language classroom and adapt classroom methodology to specific developmental levels. These levels also seem realistic for language learners, as with increased knowledge and proficiency, many students seem to hold more interest and open mindedness to differences.

The following is a brief overview of the DMIS stages using Bennett’s definitions:

Denial: The inability to be aware of cultural difference. Stereotyping and a lack of genuine tolerance are common in this stage. (Bennett, 1993, p. 30-31).

Defense: There is a small recognition of cultural difference, but is accompanied with negative evaluations of differences in culture. Superiority of one’s culture and stereotyping of cultural differences is also common in this stage (Bennett, 1993, p. 34-41).

Minimization: In this stage, the person moves beyond defense but there is more emphasis in the similarity and indifference versus recognition of cultural difference. There is a decreased negative association with cultural difference, but it is only created through a focus on similarity so that difference is not of importance and that we can put all differences aside (Bennett, 1993, p. 41-47).

Acceptance: This stage is the beginning of the ethnorelative stages. There is a recognition and appreciation of difference in this stage. Cultural difference is not assigned as either good or bad. The person is able to create more complex constructions of how culture functions in a variety of human interactions (Bennett, 1993, p. 47-51).

Adaptation: At this stage, actual skills are developed to relate and communicate in culturally different contexts. Bennett notes that this is different than assimilation in that, a person at adaptation is able
to change between and within cultural contexts without losing their own set of cultural differences, whereas assimilation is closer to denigration and the stage of defense. In this stage cultural difference is as “respected as highly as one’s self” (Bennet, 1993, p. 51-54).

Integration: The view that one is continuously in a stage of process when perceiving and interacting with cultural difference. A key component of this stage is relating one’s self and experiences to cultural context. In this stage, a person can see himself or herself interacting and “existing” in a variety of cultural contexts. This stage is the pinnacle of intercultural competence, and any intercultural activity is usually met with a positive attitude. Complex views of ethics and cultural topics, and also one’s personal identity are also exhibited in this stage (Bennett, 1993, p. 59-65).

Within Bennett’s presentation of these stages he also includes strategies for recognizing and developing the person at each stage, which would prove to be helpful in the language classroom. In comparison to Byram’s extensive explanation of intercultural competence and inclusion of various components, Bennett’s research and design of this developmental model seems much more comprehensive and accessible to instructors. His research is supported by Byram’s framework, but offers a scale to which one can reasonably identify the developmental level of the individual versus figuring out how a specific body of knowledge and the synthesizing process can be incorporated into the development.

Establishing the Exclusions from the Definition and Applications of Intercultural Competence

In analyzing the above information, there also needs to be discussion as to what intercultural competence is not, so that instructors do not misinform or incorrectly instruct students. As a culmination of the pertinent literature and specifically through Byram’s work, intercultural competence education does not include the following components:
1. Assimilation- those that acquire intercultural competence do not assimilate into another culture, but rather critically think of their interactions with other cultures, can adapt more easily, and understand others without completely changing their personal cultural characteristics.

2. Transculturalism/internationalism/globalization- these concepts negate a complete relative view of cultural difference. Being transcultural implies that there is little difference between culture, and that an emphasis is on the world as one shared culture through similarities, at which this viewpoint would fall under the minimization stage of Bennett’s Model.

3. A competence that emphasizes certain proficiency/fluency goals- being able to simply communicate in another cultural context does not necessarily correlate to being able to understand and react appropriately in another culture. One may be able to exchange dialogue in a very “fluent” manner, but to have an interpersonal dialogue requires the combination of awareness, language, knowledge and general communication skills.

The language instructor for several reasons should recognize these three concepts, but, above all, the students’ learning process should also include their personal cultural experiences, values and perspectives while promoting intercultural competence. Students should also know that proficiency and language skills are very important, but must be associated with the ability to empathize, genuinely interact and hold a conversation with someone outside of their cultural context. Consequently, the language classroom should facilitate language skills, communication skills and intercultural interaction, and only then will intercultural competence be possible in and outside the classroom.
Overall, intercultural competence is a broad topic that encompasses a variety of definitions, purposes and pedagogies. Its development in the classroom should be focused on the realistic growth and skills in the students, and therefore necessitates using a definition and model that is applicable throughout the curriculum. As mentioned earlier, for purposes of this paper, Bennett’s model will be used to define and analyze the data. Therefore, summarizing this definition, intercultural competence is the ability to move past one’s own ethnocentric views of culture and be able to acknowledge cultural difference and interact appropriately in a variety of cultures.

From Theoretical Models to Application-Intercultural Competence in the Classroom

Instructor Perspective and Attitude

Through this compacted research on intercultural competence the themes of interaction, awareness, reflection and integration have emerged as four integral components of intercultural competence. Classroom practice and assessment should include these components and encourage a person to progress toward a higher level of intercultural competence, no matter their current level of development. Application of this concept should be one of the most important parts of the curriculum because use and proficiency of the target language are parallel to intercultural competence if applied effectively in the classroom. Specific methods of assessment are not mentioned within this section, but provide room for future research regarding the evaluation of intercultural competence in the classroom. According to majority of the research, the foreign language teacher should engage in appropriate professional development that encourages personal growth and interactive pedagogy in the classroom in all areas. The FL teacher should seek to be at that integration stage, in order to further represent himself/herself as a model for their students. In Sercu’s *Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence*, she first states that FL instructors need to be proficient and constantly developing all of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that which Byram
propones. She also states that instructors should know how to assess curriculum materials from an intercultural perspective to best encourage development in their students (Sercu, 2005, p. 5). In the study in this publication, Sercu did a study on the instructor’s willingness to include intercultural competence into the curriculum, in a European context. She included a variety of cultures and countries, and found surprising data, despite the positive attitude that was met with this topic. Overall, the first factor of this attitude was recognition that culture activities were equally as important as language activities in the classroom. Secondly there was a correlation that by providing more cultural information, students are likely to be more open to cultural difference. And lastly, that all students should develop intercultural competence at all levels in the curriculum (Sercu, 2005, p. 135). But, ultimately, instructors need to first develop an attitude that intercultural competence is something that can to be developed in all learners, and then education for intercultural competence can succeed.

At which age levels and language levels can intercultural competence be promoted and taught?

Within the research and survey implemented, developmental levels are an important factor when considering the range of competencies in students. Intercultural competence should and can be promoted at all language levels, and there is research that supports this. As intercultural competence encompasses a variety of knowledge and skills, certain components can be taught and used at different levels. Byram does not necessarily offer research in relation to age and development, but Bennett offers suggestions and research within his methodology specifically related to the various developmental levels of learners. Bennett proposes that his model is not simply an acquisition of content or knowledge, but supports the ability to shift cultural perspectives, which can be integrated into the present curriculum with an intentional framework (Bennett,
Bennett and Allen, 2003, p. 28). First, the model can be used at the most basic levels because it supports the realization of the “inter-relatedness” between the native language and target language through cultural self awareness, in which Bennett advocates that we do not know our first language until we study a second language. This is a concept that can be supported at the beginning levels and age groups as students are making language progress in L2, which furthermore is inclusive to building connections with both cultures. Next, Bennett notes that as language is a communication endeavor, language competence is associated with the ability to use the language as an “insider,” which is parallel to building cultural competence and being able to act culturally as an “insider,” and only when these are both supported in the classroom there is full communicative competence within the target culture and target language (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 2003, p. 28).

When teaching any level, Bennett maintains that first the instructor must build a system of challenge and support. This will encourage a continuous process within the language classroom. This means challenging students with content, and making activities and applications easier, or vice versa. In general, topics about cultural difference will be difficult at younger ages and language levels. But, as their growth increases, a parallel correlation between intercultural competence and use of target language seems to be prevalent. Therefore, in creating a balance of challenge and support and focusing on activities appropriate for intercultural stages of the learners, instructors should be able to find activities that foster development and meet the current needs of the students. The below model is an adaptation of Janet Bennett’s model of “Development of Intercultural Sensitivity in the Language Classroom” (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 2003, p. 31).
Bennett’s model is made for a curriculum focus, and not necessarily for individual learner competencies, however the model offers a structured pattern that is logical for the development of most students. To apply this framework, Bennett offers several suggestions for activities and assessment, as do various other scholars. The following information will include specific examples of intercultural activities for novice language learners, and later, appropriate assessment and questions. Generally, this topic is too broad and vast for many language teachers to fully implement, a few starter examples from Bennett’s framework, and similar pedagogical stances, should be provided.

At the denial and defense stages, the language learner is typically at novice and early intermediate levels with their language skills, and therefore intercultural competence activities must be low-risk, engaging, and allow for simple vocabulary to be used if the instructor wants maximum
language use as well. For the denial stage basic activities that language instructors already use, such as shopping simulations, celebrating holidays, and talking about important people, are used at this stage. At this point, there must also be opportunities for subjective culture to encourage movement into the next stage, this should include room for the comparison of culture and recognizing what specific cultures value or appreciate. The important recommendation for instructors teaching at this language level is not to aim too high (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 2003, p. 33). In the stage that follows, defense, students are also at a novice level of language competency. For this stage, instructors should focus on similarities only for this stage, as the learners need much support to realize that transition and difference is good, but also that they may share commonalities with the target culture. Again, one of the most important things is not to be too ambitious with this level of intercultural competence, but still find small ways to allow students to develop to the next stage, minimization. At the minimization stage, the last stage that will be presented that poses relevance to the paper because of its novice-level focus, students should be early-intermediate language learners. These students have moved past defense and are recognized as “down-playing” or minimizing differences in cultures. Students often have a picturesque view of subjective culture that “we’re really all the same on the inside” although they may recognize arts, music, and politics as different. The key part of this stage is encouraging the students that they too have their own subjective culture and then separating culture into specific categories such as “Big C” culture, non-verbal communication and culture-specific patterns of communication. By the end of this stage students should have acquired several skills in the classroom such as personal culture awareness, a non-judgmental disposition for interaction and listening skills (Bennett, Bennett and Allen, 2003, p. 33).

Overall, according to the research, the novice-level foreign language teacher should be including intercultural activities that focus on comparisons, introductions to subjective culture and reflections on personal learning processes. Although Bennett doesn’t suggest explicitly that all of
these activities be conducted in the target language, by focusing on level appropriate activities in intercultural competence, both Bennetts’ models show that there is a similar parallel to language ability. Though Bennetts’ (Janet and Milton) models are not the only intercultural competence methodology that offers activities and lessons, Bennett’s development model is applicable to any classroom and presents key objectives for the teacher to incorporate into established curriculum or create new lessons and activities.

E. Use of Target Language in the Classroom.

Using the target language in the classroom has always been a significant topic of debate to language instructors. Some instructors feel that a balance between first language and second language is reasonable; some maintain that the target language should be used no matter what. There are several pedagogies and theories that support the spectrum of positions on this topic, but generally they do not focus on specific framework for maintaining the target language when talking about cultural and intercultural content, especially as these topics can be more complex for students. However, the polemic question that revolves around the methodology is “Does the first language impede or foster the success of the target language in the classroom?” In this discussion, various theories of target language use will be shared, along with real issues that arise for instructors and finally, the connection to teaching culture and intercultural competence.

Instructors Use of English and Common Challenges-A Case Study Example

The dual focus of how teachers are using language as well as how they are focusing (or not) on intercultural development is an important relationship to consider. However, the analysis of how much and how the instructors use the target language, and the challenges the target language can in further understanding of instructor practices and perspectives. In the language classroom, there can be a multitude of factors that determine the reasoning for using English (or the first language) in the
second language classroom, regardless of the instructor’s view of target language use. In a 2005-2006 study entitled “Instructors’ Use of English in the Modern Language Classroom” by Wilkerson, five university Spanish professors were observed in their first-semester elementary language courses. They were all of similar profiles, and had advanced or superior ratings, five years of experience with elementary level language courses, had extensive experience abroad, and completed graduate level course work in Spanish. In this study, the participants were first asked to write a description of their teaching style and their perspectives of English use in the classroom (Wilkerson, 2008, p. 312). Throughout the study, there were several themes that became apparent within the use of the first language in the classroom. Generally, it was found that English was used to “save time, avoid ambiguity and establish authority” (p. 310). The study further examines actual use of target language and first language, versus the actual ratio language use in the classroom, because often times this proves to be a challenging realization as well. In the first interview, the participant Steven did not recognize that he was even continuously switching in and out of Spanish. He stated that he translated into English for comprehension, grammar explanation and to give directions. Most of the time his Spanish use was only 30 seconds or less when speaking in passages. He frequently code switched, and in the examples it was apparent switched for understanding, and to save time. A point of interest is that when a student asked “¿Es agua?” in Spanish, he responded in English, which later pointed to a sense of confusion for students’ language choice and response in the class (p. 313). Another participant had similar results, and often continued to speak in English throughout the class period once she explained something once in English. This participant also recognized her challenges and its affect on the students, “if students haven’t studied, they are confused because they don’t know the answer, but then I give them an answer in English, so why should they study?” (p. 314). However, there was one instructor that used a significant amount of negotiated discourse, and thought that the first language is an effective strategy if used appropriately. On the first day of class,
this instructor explained to the class how important using Spanish would be for classroom interaction, and told students that they would be able to understand her through non-verbal and verbal cues. Upon observation, this proved to be completely true, and English was only spoken at the beginning and end of class to introduce objectives and summarize; the total English time was only about 5-10 minutes (p. 314). The other participants were more extreme in their styles, with one using English almost exclusively and extensive repetition and the other using Spanish exclusively (p. 315).

