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Classroom Language Socialization: Language acquisition, educator beliefs, and intercultural communicative competence

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Skoog, Rebekah M., "Classroom Language Socialization: Language acquisition, educator beliefs, and intercultural communicative competence" (2021). *UM Graduate Student Research Conference (GradCon)*. 11.

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Language Socialization:

Language acquisition, educator beliefs, and intercultural communicative competence

ITCHY FEET



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Introduction

- Language and culture
- Dell Hymes (1989) and the Ethnography of Communication
- Communicative Competence
- Shift in “Best Practices” in Language education research on pedagogy
- American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages - Grant Funding

The Five C's



ACTFL – World–Readiness Standards

“Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language.”



The Communicative Shift

Intercultural communicative competence

Developed from Hymes' Communicative Competence

Self-awareness and understanding of one's own culture

Convey and interpret messages

Example: Navigating handshakes in Ouagadougou



American Language Learning and Chosen Field Sites

- Historical Context - Language as a matter of national security (Macedo 2019)
- Language Learning for Economic Gains
- Limited resources for Educators
- Two year requirement in high school
- Montana and New Hampshire - seemingly isolated offer unknown potential for language as tool of understanding diversity

The Problem: Dangers of Misrepresentation



What's the harm?

1. Language as heritage
2. Prestige Standard - Example of French
3. Language Acquisition Ideology “Cultural beliefs about language acquisition affect the language socialization routines used by caregivers and educators. **Assumptions about the contextual use of language have an impact on the socialization of communicative competence.**”
4. Foreign Language Learning (FLL)

What are teachers doing? : Research on pedagogy vs. practice

How is culture perceived and transmitted in the language classroom?

What are the beliefs of language educators surrounding intercultural communicative competence and language acquisition?

How do language educator backgrounds influence the role of culture in the language classroom?

Methods & Analysis

Who:

- Language educators
- French, Spanish, German, ESL
- Montana and New Hampshire
- Varied Experience Level

What:

- Semi-structured interviews (*In progress*)
- Professional Develop Workshop Participant Observations (*In progress*)
- Focus-Group discussion (*To be completed*)
- Mini- Classroom observation (*In Progress*)

How:

- Thematic Analysis
 - Basic, Organizing, Global
- Narrative Analysis
 - Telling educator stories

The emerging themes



About their backgrounds:

- Unexpected turns
- Eager to learn more
- The value of the study abroad experience

About the practice:

- False Dichotomies
- Understanding Culture and ICC
- Relationship with textbooks

Conclusion

- Language as a powerful tool
 - Empathy
 - Memory and brain development
- Educator Experiences and Understandings
 - Blank Slates or Social Scientists?
- Highlight the power of language
 - Indigenous languages vs. European, Asian, Middle Eastern?
- To understand their story - unlocking potential

Thank you!