With the variety of instructional practices in the study, there was still the commonality of using English for comprehension, to save time and avoid ambiguity. Using English helped control the pace and direction of the class period, and regulated speaking time for students. Also, switching into the first language established authority for the instructor, as she/he was allowed to change the language used at any point. Recasting phrases and words in English was another significant pattern that may have encouraged comprehension, but reduced the effort or clarity of what language to use for the students. Conclusively, it seems that instructors do not fully realize how much of each language they are using and to what effect it has on students’ comprehension and comfort in the classroom. Despite these realities of use and challenges, there are still myths and extreme positions on code choice in the classroom that further affect student understanding and use of the language.

**Brief Theoretical Background of Target Language Use in the Classroom**

The application and methodology that are aimed for use in the language classroom are often associated with some very common myths about first language use in the classroom. In many cases, first language use in the second language classroom has a negative stigma, regardless of the actual amount of target language production by the teacher and students, as seen in the study presented previously. Levine wrote a book specifically about the challenges of target language use, and dispels
these myths in *Code Choice in the Language Classroom* (2011). These myths are as followed with brief explanations:

1. **Monolingual second language use is the most intuitive mode of communication in the language classroom**

   Students are naturally going to make comparisons and connections, and this can be an effective scaffold for future language learning and analysis.

2. **Monolingual native speaker norms represent an appropriate target for the language learner**

   This view discredits language learning from diverse backgrounds and experiences. “Native speaker” would need to be strictly defined, and further the parameters of dialects and “standard” language.

3. **A monolingual approach reflects the reality of language classroom communication**

   Naturally, the L1 will have a presence in the classroom, despite the pedagogy and instructor’s desires. The reality is that by completely forbidding use of the L1, the affective state and willingness for further learning is at stake.

4. **Use of the first language could bring about fossilized errors or pidginization**

   When in correspondence with a monolingual speaker of the L2, the learner of the L2 often knows what is appropriate and what is not in certain situations. Learners should be seen as emerging intercultural communicators, and using appropriate strategies at various competencies does not necessitate the long-term acquisition of a “pidgin” version of the L2.

5. **Use of the first language minimizes time spent using the second language**

   Though this may be true of class time, a multilingual approach can “extend and enrich” the use of the target language. (Levine, 2011, pp. 10-17).
Perhaps all language educators do not believe these myths, but within the wide array of pedagogical beliefs regarding target language use and first language use, it is helpful to know the general influence of this research and consider it when making instructional decisions.

In the publication, *First Language Use in Second and Foreign Language Learning* (2009), Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain present the two positions of target language use in the language classroom. The two positions: the “virtual position” and the “maximal” position represent the two extremities of language choice.

The “virtual position” maintains that the second language should be the only means of communication in the second language classroom, and those that support this view do not see a value in the first language whatsoever. The hypothesis is that L1 = L2 in the sense that students learned the first language with only the first language present, and therefore the target language should follow that same pattern (Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain, 2009, p. 3). Scholars that support this position tend to utilize Krashen’s comprehensible input theory that introduces learners to language that is understandable and available for use (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) of this theory also place high importance on student output completely in the target language. Furthermore, there are several studies that show that the amount of target language input positively correlates to student language development, which also further increases motivation because students see that the language is useful. However, with this theory there seems to be a blind acceptance that exclusive use of the target language is the best practice, and often times this position does not represent the reality of second language classrooms.

Instructors and many students alike admittedly use the first language more than they would like, and agree that the target language should be the “predominant” language in the classroom (Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain, 2009, p. 4). Some instructors believe that the first language can aid in
second language learning, but believe that the second language should be “maximized,” hence, the maximal position. Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain state,

Target language exposure is necessary, but not sufficient to guarantee target language learning; since target-language input must become intake. The target-language input must be understood by students and internalized, and… theoretically principled first language use can facilitate intake and thereby contribute to learning. (Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain, 2009, p 5)

They further elaborate that little amounts of the first language can be beneficial, if it reaps more second language production in the student, whereas exclusive use may sometimes lead to a teacher-fronted classroom. And, it is also important to note “the language of thought for all but the most advanced L2 learners is inevitably his/her L1” (Turnbull and Daily-O’Cain, 2009, p. 5; Macaro, 2005, p. 68). But with this we can begin to see that a balance might be necessary between the two languages, especially in more complex cognitive tasks or concepts in novice language classrooms, can facilitate increased understanding.

An additional theory that supports the maximal use perspective and bridges the discussion to intercultural competence, culture and code choice involves a sociocultural view of language learning, which is Vygotsky’s theory on learning in general. Vygotsky proposes that what a learner first acquires in a social/interactive setting will be acquired eventually on an individual basis. These social processes are cognitive tools that a learner can use individually to further dissect and use the input language. In younger and novice learners, this theory proves to be helpful. Though the theory of Vygotsky is mainly applied to children, as cited by Atkinson, it still recognizes that

Neither language acquisition nor language use—nor even cognized linguistic knowledge—can be properly understood without taking into account their fundamental integration into a socially-mediated world (Levine, 2011, p. 25; Atkinson, 2002, p. 534)
This further means that language is dependent on the mediated instruction between L1 and L2 from instructors, and is a natural process that represents a reality of social interaction and code choice use. Additionally, if one follows and accepts this theory, the learning process also gives responsibility and choice to the teacher and students to construct realistic bilingual norms appropriate for the learning environment, and include a variety of meaningful social and sociocultural contexts (Levine, 2011, p. 26). Conclusively, this goal towards meaningful and authentic communication for the learners and an authentic representation of target culture through instruction, although it may not include exclusive use of the target language, supports a multilingual approach that

Derives from the acknowledgement of explicit roles for language learners’ linguistic multi-competence and of the intrinsic cultural value of the language and of the intrinsic cultural value of language class in its own right and as a component of the larger cultures of which it is a part (Levine 26).

Using this statement, we transition into the thought that global interaction does not often mean monolingual interaction, proponing that we learn other languages and engage in cross-cultural and cross-lingual interaction. As mentioned before, that because we want to encourage students to have intercultural competence, and not simply separate cultural competences, it is natural that first language and second language will closely intertwine in the classroom. Therefore we come to the core research of this study, intercultural competence, culture teaching and the relationship between target language uses.

From Theory to Application-Target Language Use

Though a specific curriculum will not be outlined in this paper, Levine’s research again provides relevant practices and theory that can be applied to this subject. He first states that
instructors cannot design curriculum with the expectations that they are designing identities and opinions, but rather responses, open minds and appropriate skills related to the content. And, consequently, the following principles can transform the shape of a curricular framework:

1. The L2 classroom is one community of practice that is linked in a myriad of ways to many other communities of practice.

2. The learning that goes on in the classroom is a response to rather than the product of the curricula we design, but nonetheless valuable and necessary on those terms.

3. The specific sorts of communication and learning that students engage in as members of multiple communities of practice represent an important component of the diverse sorts of life learning that all of us benefit from all the time (p. 43)

With these principles, it becomes apparent that the language used and taught needs be language that connects one to others and is practical on a daily basis. Before proceeding, Levine noted that complex discussions and personal awareness, and further student production will not be possible if much of the instruction is done in the target language at the novice levels, simply because of the proficiencies and competencies are not sufficient for this type of discourse. Despite this, instructors can adapt to the classroom needs and integrate activities and concepts as appropriate, and supplement with a certain code as necessary. Levine also suggested that the need for these intercultural and personal awareness activities and discussions should override code choice, as students often benefit from having a better sense of purpose for learning language.

Creating a Classroom Environment for Language Learning

Setting up the classroom environment, one that promotes intercultural competence and the target language, in an effective and intentional manner might lower the occurrences of the common
issues and challenges that were presented in Wilkerson’s study (“Instructors’ Use of English in the Language Classroom). This includes engaging the students with a set of skills to navigate the classroom experience and the target culture. Based on Levine’s information, it seems that when learners have these abilities, code choice and intercultural competence are more integrated and natural objectives, rather than isolated events in the classroom. Furthermore, setting strict boundaries on language use would not be necessary as students are able to realize act upon appropriate ways to use their knowledge and skills. Instructors can implement this pedagogy through engaging the class as a community, and working on a “co-construction of classroom conventions” (p. 146) This signifies that instructors do not necessarily lay the ground rules for using language, but rather lays the “affordances for learning and not learning,” or laying out the ground work for language learning in the classroom (p. 147).

*Establishing Classroom Norms*

In creating the learning environment that follows this thought, instructors and students will first have to create an environment that establishes the class as a community, and become acquainted with norms and conventions of language use. The instructor can largely mediate this, probably within the first weeks (or days) of the class, and will approach the classroom depending on the background, needs of the students and institutional groundwork. During the first few periods of the class, the students and instructor develop what is appropriate English and target language use and establish these norms, and once these are established it is appropriate that everyone can be held accountable for defying these norms (though strict punishment would not be recommended). To clarify, students and instructors will create and discuss what is deemed acceptable for English use, and what is not. And additionally, learners will slowly engage themselves in their own process, and use language as a tool for meaningful communication (pp. 147-152). Levine’s views on this subject
should be considered, as intercultural competence should be one of the ultimate goals of a language learner and instructor, and establishing a community that fosters this development will only support the competencies and proficiencies long-term, if a student at some point wishes to continue with language.

On the whole, there was no pedagogy found that proposes exclusive use of the target language or first language that seems fully functional and beneficial to the students. The cooperation of students and instructor to create a language environment that promotes participation, authentic target language and engaged learners appears to be the most important objective of the classroom for desired language production. This also fits with the pedagogy and research of intercultural development in that the goal to create a personally aware learner that behaves appropriately in various contexts, which also does not exclude the classroom learning environment. If the instructor continues to provide authentic material with a multilingual scaffolding approach, this does not necessarily mean that language skills are compromised, just presented in a way that promotes meaningful learning. At the least, instructors should critically examine the way they establish their classroom.

**Culture teaching and use of the target language**

Use of the target language will always be a subject that which instructors have varying opinions and actual applications. Within the schema of information in a FL classroom, there are going to be times where some content is easier to explain and use in the target language, and some content that needs support in the first language in order to fully comprehend and synthesize. Use of the target language in relation to culture can be very difficult without a background or specific set of vocabulary in the target language. However, Robert C. Lafayette in the compilation of culture teaching essays *Pathways to Culture* (1997) gives strategies and suggestions for integrating language and
culture. At the beginning of his essay he points out that educators must convince that the target language exists beyond the classroom and the textbook, that “the language is real and that it works” (Heusinkveld; Lafayette, 1997, p. 127). He first outlines that every lesson must have a culture component and a language component that work together, he uses the example of using “to be” in relation to location and geography of a country of the target culture, although this may seem simplistic (p. 128). He then suggests that oral communication skills and culture should be assessed as often as other linguistic content. Lafayette also holds a strict view that the target language should be the “primary vehicle” for culture teaching (p. 133). He believes that exclusive use of the target language entails lowering the complexity of topics, and that while growing in language skills the culture development and complexity of the topics can and should be parallel, much like the Bennett model that is presented in this paper (p. 133). Lafayette states “Language is the first and most important representation of culture” and cites Allen as saying this best:

Of all the elements of the target culture, the target language is the most typical, the most unique, the most challenging, and – and almost ironically—the most readily available. Its authentic use in the classroom from the beginning of instruction is therefore the primary cultural objective (p. 134).

This statement exemplifies the purpose of language teaching, and proposes favorable learning outcomes if paired with effective pedagogy. He further suggests that although most texts and curriculums require that culture be integrated into the language-based curriculum, instructors should take the opposite approach in that language should be integrated into a culture-based curriculum. Though Lafayette does not explicitly say that cultural content should move past the “Big C” content into the “little c” content when integrating the two, he shows that it is possible through his teaching suggestions.
Overall, culture and target language have a close parallel relationship in the language process. Students’ first interaction with a target culture is often through learning vocabulary and phrases, and instructors can diversify their instruction to teach the language that is culturally specific. Although it is difficult to maintain the target language as the only language in the novice classroom, it is possible to find ways that serve the affective and cognitive levels of their students and recognize that adjusting language and content is a continual process and realization.

**Intercultural Competence and Language Use**

As the use of language is a communicative function to share and create meaning for the world around us (with others), language as a function is a fundamental aspect in being interculturally competent. This may seem to be an obvious statement, but often times one can forget that language is most often the determinant in how we communicate and with whom we can communicate, and furthermore, how we interpret these acts of communication. Towards this process of intercultural competence, Levine bridges code choice with intercultural competence in that when we ask learners of the following

> [When we ask learners] to engage with the cultural practices of users of the L2 language on their own terms, issues of code choice become about striking a balance between the appropriation of new ways of meaning and the questioning, or even the rejecting, of prescribed ways of meaning (Levine, 2011, p. 39).

This further means that the new language and cultural skills have a base from the connection made from the L1, and that further actions and inquiries will continue to have that L1 influence when making language and cultural behavior choices. As Bennett mentioned in his research that there is a parallel correlation between the increase of language proficiency and intercultural competence, instructors must remember that both of these can be inseparable objectives, therefore the language
used and taught should be naturally involve learners into cultural contexts and discussions revolving around personal awareness. Though instructors may have doubts about creating a multilingual classroom, promoting intercultural competence negates they should be aiming to expose the reality that exists outside of the classroom, which most definitely includes the exposure to a variety of authentic resources and teacher/student interaction that does not include code switching.

Usually, language learners want to use language appropriately, and there will be also times where learners do not, or purposely “subvert” themselves from the target language and culture, but so do people outside of the classroom environment as well. Levine says that the “larger goal of a multilingual approach is to help learners become aware and take advantage of these sorts of linguistic, social and cultural choices” (Levine, 2011, p. 40). It seems that this approach does not propose a lessened quality of teaching as a result of using the L1 in the target language classroom, but quite the opposite, that learners and teachers alike are making (or learning to make) intentional linguistic choices in authentic situations while building a personal awareness of how one communicates with another. Conclusively, if language instruction’s purpose is to build intercultural competence, the language instructor must adopt an inter-lingual (or multilingual) environment to achieve the desired learning objectives of this pedagogy (p. 4).

III. Research Design

Introduction

This mixed-methods study set out to find relationships among several variables. The mixed-methods approach to analysis was appropriate as not all of the variables were of the same form. The study asked for demographic information, personal perspective and philosophy and actual teaching practices. The variables chosen were a result of the research in the literature review and the relationship among the sample populations.
Again, the study’s primary research questions were focused on the following:

1) How do Spanish educators view culture and intercultural competence in the novice language classroom?

2) How do Spanish educators formulate their views on language use and what difficulties are associated with exclusive language use? (What influences these views?)

3) What relationships are associated with target language use in the novice language classroom and teaching certain language learning and cultural concepts and intercultural skills (i.e. grammar instruction, geography, interacting with native speakers, etc.)?

The predominant purpose of this study was to discover whether or not there is a relationship between the perspectives and practices of intercultural competence/skills and target language use among Spanish instructors, which involved several conceptual facets to obtain the necessary information.

**Methodology**

**Human Subjects**

In the spring of 2012, thirteen Spanish instructors teaching at the elementary, secondary and university level participated in this study. The population had a variety of demographic background and was not limited by any characteristic other than the requirement of teaching Spanish in a relative time frame and having a connection to the study’s chosen institution. Each of the participants had a connection to a small, private, liberal arts post-secondary institution by being either an instructor of the Spanish department or alumni of the Spanish/Secondary Education program, with the purpose of potentially seeing correlations between pedagogical perspectives. The participants were recruited through an alumni database and university directory through email with an attached form of consent.
and link to a survey. Overall, the email was sent to 73 university and high school instructors. The email was sent four times over the course of two months. In total, there were 13 respondents to the survey, eight instructors taught at the high school level, and five taught at the university level. To give complete anonymity, and also profile the participants for the purpose of the study, each participant was given a “new” name throughout the analysis.

**Human Subjects Approval**

The human subjects approval was given through the author’s institution, through the Institutional Review Board. After completing the application and the review process, approval was officially granted on April 2nd, 2012. Shortly thereafter, the survey was sent to participants.

**Evaluation Tools/Data Collection Instrument**

Before any instrument was created, current research in the field was analyzed and gathered to assist in forming relevant questions and to establish a clear purpose for the project. Then, a mixed methods survey was created using Forms Manager through the researcher’s institution, through the department of Information Technology Services (see survey in appendix A.1). This survey included a variety of questions that will be discussed in later sections, but offered the opportunity to respond to free-response, multiple choice and short answer items. The survey was only available through a link sent to participants through the online-based Forms Manager.

The information requested of the participants included background information (degree, level teaching, native/non-native speaker, abroad experience, areas of specialty, and current levels teaching), professional development experiences, definitions of culture and intercultural competence, target language use, and importance/occurrence of specific activities, and any limitations they might face in the classroom.
The survey utilized multiple types of questions, with open-ended questions regarding personal definitions, experiences and limitations, and multiple-choice questions regarding the ranking of importance of various activities and the occurrence in the activities in the class. This survey instrument was used in order to acquire a variety of data and a significant amount of data, while still providing the opportunity for participants to share open-ended responses anonymously.

The reasoning for a mixed-methods survey offered the participants to share information to the level they were comfortable through open-ended responses, but still provide responses that would employ quantitative analysis as well. The survey instrument allowed the researcher to gather a variety of data covering several facets of the research objectives, rather than through a single medium. The data and studies mentioned in the literature review gave a framework for the survey instrument. As there are two distinct realms of concepts in this study, intercultural competence and target language use, the majority of the questions came from research in those two sections of the literature review. However, culture was also significant, as it provides the base for language learning and intercultural interactions, and therefore teacher perspectives on culture were integral, and further inquiries were derived from the CARLA definition, Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century-“The 5 C’s” (ACTFL), and Kramsch’s relevant research. Bennett provided much of the structure for the questions that focused on intercultural competence, especially as his research pertained to instructors knowing the developmental and language levels of their students to know the stage of intercultural competence and further activities. Hence, including questions that encompassed Bennett’s idea of intercultural competence at novice stages and furthermore, appropriate activities, the questions inquired about perspectives and practices according to Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett 1993). Within the target language inquiries, the Wilkerson study and Levine’s work on code choice were the most significant to the creation of the instrument. Both provided myths, common challenges, and a
variety of language use approaches to give further structure and background for appropriate questions.

Data Collection Procedure

After the survey was created, 73 potential participants were emailed (in an anonymous manner so that other participants cannot see the emails of other participants) and asked for their participation/consent. The potential participants were given a detailed purpose for the research and its entailments through the included consent form, which also included the details of their participation. Through the email/consent form, directions were sent for the online survey and an online survey link to participants. Participants were asked to complete an online survey (the survey should take approximately 30 minutes to an hour) for the research within a short period of time, two months from the initial participation request. The researcher followed up with participants four times through email to encourage higher response rate as needed. After participants completed surveys two months after sending the initial email request, the results were exported into a data spreadsheet to begin the analysis and coding process.

Analysis Process

Upon gathering the data, a detailed analysis ensued, in which the relationship among variables was analyzed. First the data was split into two groups: high school Spanish educators, and university Spanish educators. The data was also split according to highest degree obtained (bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate). With these separations, there were preliminary relationships between differences in education backgrounds. The collected responses included perspectives of current practices, but also asked for the demographic information (degree, native/non-native, abroad experience etc.), in order to see correlation between their ideas about culture/intercultural pedagogy. In addition, data was sought to see what extent the educators’ philosophy of teaching
reflects/compares to what they’re really doing in the classroom. The use of the target language in the classroom was analyzed and then connected to the educators’ overall philosophies as well as their demographic characteristics, which entitled the use of some basic statistical analyses. Generally, this study was qualitative and exploratory in nature, and patterns, trends and variations between all of the variables were sought. The research methodology and analyses used included grounded theory, which was used to develop some foundational theory/reasoning as to why or why not language educators include specific practices into their teaching, especially regarding the inclusion of intercultural competence activities and target language use. After the literature review research and the surveys were submitted, developed a predetermined codebook and further coding of the responses (specifically free-responses) to develop coherent categories of themes/patterns, descriptive analysis, and finally, constant-comparative analysis was used (within the grounded theory and coding) with specific questions to distinguish themes and display similarities.

As the study was dependent on a mixed-methods study, the analysis was qualitative and quantitative in nature. The majority of this data set depended on free-responses, the coding included dissecting meaningful statements and phrases that either aligned with other responses, or provided an outlier to the majority of responses, which was highly qualitative. However, correlational analyses and descriptive statistics were used as well. With the numerical responses, such as percentage of target language use, additive and percentage calculations were used to correspond with the free responses or basic background information (ex. Analysis of highest degree obtained/age level currently teaching and use of target language in the classroom by the teacher).
Summary

This study inquired about a variety of issues regarding second language education and pedagogy, and therefore the survey instrument lent itself well to yielding a variety of results and opportunities for the instructors to express their thoughts. However, each of the survey responses was intended to find connections and make observations regarding target language use and intercultural competence.

IV. Results

Introduction

For this study, all of the Spanish instructors have taught novice language courses at some point in their career. The data will represent two groups, K-12 instructors (majority high school instructors) and university instructors. The data is also analyzed in regards to the highest degree obtained by the instructors, as this provided a difference in various other components of the data.

Participant Profiles

All names have been replaced to protect the identity of the participant, and names used in this research are solely used for the purpose of ease and understanding for the reader. Hence, each the participants remained completely anonymous through taking the survey as well, except for giving background details relevant to the study.

The profiles of the participants varied significantly in that variables such as being a native speaker, time spent in Spanish speaking countries, or years of teaching experience in that they were not fixed variables. The following profile information is simply to give an idea of who are the participants and their teaching experience in relation to the study’s research questions. The majority
of the participants were non-native speakers with nine total, and the native speakers represented four of the participants. Of the highest degrees obtained, 46 percent of the participants had a master’s degree, 31 percent had a bachelor’s degree, and 23 percent had their doctorate. The year that each participant obtained their highest degree spanned from 1988 to 2011, representing a range of educational backgrounds and experience. Those with master’s degree and doctorates have research/specialties in variety of areas such as linguistics, second language acquisition, literature, Latin-American culture, language pedagogy, assessment and history and communication. The current level or most recent level of students taught included elementary school, high school and university level novice Spanish classes.

**High School Instructors**

In general, the high school instructors had a range of perspectives, experience and education regarding the research objectives. Eight instructors of the total number of participants have taught high school as their most recent or highest level of students. Within this, four instructors have their bachelor’s degree and four have their master’s degree. Also, two instructors are native speakers and six are non-native speakers of Spanish. All of the instructors have had abroad experience in a Spanish-speaking country, with the actual time spent varying for each instructor. This background information will pertain more to the study as the information is analyzed for overall understanding and implementation of the research concepts in the participants’ classroom. The following table outlines a sample of the basic demographic information reported by the participants.
The university instructors also provided a variety of perspectives and experience regarding the research objectives. Five instructors listed themselves as currently teaching at the college-level, and within this three had their Ph.D. and two had their master’s degree. Non-native speakers are the majority in this group with three labeling themselves as such, and two considered themselves as native speakers. The university professors also seemed to have more abroad experience than the high school instructors varying in several Spanish-speaking countries. These participants also had a wide range of research and specialties that the many of the high school instructors did not, and this

### Table A.1 Sample High School Instructor Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Completed</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>Highest Area of Study</th>
<th>Currently Teaching</th>
<th>Are you a native speaker of Spanish?</th>
<th>Other abroad experience in Spanish speaking countries: State country and approximate time spent there (in months and years) Example: Spain: three months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)</td>
<td>Spanish Language/Education</td>
<td>High School Spanish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>I am not a native speaker, and was able to learn the language through studying the language in high school, and then majoring in Spanish during college. Throughout high school and undergrad, my passion for the Spanish language was strengthened through 6 - 2 week service trips to Maicatán, Mexico. When in college, I studied abroad in Segovia, Spain for 4 months and after college, devoted a year of service in Guayaquil, Ecuador.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
may have been another factor in their perspective of teaching. The following table outlines a sample of the basic demographic information reported by the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What year did you complete your highest degree?</th>
<th>What is your highest level of education?</th>
<th>If applicable, please list any areas of research and/or specialty</th>
<th>Currently Teaching</th>
<th>Are you a native speaker of Spanish?</th>
<th>If you are a native speaker of Spanish, state country of origin and approximate time spent there in years. OR if you were U.S. born, state the conditions to which you learn Spanish (i.e., parents were native speakers, first generation immigrants from (insert origin)).</th>
<th>Other abroad experience in Spanish speaking countries: State country and approximate time spent there (in months and years) Example: Spain: three months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42 Doctorate</td>
<td>Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Latin American Culture through Theater.</td>
<td>University Level Spanish</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spain, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189 Doctorate</td>
<td>Literature, Latin America, Women writers, Spirituality</td>
<td>University Level Spanish</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mexico, 26 years</td>
<td>Short visits to Spain: Madrid, Barcelona. Short work related trips to Santiago de Compostela, Spain, Puerto Rico, Guatemala and Ecuador.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103 Masters Degree</td>
<td>applied linguistics, language pedagogy, language assessment</td>
<td>University Level Spanish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spain: 2 weeks Costa Rica: 3 weeks Mexico: 1 week plus several day trips (lived in San Diego, CA for several years).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2 - Sample University Instructor (Self-Reported) Demographics

**Research Question # 1: How do Spanish educators view culture and intercultural competence in the novice language classroom?**

**Perspectives of Culture**

As iterated in the literature review, culture encompasses a variety of concepts and ideals, and knowing how to differentiate and include culture as a dynamic subject can be difficult for an instructor. In the study, the participants were asked to give their definition of culture and explain how they came to this definition. The definition of culture, given by CARLA earlier in the paper, is the definition followed for purposes of this paper, and describes culture as the shared practices, beliefs and cognitive functions that aid the process of socialization; and culture also differentiates and assigns people into various groups. Using this definition, culture can mean almost anything as...
long as it is a something that is shared by a group of people (and distinguishable to an extent from other groups). These answers were analyzed based on the definition given from CARLA and whether or not they see culture as a limited group of topics, or being inclusive to the “Big C” and “little c” components of culture.

The following two definitions were comprehensive and the most representative of all of the high school instructors and spoke of culture as an “all-encompassing” part of society:

**Culture Definitions**

Dana: Culture is the embodiment of practice and beliefs of a certain group of people, and includes but is not limited to language, daily routines, traditions, living environment, etc. I have developed this definition throughout the study of courses I took in college and also from experience of meeting people from cultures different from my own.

Drew: There are many types of cultures... Historically culture revolves around food, religion, music, art, dance, clans, regions etc. Basically, all the things that make us uniquely human are what we call culture.

One of the outliers was Quinn, because it lacked sufficient and complete definition:

Quinn articulated (without giving an explicit definition) “Culture is what makes a language interesting! The stories that can be told about practices in other countries lead to lively conversations and help all of us look at our own practices.”

In the university instructors, many shared similar view on culture. The following samples are representative of the university instructor samples. Alana, Sally and Rita all attributed a wide variety
of characteristics to the definition of culture. However, Rita also mentions the difficulty of defining culture but attributes her definition to professional development and education like Sally.

**Culture Definitions**

Alana: Both high culture (history, current political, economic, social issues, classic literature, the formal study of language), but also popular culture (songs, TV shows, films, sports, comics, everyday life habits such as eating times, favorite foods, fashion trends). I have come to this definition through my research based on my curiosity toward all kinds of popular culture expressions.

Sally: Culture involves the products, practices, and perspectives of a particular group of people. It ranges from the 'big-C' components such as art, literature, traditions, and history to the 'little-c', or more day-to-day components such as daily activities, habits, routines, etc. I have felt comfortable with this definition for quite some time due to my preparation in graduate school and by familiarizing myself with novice language texts, but I have reinforced it through professional development opportunities.

Rita: Culture is often difficult to define as it encompasses a number of issues... I have come to {my} definition based on my personal experiences traveling and living abroad and based on some of my reading (e.g., Byram, 1997; anything from Claire Kramsch, etc.).

**Perspectives of Intercultural Competence**

All of the participants were asked to rate the importance of including intercultural competence into the curriculum on a scale from 1-5, with “5” being very important, “4”-somewhat important, “3” –neutral, “2” –not very important and “1”- not important at all. The majority of
high school instructors rated the importance of including intercultural competence into the curriculum as “5-very important” with six out of eight high school instructors sharing this idea. The other two participants rated it as a “4” and as a “3-neutral.”

As intercultural competence involves a variety of facets that include knowledge, skills, and understanding, the aim of the analysis was to find responses that include these components.

For the high school instructors, some of the definitions did not move beyond the acceptance stage of intercultural competence nor acknowledge that intercultural competence requires interaction and appropriate behaviors:

The following quotes belong to high school instructors and showcase a variety of perspectives. Thomas, a native speaker, Quinn, and Sam represented this lack of moving beyond the acceptance stage. There was also one response from Drew that did not fit any of the research nor Bennett’s definition, and definitely stood out as an outlier in the data set. Finally, there were two responses that ventured closer to the definition outlined from Bennett from Rebecca and Dana, which further seemed to denote a higher understanding of the concept.

Intercultural Competence: Beginning Stages of Understanding

Quinn: Understanding that diversity is what makes this world amazing.

Thomas: Respecting, appreciating, and having knowledge of other cultures.

Sam: Intercultural competence is the ability to understand the unique qualities that other cultures offer and to respect these differences as an opportunity to learn more about people.
Intercultural Competence: Higher Understanding

Rebecca: The ability of someone to "know" a culture-language, of course, but equally as important, knowing the art, music, current culture, past history, the people and what they really think (not what the news tells us). 21 years of travelling with students to Spain and 21 years of the summer hosting program that I have directed. I have gotten an up close look at this

Dana: The ability to communicate with people from another culture in the target language and also the ability to display appropriate behavior patterns based on the knowledge of another culture. My definition is based on my experience of communicating with native Spanish speakers.

Intercultural Competence: Outlier Definition

Drew: This is not a term I use, since my philosophy is of the unity of human kind. No one likes to be labeled. I encourage anyone learning a language or meeting a person outside of their usual circle to practice basic human courtesy and to practice the Golden Rule. When one is kind, pure of heart and honestly curious, they will naturally find their way in another's culture.

Therefore, a range of responses was prevalent in the data within the understanding of intercultural competence, and yields a discussion about various variables.

Responses from the university instructors were very similar and indicated professional development as a significant factor within the understanding of intercultural competence. The responses below demonstrate the overarching themes amongst the university professors. Sally gave a complete definition that alluded to the skills component of intercultural competence and listed
professional development as the factor that helped her come to this definition. The following participant, Rita, had a doctorate completed in 2008, and listed a significant amount of professional development that seemed to aid in her definition. Merriam, who completed her master’s degree in 1988, was a participant that seemed to have the most knowledge and experience with this topic, as she mentioned much professional development and teaching a course on intercultural communication at the college level.

Intercultural Competence: Higher Understanding

Sally: Intercultural Competence is the ability for an individual to interact appropriately in another culture (or multiple cultures). It involves the skills needed to acknowledge difference and see the value of that difference, and the ability to engage with members of the target culture 'as one of their own.' Someone who has obtained high levels of IC can move in and out of cultural situations with ease, innately navigating the cultural rules and values with little thought or hesitation. This definition has been developed through professional development experiences I have had.

Rita: I think that intercultural competence is having the ability to understand a phenomenon/topic/issue from the perspectives of both the C1 (i.e., first-language culture) and C2 (i.e., second-language culture). "Understanding" here means that one not only is not only literate in the L1 and L2 (i.e., can read, write, speak, and listen in a proficient way in both languages), but also has the ability to critically think about/reflect on the phenomenon/topic/issue in both the L1 and the L2. Part of this definition comes from some of the literature I have recently read on literacy-based approaches to FL education in the U.S. (e.g., Kern, 2000 & 2003) and others (e.g., recent work by
Heather Willis Allen, Kate Paesani, or Beatrice Dupuy as well as some of the recent work by Steven Thorne and Jonathan Reinhardt)...

Merriam: Interacting successfully with strangers calls for the same ingredients in general communication competence. Motivation + attitude, tolerance for ambiguity, open mindedness and knowledge of other cultures, with mindfulness--awareness of one's own behavior and that of others, passive observation of other's behavior and communication, active strategies such as taking my Intercultural Communication class and self-disclosure to those of other cultures about your own ineptness are all qualities that may result in intercultural competence. I came to this definition after 40+ years of learning, teaching and knowing other peoples of the world.

Overall, there were no significant outliers in this portion of the data set, which led to various conclusions amongst university professors.

**Research Question #2: How do Spanish educators formulate their views language use and what difficulties are associated with exclusive language use? (What influences these views?)**

**Perspectives and Practices of Target Language use in the Classroom**

The instructors were asked first about their overall philosophy regarding target language use in the classroom before questions about their actual use of Spanish in the classroom. Many indicated, regardless of actual practice, that a high use of the target language was best for students.

The following responses were given from high school instructors. Dana, described challenges within her philosophy (also similar to others), Drew shared his philosophy that also seemed to advocate high levels of using the target language.
Overall Philosophy of Target Language Use: Advocates for High Use of Target Language

Dana: I believe that increasingly using the target language in higher levels is the most important. In Spanish I, I do not use the target language often, but by Spanish III, I am using it about 50% of the time… I think the biggest factor that has influenced this was the way that I learned Spanish. Also, I am the only teacher in the department so it is more difficult to have support in doing this. I am a relatively new teacher and do not feel that I have enough knowledge in this teaching format. I definitely use the target language every day but it greatly varies depending on the topic/unit we are studying.

Drew: Every moment counts in teaching the target language… Each time a teacher reverts back to the native language, in this case English, students’ ears are turned off, they are in their comfort zone and it will take triple the effort to get them back to using the target language.

Another question asked participants “what issues arise when attempting to teach exclusively in the target language?” There were three responses that illustrated these themes comprehensively, and seemed to answer the question in regards to student development and language level. All instructors spoke of students being able to adequately express themselves and/or classroom management.

Challenges of Exclusive Use of Target Language

Sam: Having students really explore their personal thoughts to synthesize new ideas and express them. This is hard to facilitate even within their own language-and to be able to target this in a second language is even more challenging.
Drew: Students want to be able to speak on the same fluency level in the target language as they do in their native language. Subsequently at the high school level they take even less risks at genuine target language production...

Dana: Students definitely feel intimidated and do not feel as confident. It seems to be that the learning filter of many students is low because they do not feel comfortable asking questions, etc. Classroom management can be more difficult at times…

The diagrams below show the actual target language use projected by the instructors at the high school levels and university levels.
The philosophies about target language use, and the actual time spent using the target language proved to be quite different with the university instructors (as seen in the above graphs), even at the novice levels, especially as each instructor advocated for maximum use. The discussion will further outline the clear discrepancies between each language learning level. The following perspectives were given by the university professors.

Use of Target Language in the Classroom

Sally: I believe in using the target language as much as possible in the classroom, (90%+) in most contexts. I understand students' linguistic limitations with target language use, especially when asking complex questions about grammar/culture/etc., but I try my best to answer in TL whenever possible. My experience teaching for over 10 years, plus my experience as a second language student of Spanish has influenced this philosophy - I believe strongly in making students comfortable in class, thereby lowering their affective filter and allowing maximum learning.

Rita: From a teaching perspective, I think that one needs to use the TL in the classroom 100% of the time. This philosophy has come from my understanding of second language acquisition theory and communicative language teaching methodologies. Specifically, one acquires a FL most efficiently/effectively if one is immersed in a classroom (or naturalistic) environment where the TL is spoken.

When discussing issues that arise when teaching exclusively in the target language, the university professors named a few of the same challenges that the high school instructors mentioned, like comprehension and being patient. However, “engaging the students in complex discussions” was more prevalent, especially as these students were older and could talk about more complex subjects in their native language. Again, Sally and Rita provided the most comprehensive
examples. These challenges were most reflected in Sally’s response, but Rita’s response was more optimistic.

Challenges of Exclusive Use of Target Language

Sally: The more complex the ideas/issues get, the more difficult it is to use the target language. Since we are dealing with college students, I try to choose topics that are more complex and appropriate for an older audience, but that sometimes makes the linguistic limitations more obvious or difficult to get around.

Rita: Difficult grammatical concepts can be a challenge to explain entirely in the L2. As stated in the previous question, engaging students in in-depth conversations about some cultural issues can be difficult with less proficient students. However, I have found that if you establish a classroom context/environment where the TL is exclusively used from the beginning of the course, that students will generally use the TL as well.

The diagrams above show the use of the target language by university instructors and university students. Already, it is clear that instructors projected that they and their students use the target language at a higher percentage, and more than the high school instructors projected.
Research Question #3: What relationships are associated with target language use in the novice language classroom and teaching certain language learning and cultural concepts and intercultural skills (i.e. grammar instruction, geography, interacting with native speakers, etc.)?

The Practices of Culture, Intercultural Competence and Language Concepts in the Classroom

Despite the fact that an instructor may know the definition and theory surrounding intercultural competence, actual use and praxis varies depending on the school, students and curriculum, among other factors. In this study, there were a few questions that focused specifically on the importance of including certain activities and concepts, and then the actual practice of including these components. Because the study was aiming to see the frequency and perspective of intercultural competence activities in comparison or correlation to other activities, various scales were established. The first scale asked the instructors to rate various concepts on a scale from 1-5 (1-being minimally important and 5-being very important) in regards to the importance to teach the various concepts in the novice Spanish class. The second asked the instructors how often (daily, weekly, monthly, rarely, never) they include these various activities. These scales included activities and concepts under three categories: language objectives, cultural objectives and intercultural competence objectives. Of course, because in language teaching it would be ideal to integrate these categories as much as possible/necessary, some of the activities might have belonged to multiple categories, depending on one’s perspective and method of integrating the activity. Nonetheless, there were apparent trends regarding the choices and practices of the instructors. Additionally, the instructors were also asked questions that related to target language use and their inclusion of intercultural concepts in the classroom, which brings the study to its purpose; the relationship between intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom.
As stated earlier, majority of the high school instructors deemed the inclusion of intercultural competence into the curriculum as very important, but when the instructors responded to the importance and frequency of specific activities, the results varied among them. The results below are the average ratings of importance between the eight instructors, which were rounded to the nearest tenth, and each activity or concept is labeled by to which category it belongs (which was not disclosed to the participants). For the full list of variables; please refer to the actual survey in Appendix A.1 As the categories were not disclosed, nor presented in a particular order to the participants, each instructor had the opportunity to answer honestly with each rating. Also, each of the categories did not have the same number of activities/concepts that to which they belonged, which was without direct intention, just to include a variety of activities for each category.

In this component of the survey (frequency of activities), culture-category-only items were the least prevalent, and this was not intentional to obtain certain responses, especially as the intercultural activities naturally have culture concepts within them. However, this could have influenced the outcome, and this is recognized. To analyze this data, each of the activities were grouped by category (language, cultural, intercultural), and then per category, the frequencies for the daily, weekly, monthly, and rarely/never, were added together. Each of the points represents an assigned frequency from a single instructor for a various activity. For example, for the item that asked frequency of “provide instruction about daily life and routines” (which belonged to the language items/category), three of the high school instructors included this into the curriculum on a weekly basis, and five did include this component on a monthly basis. Furthermore, all of the daily frequencies for language activities totaled 12 points (in the distribution of the points for that category), the monthly frequencies of language activities totaled 15 points, and so on.
The frequencies of the various activities and their corresponding categories varied from the ratings of importance. Within the analysis, the frequency that seemed to be the most significant to compare among the categories are the “daily” and “weekly” frequencies, because these demonstrate the significance of the respective concepts in relation to each other, and generally in the classroom environment. Language activities and concepts are the most frequent in the classroom with the majority of instructors using them on a weekly and daily basis, with the daily frequency percentage being the highest of the three categories-37 percent of the possible points for language activities were designated to daily frequency. The next highest percentage for daily frequency in the “cultural category,” though this percentage was only 1 percent higher than the daily frequency for “intercultural activities.” The significant differences were seen in the weekly category with language activities leading again with 47 percent distribution of language activities falling under this category, intercultural activities following with 38 percent, and cultural activities following with 20 percent. The culture activities were most frequent on a monthly basis, which was interesting to see, as it was predicted throughout the research that they would be equal or more frequent than intercultural activities, as intercultural competence seemed to be more of a complex topic. But, perhaps instructors are teaching these concepts without recognizing or labeling them within a particular category.
The university instructors provided a set of data that was notably different than the high school instructors. The questions and analysis processes for each group remained the same, and the tables and charts related to the study’s procedures presented in the “high school instructors” section follow the analysis process for this section as well. Intercultural activities were the most important for the university instructors, followed by cultural activities and language activities. In tables 2.8, 2.10 2.12, the frequency of activities and concepts reflect the responses given by the participants. At first glance, one can see that these instructors utilize all categories on a daily and weekly basis, and seemingly more than the high school instructors. The following tables show the comparisons and correlations of ratings of importance on the various activities and their frequency in the classroom.

Upon looking at both, one can see the differences amongst the high school instructors and the
Diagram 2.7: Frequency of Language Activities-High School Instructors

Diagram 2.8: Frequency of Language Activities-University Instructors

Diagram 2.9: Frequency of Cultural Activities- High School Instructors

Diagram 2.10: Frequency of Cultural Activities-University Instructors

Diagram 2.11: Frequency of Intercultural Activities-High School Instructors

Diagram 2.12: Frequency of Intercultural Activities-University Instructors
Synthesis and Summary

Each component of the results was factored into the final conclusions and observations. Separating the respondents into the levels in which they taught seemed to be the most conducive for accurately analyzing the data, as each set of participants clearly had challenges and perspectives that were based upon the education level of their students. Separately analyzing these two groups, and then making overall comparisons allowed for closer analysis and furthermore added to more conclusive analysis between the two. However, with the vast amount of data, there are several possible correlations within each participant group, and the data could be analyzed in several manners. At first glance it did seem that university professors had more variables in their favor, which would make for better instruction regarding these concepts, however, the high school instructors provided reality into how majority language instruction starts, at the high school level.

Feedback from the Instructors

Before sharing the observations and conclusions that attempt to answer the research questions, some of the instructors’ gave additional input that aided the speculations and analysis. The instructors were asked if they had any additional feedback or questions, and shared several noteworthy statements. While there were some that complimented the instrument and the effort put forth for this project there were also instructors that took a defensive stance, and understandably so. These statements were found to be helpful, and honest, which is exactly what the hopes were for the survey. I would like to address the following statements briefly as they seem valid and important to the study and results.
Quinn stated,

There is no perfect way to teach. Each year I learn something new from my students. I try very hard to teach the kids that are in my room and not just plow though material. Each student is interested in something different, so to vary your approach each day / year helps immensely. My main job is to get them interested in Spanish. If I am only concerned about the "right" way to teach I might forget that I have students with all kinds of different needs and interests. My interests play a part BUT I really try to look at what might be of interest to them.

The statement emphasizes the need to individualize the language experience for students, and the fact that each classroom will have different needs. The purpose of this study was not to promote a certain level of intercultural competence to be taught, or a certain amount of use of the target language. Individualizing language education is very important, especially within intercultural competence and motivating students to learn about other cultures. To get students interested in Spanish is perhaps the first step in promoting intercultural competence, regardless of target language use,

Alana responded,

When you ask how often I provide information about history and political issues, you're assuming it's only a one-way process. So, you don't ask me if I encourage students to look up this information on their own and present it to the class; I consider research and sharing of its results one of the most important aspects of learning.

Student research is an integral part of the language classroom, as it increases motivation and interest in specific topics. The lack of inquiry of whether or not instructors encouraged
student research was not excluded intentionally, but would have been a beneficial component to the study’s results. Student research would seem to aid intercultural competence and target language exposure depending on the contexts; therefore this should have been a consideration in the study.

Sally stated,

I think all the elements of instruction mentioned in your lists are important, but I do not think they are all appropriate for the NOVICE language classroom since they are so limited in terms of proficiency - I think some of those items are best left to talk about in the intermediate or advanced levels so that students can acquire them more consistently.

This statement gives a rather direct answer to the study’s research questions, and from an instructor’s perspective, it seem legitimately stated with real experience. We have to remember that this study focused on intercultural competence and target language use at the novice language classroom, and that the limitations of beginning language learners are many and therefore perhaps this study seemed as if it proponed an unrealistic approach to instructors. However, being unable to give a specific approach of pedagogy, this further illustrates the need for further opportunities for instructors to develop an approach that allows them to include intercultural competence and an amount target language that is suitable for their classroom. This statement transitions well into the discussion section, and gives comprehensive observations and speculations based on the results presented.
V. Discussion

Introduction

The discussion that follows covers the multiple areas analyzed throughout this study and makes connections between the responses and previous research presented in the study. Although there was no actual classroom observation done within this study, majority of the responses seemed honest and realistic, and the analysis was based only upon survey responses. However, because of the small sample size and specific group of participants, the analysis cannot be generalized for language instructors as a whole. As a pre-service educator, the analysis completed simply consists of suggestions and observations from personal experience and analysis with the data and prior research, and does not propose a specific methodology in regards to the concepts.

Research Question # 1: How do Spanish educators view culture and intercultural competence in the novice language classroom?

Perspectives of Culture

The majority of the high school instructors established culture in “Big C” and “little c” terms and did not limit culture to particular categories or topics. There were three instructors in particular that seemed to follow the CARLA definition in their own definition: Dana, Sam, and Drew.

In Sam’s definition, it seems apparent that culture is not a stagnant component of language education, and therefore is the scope of life in which a certain group aligns and socializes within. This definition also emphasizes the similarity and community aspect of a culture, rather than the characteristics that distinguish one culture from another. Drew’s definition focuses on the differences and distinguishing features of a culture. Drew also subtly acknowledges that culture cannot be fully acquired as a body of knowledge but it is an innate part of a person, so rather, like a
garden cohabitates various flowers, we must try to understand and accept these differences. This view not only fits the CARLA definition (in which culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization, and these patterns differentiate and create memberships to a certain group), but also connects to the intercultural aspect of teaching culture. Along with this integrated definition of culture and intercultural aspects.” Quinn’s definition further shows that the purpose for language is to engage and share about culture, but does not give a complete definition that includes specific components of culture, which was contrary to the other instructors.

The definitions given by the six out of the eight high school instructors aligned with the research presented, and did not limit culture to a body of knowledge that one can master. This was somewhat surprising, as there was only one response that did not align whatsoever with the CARLA definition of culture and one that did not give a complete answer. It was initially predicted that high school instructors would have a more limited view of culture for various reasons, especially in the areas of professional development and time abroad, as they seemed to have less experience in both areas through the responses in the study. Though the definitions are significant to their understanding as educators, the real challenge comes when educators have to implement their philosophies and pedagogical training, which was be presented with the data from intercultural competence, as actual teaching practice often integrates both simultaneously.

The university-level instructors also had an open-ended view of culture. All of the instructors indicated that culture involves “Big C” and “little c” components, and that it is an ambiguous word encompassing many aspects of a person's lifestyle. Sally and Alana both mentioned the two types of culture, and align with the CARLA definition, though they still seem to focus on culture as a cohesive concept, rather than something that distinguishes one group from another.
Additionally, both elaborate that they have had experience and professional development. Rita also mentioned the challenges defining culture, and how it covers a variety of areas.

Thus, given the university instructor definitions, there is little discrepancy in the understanding of culture for the university instructors. These instructors mentioned more preparation and training regarding the concept of culture, which was not surprising as they had more time abroad, more education, and more professional development overall. Despite this, the majority of the high school instructors also had a solid idea of what culture entails and did not place limits or concrete elements as solely defining culture, although there was little mention of preparation and professional development that contributed to their definitions. With these definitions, there were a few specific elements that the coding and research was directed towards; an open-ended or limiting idea of culture (including objective and subjective culture), recognizing culture as something that is shared among people and distinguishes itself from other groups of people, and the professional development/personal experience that contributed to this idea. On the whole, with this group of participants, it seems that the institution that which with they all have a connection shares this “all-encompassing” idea of culture, and it reflects the CARLA definition as well, in that people share cultures and distinguish themselves from other cultures. Though for many of the participants, the professional development and education went beyond what the study’s institution provided, most the high school instructors did not state any additional training in culture. Hence, it seems logical to say that this group of instructors had quality training or instruction before they attended or taught at the institution, or this idea of culture was shared within the language/education departments of the institution.
Perspectives of Intercultural Competence

The responses on culture seemed to be relatively straightforward and the participants had a consensus on the definition. However, the responses on intercultural competence did not share an overarching theme or consensus, with a wide scope of responses and ideas. The research presented used Bennett’s definition of IC as “the ability to relate effectively and appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts,” which further involves language skills and cultural knowledge. While some instructors shared this idea, there were two that did not know of the term “Intercultural Competence,” or they responded with a lack of clarity that did not make for a complete definition. With this portion of the study, coinciding with research in the literature, there was either a presence or lack of presence of several factors, which included: a definition of intercultural competence fitting with Bennett’s definition, placing certain value of intercultural competence in the classroom, and viewing intercultural competence as a process.

The high school instructors in this survey placed a high importance on this concept, especially upon analysis of their ratings with majority of the participants placing intercultural competence as “very important.” Within the definitions, two did not know this term, or said they lacked sufficient knowledge to define it, but there still remained a significant variety of definitions.

In this sample, the given responses suggested, along with the other definitions given, that intercultural competence has not been given an explicit definition to the participants in this study and that cultural tolerance and knowledge are the main constituents of this idea. Moreover, there was also a response that completely disregarded the “acknowledging difference” and further knowledge and skills as part of intercultural competence. Two of the definitions of intercultural competence placed the instructors at the beginning stages of understanding intercultural competence, and while they hold well-intentioned definitions, it does not include the necessary skills
and interactions with other cultures. With Sam’s definition, he began to allude to a meaningful intercultural exchange that is supposed to occur with increased intercultural competence, but does not give an explanation that coincides with Bennett’s. Also, in the responses, two gave an explanation that proposed that intercultural competence was indistinguishable from culture knowledge, which is not the case, given prior research and understanding.

Drew’s response was somewhat surprising as this participant had a significant amount of professional development; a master’s degree in Spanish and multiple licensures in teaching amongst other factors that would have favored a response more accurate to Bennett’s definition. She did not understand nor use the term, and simply ventured a guess for the definition. However, because intercultural competence is an idea that has emerged recently in language education, the time period that which participants completed their degree and various professional developments could have been a factor in the responses. And in the case with Drew, she reported that she completed her master’s in 1994 and has been substitute teaching in the most recent school year, which indicates a lapse of time that this concept may explain her lack of clarity with this term.

Despite the misunderstandings and ambiguous responses, there was one high school instructor (Dana), a recent graduate in 2009 with a bachelor’s degree, which coincided almost exactly with the definition of Bennett and other factors in the research. Her answer suggested that cultural interaction, along with understanding and knowledge, is the core of intercultural competence.

Although most of the instructors seemed well intentioned and open minded with their responses, many failed to give a response that went beyond accepting difference, instead of iterating that engaging in conversation and building the skills necessary to participate in another culture was integral to this definition. A few other reasons for the disparity between the high school instructors and the university instructors may include the cognitive levels of the high school students and Janet
Bennett’s diagram that showed that the “acceptance” level is really only available once students obtain the intermediate proficiency. The various responses given seemed to be at so many levels of understanding and experience, that I could not draw a conclusion from their shared experience at the institution, although it would seem that there has not been much explicit emphasis on intercultural competence in the curriculum or pedagogy classes, though it is not possible to suitably speak for current students in the program. Moreover, the high school instructors varied significantly on when they obtained their highest degree, and within other pertinent experience such as time spent abroad and professional development, which could contribute greatly to increased understanding of the concept.

The university instructors also placed high importance of including intercultural competence in the language classroom, with four out of five rating it as “5-very important” and the remaining person rating it “4-somewhat important,” suggesting that they try to include this into their curriculum, or somewhat share a definition. Four out of the five participants alluded to Bennett’s idea of intercultural competence, and moved beyond an understanding and acceptance of difference. The responses shared in the results exemplified this.

Sally’s definition seemed to be the most succinct and cohesive to Bennett’s definition and research presented. This participant also had a wealth of professional development listed in the survey and she completed her master’s within the last 10 years, which perhaps indicates some knowledge or education of the concept. Rita’s response also suggested much research and experience with this concept, which was not surprising with her professional development and level of education. And this response further aids the trend that the university professors had an overall better understanding of this topic, or at least the exposure to this concept.
However, Merriam’s definition seemed to be the highest quality and included an exceptionally high understanding of the topic. Her definition and experience was apparent throughout her responses in the survey and truly exemplified the various facets of intercultural competence in language education. Not only did she provide definitions that were sound with majority of the research presented, but detailed examples of past experiences and practices in the classroom. Though her she obtained her master’s over 20 years ago, she has continued to engage in current practices and professional development, which seems to aid tremendously to her understanding and praxis of intercultural competence.

Conclusively, the university instructors had the most detailed, succinct and research-based responses when defining intercultural competence. They responded to the multiple facets of intercultural competence and on a whole, knew the term and research more than the high school instructors. This might suggest that because of their level of education (more had doctorates and master’s degrees, and overall time in the target culture was more than the high school instructors) they had more experience and training with the term. Upon looking at both sets of instructors, those that potentially taught at the institution, and those that graduated from the Spanish education program, it does not seem possible to make an inference about the definitions of intercultural competence in relation to this shared variable. This is primarily because of the span of completing degrees (and possible dates of employment) and the various experiences and professional development aside from any institutional instruction. It was hoped that there would be a correlation between definitions and a shared institutional connection, but it was simply not possible given the data. However, we can still conclude that those with increased experience in education and professional development have a likelihood of understanding intercultural competence in the complete sense of the concept, not just at basic levels.
Research Question #2: How do Spanish educators formulate their views on language use and what difficulties are associated with sustaining target language use in the classroom? (What influences these views?)

Perspectives and Practices Target Language use in the Classroom

As noted in the literature review, the use of target language has been a polemic topic throughout the history of second language teaching, and it remains to be an area that spurs many opinions, even with the instructors in this study. In the research we can recall that through Levine’s research and studies presented, exclusive use of the target language (or English), does not necessarily equate higher levels of Spanish production, but rather, a multilingual approach is recommended with careful planning from the instructor, especially in encouraging and supporting intercultural competence in the classroom. Generally, trends that favored extremes or noted limitations were analyzed more carefully in connection with the other research objectives, such as language use in relation to cultural/intercultural topics. In the study, we could see a variety of approaches that concurred with this, or approaches that differed significantly, along with commentaries on what inhibits the instructors (and students) from using the language in their preferred approach. In this study, various questions regarding target language use inquired about instructor use of the target language, student use of the target language, overall philosophy of using the target language, and factors that inhibit language use. Upon preliminary analysis, it was clear that those with master’s degrees, doctorates, and/or taught at the college level, had higher perceptions and practices of language use for themselves and their students, whereas the high school instructors (mostly those with just a bachelor’s degree) felt that they had more limitations with the novice level. But, the proportion of native speakers as instructors was higher at the university level, which might have also accounted for these differences in perspectives.
All of the high school teachers agreed that Spanish should be spoken the majority of the class period, or used as much as possible. A few instructors said that target language use should increase as the level and skills are higher. However, there were high school instructors that iterated, despite their desire to speak Spanish majority of the time, there are significant limitations that inhibit them while trying to do so.

Dana’s response was honest, and seemed to be the reality for many language teachers. Variables such as outside support, professional development and the concept being taught all influence use of the target language for the instructor. With this, Dana gave some the first indicators that difficult concepts, such as intercultural competence and culture topics, can inhibit language use by students and teachers if the objective includes more complex discussion beyond the language level.

In Drew’s response, which seemed drastically different to other responses, we saw that everything a teacher does or teaches is an opportunity to use the target language. This response alluded that it is possible to teach a variety of topics using the target language, but only described the dangers of using the native language as an obstacle for habitually using the target language. The other responses did not give as elaborate of responses, but simply stated the target language should be use majority of the class period, or used as much as possible, without theory or experience that contributed to this view. Given these responses, it was not possible to conclude much from this inquiry, as many of the teachers did not follow with examples that specifically answered this question. Also, only one response even mentioned the place and use of the native language in the classroom, which was surprising, as there was only one specific example of the native language as a negative component of the classroom, despite the majority proponing significant target language use.
When participants were asked, “what issues arise when attempting to teach exclusively in the target language?” We saw that these responses seemed more realistic and honest about the challenges of using the target language. The high school instructors gave a variety of responses, but common words that came up included “frustration,” “stress,” “lack of comprehension,” “takes up/wastes time,” and “students are intimidated.” In the responses of Sam, Drew and Dana, we saw similarities that focused on age and development. These responses show that student comfort in the classroom is crucial to participation and language development, and that exclusive use of the target language seems to detract from these goals. Therefore, at these novice levels, a multilingual approach also seems to be favored, or at least places value on some use of the first language. Although all of the instructors stated that they believed the greater part of the class period should be in the target language, these responses dictate the reality of their classroom situations. This leaves some speculation that perhaps there should be a place or pedagogy in that instructors accept the first language as a natural and even helpful part of the second language classroom, much alike Levine’s research on code choice. To further this speculation, the practices explained below show this reality for the participant below, that in fact, the first language is present in their classrooms.

In the practices of high school instructors, we saw a variety of actual use of target language, in instructors and students. Despite the lack of detailed responses, half of the respondents claimed to speak in the target language 75 percent of the time. Only one respondent, Drew, claimed to speak the target language 100 percent of the time, but this is not surprising given his response above that propones first-language use as a negative practice for the students.

Target language use in the high school students followed similar proportions in those of the teachers, which leads to another speculation that perhaps teachers are the ultimate models of target language use for their students. Overall, the majority of students used the target language 50% of the
time or less, which seemed adequate in relation to their instructors’ use and novice language level. These proportions in each of the diagrams seem to generally follow what the instructors responded in their free-response and give a more realistic view of how much target language is used in their classrooms. With the knowledge of target language use of the participating instructors and their students, we can then dissect what activities and concepts instructors teach during their class time, and further establish a basic idea of the relation between use of the language and the support of intercultural competence/skills in their classrooms.

The responses given by university instructors about target language use were drastically different in comparison to the high school instructors. Overall, the university instructors were bigger proponents of exclusive use and reported that their (novice) students used the language more. The philosophies illustrated the perspectives with a seemingly more rigid perspective, and do not mention as many limitations in regards to target language use as do the high school instructors.

Sally was the only instructor that mentioned the students’ affective filter among the university professors, which seems to be an important factor for student use and learning of the language. Although she proposes maximum use of the target language, she allows for the native language as a tool for making students comfortable, therefore utilizing a multilingual approach. However, four out of five of the instructors did not allow for use of the first language and Rita’s philosophy reflected this majority. Her philosophy excludes the “affective filter” and seems to disregard that as significant component, but rather emphasizing the maximum exposure to the target language. The belief and research that students learn best with exclusive use and input of the target language was the prominent philosophy among the most experienced and educated instructors in this survey, leading one to think that perhaps this is the training that they have received or researched independently.
When the university professors responded to limitations in exclusive use of the target language, there were a range of responses that presented the real challenges, and even optimism at tackling these challenges. With the responses, college students, even at the novice level, needed more complex and relatable topics. With these students, it is difficult to stay on basic topics and bland grammar, as these students seem to require more intellectual stimulation, which Sally mentioned in her response. This begs the question as to whether or not the target language should be forgone in order to cover these complex topics (such as body language or perspectives on beliefs). Rita’s response spoke of maintaining a classroom environment that is mainly in the target language despite these challenges (but mentions room for the first language for cultural concepts in a different response and offers suggestions such as a blog). This response was similar to others, which almost all maintained that full target language use was possible with ‘proper’ environment and instruction.

When the instructors reported their actual practices, they performed as they responded in their philosophies and perspectives, including an increased use of. In the previous graphs on page 67, we see that the instructors and their students used the target language extensively, more so than the students and instructors at the high school level. The target language use of the instructors is remarkably high with 80 percent of the instructors using the target language during the entirety of the class period, and the remaining instructors still using the target language 75 percent of the time.

The students also had an increased use of the target language. 40 percent of the instructors reported that their students used the language 100 percent of the time in the classroom, reflecting Rita’s thought that if the instructors establish the target language as the norm, the students will maximize its use as well. As opposed to the high school students, university novice language students used the target at least 50 percent of the time, and 80 percent used the language 75 percent of the time or more. This data suggests that these instructors are establishing classrooms that
promote exclusive use, or tendencies towards exclusive use, in order to maximize use and learning of the language.

Generally, it seems that the university instructors were more strict and inflexible in their implementation of the target language in the classroom. Although, much of what they said was supported more by research than the high school instructors, the high school instructors accounted for emotional and environmental factors more so than the university professors. Because this study is not centered on the benefits of using or not using the target language in a particular way or for certain durations, there are not any conclusions to be made regarding whether or not exclusive target language use is better. Rather, this data is supplementary to the bigger picture-how target language contributes to the intercultural competence of students.

In general, we can conclude that the stark contrast from the use of the target language within the teachers and students in the high school level, and in the university level might be the result of several factors rather than the high school instructors’ previous instruction from the university professors/affiliated institution: a) as mentioned, the students are more likely to be at lower developmental levels than the university students, therefore other strategies and practices might be more fitting (however, the college level may have more “false beginners” or students who have had previous language experience), b) the professional development was reported overall as to equate to less than the university professors’ experiences, and c) there was overall less abroad experience than the university professors. These three factors were continually apparent throughout all of the results, but especially with target language use.
**Research Question #3: What is the relationship between target language use and the learning of language, cultural, and intercultural concepts in the novice language classroom?**

As stated earlier, majority of the high school instructors deemed the inclusion of intercultural competence into the curriculum as very important, but when the instructors responded to the importance and frequency of specific activities, the results varied among them. The average ratings of importance for various activities and concepts showed several trends within the group of high school instructors. After analyzing, it was clear that some activities and concepts were less popular than others among the instructors. For example, “translation activities” was regarded as the least important between all of the activities presented, with a rating of 3.25 (neutral rating), and it fell under the “language skills” category. Other activities and concepts that had lower average rating than others included “geography (culture),” “discussing current events in Spanish-speaking countries (culture),” and “Teaching as many writing and grammatical components as possible within the term of a course (language),” all with ratings of 3.38. Despite these findings, there were overall trends within the three categories. The diagram 2.5 showed the average rating of importance for each category on a scale from 1-5. Though the numbers seemed relatively similar, the trends show an emphasis on certain types of activities.

Diagram 2.5 showed that intercultural activities are placed as the most important with a rating of 3.96 as (almost) “somewhat important.” Language activities followed with a rating of 3.9, which is closer to the rating of “somewhat important.” However, cultural activities and concepts were placed the least important among the high school instructors, with a rating of 3.58 meaning that there was a strong “neutral” stance on the measure of importance for these activities. This data was somewhat surprising for a few reasons. Usually, language concepts and objectives are the primary focus of the language classroom, and although with a minimal difference, intercultural activities proved to be the most important among the instructors. Cultural activities were the least
important, which was also surprising as intercultural activities and concepts are closely connected with cultural concepts. With this information, one might expect that the frequency of these activities in the classroom would reflect the measures of importance among the participants, but these frequencies were almost contrary to that. In diagrams 2.7, 2.9, and 2.11, we could see these discrepancies among the categories. The majority of class time was spent on language activities, especially on a daily and weekly basis. Though, there could be a possible chance of misinterpretation of the questions because language objectives and activities should naturally take place everyday in the curriculum, embedded in the content or not. The cultural and intercultural activities were included less frequently, especially on a monthly and “almost rarely/never” basis. This suggests a difficulty within the high school level to incorporate these activities and concepts despite the instructors’ desire to do so.

Overall, this data demonstrates that although the high school instructors placed high importance of intercultural activities, the actual implementation in the classroom did not follow these results. The emphasis was still placed on language objectives, which was not surprising as much research on pedagogy and classroom concepts present the perspective that language skills are still the most important to teach. In combination with their earlier perspectives, quotations and experiences, there was little surprise with these results, as these instructors had the least education and experience with intercultural and cultural teaching, therefore language skills would be the most familiar for them to cover in the classroom. And remembering that the focus was on novice level courses, these concepts might also be seen as too complex for these levels. To summarize, these results are not groundbreaking, or new, but simply shed some light that that philosophies and actual practices are often more difficult to combine in the classroom.
Although both sets of participants placed intercultural concepts and activities as the most important, university instructors averagely rated the importance higher. In looking at the data, university professors rated intercultural concepts and cultural concepts above language activities and concepts, which was not the case with the high school instructors. This might mean that increased experience and understanding of these concepts denotes a more valued inclusion of these concepts in the classroom, or perhaps a better understanding of how these categories can be integrated in the classroom. Overall, the ratings of each category were higher in comparison to the high school instructors and show a comprehensive understanding, especially in relation to actual practice and frequency.

For the university instructors, the frequency of these activities actually closely followed the importance placed for the categories. In the graph 2.6, the language instructors included culture concepts and activities the most on a daily basis with 50 percent of the cultural concepts being presented daily. Then intercultural concepts followed with 40 percent of intercultural activities being presented daily, and finally, language concepts presented daily with 35 percent of the point distribution allocated to this frequency. The university professors presented language concepts (not to say they weren’t integrated within other categories) the most on a weekly basis, with 60 percent of the activities allocated to this frequency, followed with 40 percent of the activities for cultural and intercultural activities.

Generally, the university instructors made an effort to include all categories into their instruction on a frequent basis. As mentioned before, these instructors had more experiences, education and professional development combined, meaning that perhaps they understood how to fit in these concepts in relation to one another. They seemed to have a better perspective of intercultural competence through their philosophies, and this is also seen here through their
implementation. Although we do not know the details of each instructor’s curriculum, the fact that intercultural activities were placed highest on the scale of importance and were frequently included in the classroom, without being explicitly disclosed or labeled for them, suggests a genuine inclusion of intercultural activities into the novice language classroom.

**Outlining the specific relationship between target language use and intercultural competence in the novice language classroom**

This section of the essay utilizes a combination of this data and the previous data analyzed to speculate about the polemic topic of this paper; the relationship between intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom. The frequency and importance of these various activities, with the data about target language use provides information about the possibilities of teaching skills for intercultural competence while using the target language as appropriate for the classroom, therefore the relevance of all of this data is significant to draw any conclusions.

The vast amount of data that was requested of the participants, and the broad variety of research within these concepts has created a topic that is difficult to cover, and therefore the readers must keep in mind that the speculations presented come from the small sample of this study, and that further research must be done in order to adequately address the many facets of these research questions. However, it is possible to make some deductions about this sample size, given the results of the survey and prior research. These speculations and recommendations come with serious analysis on the subject, while keeping in mind that much more work needs to be done on a personal level, and in the realm of language pedagogy.

The relationship between intercultural competence and target language use is seemingly difficult to assess in the novice language classroom, as the data pointed out that there are so many factors to consider and obstacles when teaching beginning level students. After being asked, “When
teaching cultural and intercultural concepts do you find yourself using Spanish… more than usual, less than they would like to use, or remain consistent no matter the concept?” all of the instructors, except for one, reported that they either remain consistent or use less than they would like. Comprehensively, 54 percent of the instructors said that they used the target language less than they would like to use when working with intercultural competence in the classroom; however, six out of seven of the instructors that responded this way were high school instructors, and again perhaps lacking the experience of the university instructors. 38 percent of the instructors claimed that they remained consistent on their use of the language regardless of the concept. Only one instructor responded that she used the language more when she taught intercultural concepts, but this response seemed to correspond with her significant amount of experience and knowledge of the subject, especially as she was an instructor that actually taught a class on intercultural communication. The overarching data and quotations signify definite difficulties in using the target language to incorporate intercultural activities. Despite these difficulties, majority of the instructors placed importance on intercultural competence, and had quality definitions. As a result of these high quality definitions, this may allude to the perception that it is acceptable to use English when talking about intercultural competence topics, and that these perspectives may drive the switch into English.

Through numerous questions that directly and indirectly inquired about the inclusion of intercultural activities, it is clear that these activities were present in many of the classrooms, whether the instructors recognized them as intercultural or not. There are a few questions that could have inquired further about the specifics of their curriculums, which would have been helpful in knowing implementation strategies. Nonetheless, the fact that some instructors encouraged activities that helped the students reflect on their language learning processes and that many of the instructors facilitated discussions about cultural tolerance, suggests that there is at least a base knowledge of the skills and activities needed to build intercultural competence, regardless of any specific training.
However, the next paragraph will discuss how the instructors responded to the actual inclusion of intercultural competence and its relation to target language in the classroom.

Intercultural competence, following the research and Bennett’s definition, promotes authentic interaction and use of the target language, while becoming increasingly personally aware of the skills and behaviors one utilizes in a target language setting. And this is a daunting task for instructors who have to meet many various language objectives as well. Upon beginning this study, a few questions came to mind and soon became the overarching purpose for the study; does exclusive or extensive use of the target language promote intercultural competence? Can instructors promote intercultural competence in the target language at novice levels? And, it soon became apparent that high school and college level novice language classes were different in various ways, especially starting with the education and background of the instructor. Before including my final speculations, these are a few statements received from the instructors themselves that encompassed the themes of the research project.

To what extent do language limitations affect student understanding of intercultural competence?

a) I believe that within a classroom, you can create an environment that respects and embraces understanding other cultures. With the scaffolding from an educator this can be achieved. While I do believe that students can also understand culture within a new country, they are inhibited by limited vocabulary and inability to pick up on certain phrases/jokes.

b) Culture is an abstract concept, so naturally it is difficult to grasp, even in one's native language. I know some middle aged people who still don't have much intercultural competence. Time limitations within the school day and curricular constraints make it difficult to spend the time necessary to adequately address this aspect of language teaching.
c) I do believe they affect it; not only in terms of what they can understand that I tell them in the target language, but also what they can process and produce due to their limited abilities. For example, even if a student can understand the difference between “tu and ud.” or know of some appropriate/inappropriate non-verbal cues in the target culture, their ability to produce those items at a novice proficiency level are quite limited.

d) I think that when it comes to teaching/talking about cultural topics (particularly in a novice-level FL class), there is a place for the use of the learner's L1. Perhaps a lot of that can happen outside of the classroom (e.g., have students react/respond to a variety of cultural issues via a class Blog or Wiki). However, there is certainly room for the L1 here as expressing cultural ideas/topics/concepts in the L2 can be difficult for learners; especially at lower levels of proficiency.

On a whole, these instructors see the difficulty in using the target language exclusively for intercultural competence. Instructors have to make several choices when planning instruction, and need some solid background in culture, language acquisition and intercultural competence to fully integrate these concepts and further promote the intercultural competence of their students.

With the results of this study, it seems possible to integrate intercultural competence into the curriculum, as we have seen that instructors already do this to an extent. Continuing professional development and encouraging other faculty seems to be a factor as well, because those that said they did not include it as much as they would like stated that they needed support from their co-faculty and did not have the background necessary to teach this concept. Even with some training, and intercultural experience, some of the instructors (mainly high school instructors and those with just a bachelors degree) did not have a fully formed definition, leaving room for further understanding and training in regards to this subject. Additionally, learning the difference between culture learning and
intercultural competence seemed to be a topic that emerged as well, which also suggests a need for more professional development on all levels.

At the novice levels teaching for intercultural competence seems possible with careful consideration and planning, and integration with the other components of the curriculum. The university instructors have the advantage of maturity and age with their students, but often times the high school instructors have more enthusiasm from the students, so it is difficult to conclude whether or not intercultural competence is easier to facilitate at novice levels in the high school classroom or in the university classroom. Using Bennett’s research, and the data presented we can conclude that intercultural competence development and incorporating it into the curriculum is possible at the novice levels. If the instructor considers the background, language level and curriculum as a base to which skills and attitudes that are possible develop with their students, also meaning not to ambitiously expect more than the students’ level of intercultural competence and language proficiency, it seems as if the instructor can achieve a base level of intercultural competence, whatever it may be for those particular students.

**Intercultural Competence and Maximal Target Language Use**

Now that it has been established that incorporating intercultural competence into the curriculum is seemingly possible as a concept alone, how does this relate to the amount of target language used, especially if an instructor believes in exclusive use or another specific philosophy? The amount of target language used in a lower level classroom is a debate itself, but presenting complex topics that require increased student awareness and engagement adds another challenging dimension.

The university professors were the participants that seemed to believe that target language use and intercultural competence should maintain a close relationship in the classroom. Their
responses indicated that more target language use and exposure would equate a higher intercultural competence, much like Lafayette proposed earlier when he said that students’ view and learning of culture should be through the target language. However, there is difficulty in this when asking for student participation in class, which is integral to building intercultural competence, meaning that eventually a cultural exchange or mutual interaction is able to take place. As many of the high school instructors stated, students must feel comfortable to respond and participate in the classroom, in using the target language and using the first language, and this is largely dependent on the instructor. Though students’ intercultural competence was not assessed at each level, it would have been interesting to take the study one step further and obtain results from the students, as benefitting the students is the primary objective for the inclusion of intercultural competence. Nonetheless, using the target language depends not only on the level of the students, but the developmental age of the students, as supported by Bennett and Levine. Therefore, it seems almost logical that the high school instructors would have a more challenging experience while engaging their students in intercultural competence development and the corresponding complex topics and activities. As the spectrum of intercultural competence focuses on an increasingly objective personal awareness and ability to change behaviors, high school students may not be ready for certain levels of intercultural competence regardless of proficiency or level, mainly because students at this age are already incredibly self-conscious. Therefore, it seems that high school instructors might have to leave more room for the first language when attempting to tackle subjects such as cultural tolerance and behaviors in the target culture. On the other hand, this could be said to an extent for the college-age students, because these students might have a higher affective filter because of their awareness of lack of proficiency. Also, results indicated that these university students desired to talk about more complex topics and tended to have a more open mind towards opposing viewpoints and difference, which might also motivate students to move past the language barrier to an extent. Hence, strategies
for intercultural competence in the target language cannot be limited at a proficiency level or through specific course, but perhaps the application of intercultural competence should be focused within the emotional and developmental levels of the students, before proficiency and language use, as intercultural competence focuses on personal development in relation to interacting with others.

VI. Conclusions

Final Recommendations

The following points were conceived through themes and responses from the instructors and the literature review, along with personal observation. These points seem important to consider when including intercultural competence into the classroom:

1) The definition and implementation of culture must be established before intercultural competence can be developed, as many instructors do not agree on a single definition, especially one that moves beyond “Big C” culture. Therefore, perhaps departments and faculty can create a working definition for their curriculum.

2) The affective component of language learning is significant to language learning and the attitudes towards the target culture. This means that instructors are constantly challenged to meet the emotional and developmental needs of their students as well, which hopefully would increase target language use regardless of the proficiency level.

3) Target language use is something that should be evaluated dependent upon the topic and needs of the students at the time. Limiting oneself to the target language for all topics, including topics that are too complex in the target language, but potentially could promote intercultural competence and a better understanding of the target culture if the first language is used, inhibits intercultural competence. With the research implemented by Levine in the
literature review, and the responses above, this seems to be a reasonable approach to target language use, especially as various instructors in the study had challenges in certain topic areas with using the target language.

4) Finally, integrating intercultural competence within any teaching philosophy requires continued professional development and openness for a curriculum that encourages authentic resources. There is no perfect way to teach or include intercultural competence, but to be aware of the students’ competencies and to encourage students to think outside of their ethnocentric universe might increase motivation and a personal investment in language learning.

Limitations of the Study

This case study provided much insight and introduction into intercultural competence and culture, and furthermore, how instructors can and should promote these concepts along with their language objectives. However, this study was a mere introduction to future research that should be carried out and had various limitations throughout. First, the sample size was not representative of a majority of instructors. Purposefully, the sample size was small and chosen based upon their connections to a particular institution, and thus, the variety of responses was limited. The survey instrument may have also limited responses because of the mixed-methods used, meaning that free responses were much more limited through this medium and did not provide a personal connection to the participants. Contrary to the small sample size, there was a vast amount of data available for correlation, meaning that some pieces of data were excluded or not analyzed, which could have affected the outcome somewhat.
Future Areas for Research

In general, there is much more research to be done in this area. Intercultural competence is a relatively new concept in relation to language education, and it requires close attention and continued professional development in the concept. Combining target language use and the incorporation of intercultural competence is an area that needs to be emphasized because the ultimate goal of second language learning is to be able to interact/communicate successfully within the target culture. Future research and pedagogical methods should also be explored within specific languages, as culture and intercultural interactions differ depending on the language and context. As there continues to be debate within the relevance of foreign language in education, research is needed to display the benefits of being interculturally competent and proficient in multiple languages. Personally, I would like to continue this research to create and include more concrete and applicable pedagogical materials for the topics presented, as this seems to be the most difficult area for educators. I would also like to obtain real classroom data, meaning observations and interviews to further analyze the relationships between perspectives and practices.

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, the amount of research and data analyzed was vast, as the relationship between intercultural competence and target language use has very little applicable literature. Research from Byram and Bennett has established the concept of intercultural competence into the realm of academia, but it is important to further this concept for the applications of the world language classroom. As culture and intercultural awareness are seemingly difficult concepts at lower levels, instructors often have difficulties fitting in culture concepts, so when asked to develop intercultural awareness, target language use may seem too challenging. However, multilingual approaches to target language use and intercultural awareness have some
advocates in second language research, such as Levine and Janet Bennett. And overall, the target language use and ability to promote intercultural awareness is highly dependent on methods of teaching, instructor preferences and knowledge, and the developmental and affective levels of the students. Again, the results of this study reflected the many variables and challenges associated with language teaching. As well as this, the participants had a common relationship in that the results of this study also reflect the views of instructors that all have connections to an institution, but it seems as if this didn’t matter because the instructors did not share the same professional development and affiliation. Without making any further conclusions, it is only possible to say that the instructors seem to do what they know, given the limitations and resources they have. Their perspectives were an invaluable insight to how target language use and intercultural competence can combine in the classroom.
References


Cummins, J. (1979). *Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.


Appendices

A.1- Institutional Review Board Approval and Consent

Dr. Angela Erickson-Grussing and Leah Shepard
April 2nd, 2012
Dear Dr. Erickson-Grussing and Ms. Shepard,

In accordance with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Federal Regulations, this letter serves as official approval from the College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protocol titled: Perspectives and Practices of Culture Learning and Target Language Use in the Classroom. This approval is effective April 2nd, 2012. Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research.

This approval expires April 2nd, 2013. Please notify the committee if an extension is required beyond this time frame. Any serious adverse events must be reported to the chairperson of the IRB, in writing, within ten days of occurrence. If there are any changes/ modifications made to the approved research protocol, you must obtain IRB approval before initiation, except where necessary to eliminate immediate harm to the human subjects.

Thank you for your proposal submission. We wish you success in your research.

Sincerely,

Julie Strelow, PhD, APRN
Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University
Dear Potential Participant,

COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT/ST. JOHN’S UNIVERSITY

Survey Title: Perspectives and Practices of Culture Learning and Target Language Use in the Classroom

Honors Thesis Project Title:

Target Language Use and Teaching for Intercultural Competence in Novice-Level Spanish Courses: Comparing Practices in High School and University Classrooms

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to be in a research study about university and high school Spanish language educators’ perspectives and practices of intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom.

You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently, or have been, a Spanish language educator for novice levels of Spanish at high school level and/or at the university level. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by:

Leah Shepard in cooperation with her Honors Thesis Advisor, Angela Erickson-Grussing (Hispanic Studies Instructor at the College of Saint Benedict)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the pedagogical philosophies of teaching culture, classroom practices and professional development/pre-service training. I would like to gather the perspectives and pedagogical practices of intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom to further analyze and make these comparisons. Through this study I will first analyze these variables such as demographical information and responses, then attempt to draw conclusions and offer an interpretation as to why there are specific challenges in language education. This study will further facilitate completion of my Honors Thesis for distinction in the Hispanic Studies major at CSB-SJU.
Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an online survey as accurately and thoroughly as possible. The survey will ask for responses regarding your pedagogical views on intercultural competence and target language use in the classroom.
2. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to an hour.
3. The survey should be completed by May 1st, 2012

RISKS/BENEFITS

This study has no known risks. However, because the survey will obtain the best results if done thoroughly and accurately, there may be an inconvenience within the time needed to complete the survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Records will not be kept in any public medium, but rather stored as locked data files. Only the researchers will have access to the records.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the College of Saint Benedict or Saint John’s University.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

The researcher conducting this study is Leah Shepard, with advisement from Hispanic Studies Instructor, Angela Erickson-Grussing. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact them at:

Leah Shepard (Primary Investigator):

Email: ljshepard@csbsju.edu

Phone: (320)296-5443

IRB Chair:
Julie Strelow

Email: jstrelow@csbsju.edu
Phone: (320) 363-5181

Faculty Advisor:

Angela Erickson-Grussing

Email: aericksongr@csbsju.edu
Phone: (320)- 363-5130

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers.

I consent to participate in the research by completing the survey that follows and indicating my consent.

Survey Link: https://www.csbsju.edu/forms/49YC7KM97R.aspx
A.2 Survey Instrument

Perspectives and Practices of Cultural and Intercultural Components and Target Language Use in the Classroom

What year did you complete your highest degree?

What is your highest level of education?
- Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate

If applicable, please list any areas of research and/or specialty (i.e., literature, linguistics, etc.)

Currently Teaching
- High School Spanish

Levels and/or classes of Spanish currently teaching (please list and/or explain as needed)

After receiving your highest degree, what kinds of professional development have you engaged in that is specifically directed towards novice language and culture pedagogy (List and describe)?

Are you a native speaker of Spanish?
- Yes

If you are a native speaker of Spanish, state country of origin and approximate time spent there in years, OR if you were U.S. born, state the conditions to which you learned Spanish (i.e., parents were native speakers, first generation immigrants from (insert origin))

Other abroad experience in Spanish speaking countries: State country and approximate time spent there (in months and years) Example: Spain: three months
What is your overall philosophy in using the target language in the classroom? What has most greatly influenced this philosophy?

How would you categorize your target language use in the classroom (in amount of time spent using the target language)?

- 100% of time
- 75% of time
- 50% of time
- 25% or less of time

How would you categorize your students' target language use in the classroom (in amount of time spent using the target language when having the opportunity to speak)?

- 100% of time
- 75% of time
- 50% of time
- 25% or less of time

How would you define intercultural competence? How did you come to this definition?

How would you define culture? How did you come to this definition?

On a scale of 1 through 5 (1 = not at all important, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat important, 5 = very important), how important is teaching and promoting intercultural competence within the novice language curriculum?

- 1 = not at all important
- 2 = not very important
- 3 = neutral
- 4 = somewhat important
- 5 = very important

Rate each of the following concepts on a scale from 1-5 (1 = not at all important, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat important, 5 = very important) as important to teach in the Novice Spanish classroom:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching about the fine arts and history of a particular country or culture</td>
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<td>Discussing and comparing experiences and interactions within a different culture</td>
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<td>Teaching as many writing and grammatical components as possible within the term of a course</td>
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<td>Partner and large group oral discussion on daily routines and shared habits</td>
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<td>Presentations about oneself (characteristics, physical descriptors, family, childhood, education, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorizing Vocabulary</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussing body language and non-verbal clues when interacting with someone from a particular culture</td>
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<td>Providing relevant readings and comprehension activities</td>
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<td>Discussing current events in Spanish-speaking countries</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<td>Translation activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussing relevant social issues</td>
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</table>
Throughout the curriculum, how often (if at all) do you include the following curriculum components in your instruction (Daily, weekly, monthly, rarely/never)?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely/Never</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide information/instruction about daily life and routines</td>
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<td>Encourage students to interact and immerse themselves in culture through information on study abroad, events on/off campus and opportunities to interact with native speakers</td>
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<td>Introduce the students to a variety of cultural expressions such as literature, music, theatre, film etc.</td>
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<td>Encourage student reflection within their process of learning a second language</td>
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<td>Encourage student reflection within their perspective of the Spanish culture</td>
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<td>Facilitate discussion on values and beliefs within the culture and compare to students’ ideas of culture</td>
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<td>Provide instruction on grammar and sentence structure</td>
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<td>Provide information on real interactions one might experience in the target culture</td>
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<td>Provide level-appropriate reading and reading comprehension activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide information about values and beliefs of target culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide information about history, geography and/or political conditions</td>
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<td>Provide and reinforce new vocabulary sets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide instruction on how to interact with a variety of people within the target culture</td>
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</table>

When teaching cultural and intercultural concepts do you find yourself using Spanish:

- ☐ More than the usual amount used with other concepts
- ☐ Remain consistent with use of Spanish no matter the concept
- ☐ Less than you would like to use

To what degree do language limitations affect student understanding of intercultural competence?

According to your personal experience, what are some issues that arise when attempting to teach exclusively in the target language?

Is there anything else you would like me to know that I may have left out of this survey?

Submit  Reset