VIAL

Vigo International Journal
of Applied Linguistics

VIAL

Vigo International Journal
of Applied Linguistics

Number 5 - 2008

Editors

Rosa Alonso
Marta Dahlgren

Designing a Foreign Language Curriculum in Postsecondary Education Drawing from the Multiliteracy, Functionalist, and Genre-Based Approaches

Francisca Goldoni
The University of Georgia, USA
goldoni@uga.edu

Abstract

As a result of today's multicultural societies, globalization, and the advent of the communication and information technology the demand has increased for second/foreign language abilities that far exceed those typically associated with communicative competence. In this essay I suggest that the curriculum in a postsecondary foreign language department should be conceptualized to enable students to develop cognitive and socio-cultural sensitivity to the language, and to mature advanced language skills. I argue that the synthesis of multiliteracy, funtionalist, and genre-based approaches in second/foreign language teaching is particularly effective to achieve these goals. Mastering advanced language levels and becoming a multicompetent and culturally multiliterate foreign language user has enormous advantages in our globalized societies.

Key words: multiliteracy approach, functionalist approach, genre-based approach, foreign language curriculum, advanced language skills.

Resumen

Debido a la globalización, al aspecto multicultural de nuestra sociedad moderna y a la tecnología informática y de los medios de comunicación, ha crecido la demanda de individuos que manejan destrezas lingüísticas mucho más avanzadas que las típicamente asociadas con las habilidades comunicativas en un idioma extranjero/segundo. En este trabajo se propone que el plan de estudios en una facultad de lenguas extranjeras debería ser diseñado para ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar no sólo sensibilidad cognitiva y socio-cultural de un idioma, sino también para adquirir niveles avanzados de competencia lingüística. En este sentido la

fusión de los tres enfoques "multiliteracy" (multialfabetización), funcionalista y de género literario es particularmente beneficiosa para lograr estos objetivos. El hecho de dominar un nivel de competencia lingüística avanzado y de saber usar un idioma extranjero en múltiples contextos culturales, sociales, profesionales y académicos presenta enormes ventajas en nuestra sociedad global.

Palabras clave: multialfabetización, enfoque funcionalista, género literario, plan de estudio en lenguas extranjeras, destrezas lingüísticas avanzadas.

1. Introduction

The advent of communication and information technology in our multicultural and multilingual societies has brought about new challenges for foreign language departments around the world. One of these challenges is to enable learners to develop cognitive and socio-cultural sensitivity to the language, and master advanced language abilities that go far beyond the traditional oral and communicative competence. Indeed, today's global and multimodal societies are in urgent need of advanced foreign language users who can successfully and functionally employ the language in the wide range of academic, scientific, technological, business, social, and legal disciplines, and who can navigate in these professional fields effectively, competently, and with much confidence.

In order to face this challenge and adequately respond to the current pressing global changes, I argue for a substantial rethinking and sharpening of programs and curricula in foreign language departments, and for a greater clarity and specificity of their scope, sequence, and student learning outcomes and assessments. I argue that the synthesis of multiliteracy, funtionalist, and genre-based approaches (MFG) in second/foreign language teaching is an effective approach. With a heavy pedagogical focus on content, literacy, genre, task, and language acquisition, MFG, used in conjunction, lead students to acquire strong cognitive and socio-cultural sensitivity to the language. Moreover, MFGs are highly beneficial for the development of advanced language abilities understood in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity of language use. An advanced mastery of language abilities in a second/foreign language is attainable through the strong emphasis placed on a plurality of texts, genres, discourses, and registers, including the crucial lexicogrammatical features associated with them. This focus on textuality and genres has the unique benefit of exposing students to a variety of meaning-making manifestations

leading to an increased sensitivity, in-depth understanding and awareness of socio-cultural norms, conventions, and discourse communities.

At the heart of the MFG is a pedagogy of scaffolding, coaching, and modeling through explicit instruction throughout the course of study for the very diverse student population and contexts in which language is taught (Byrnes 2002c). Byrnes (2002c), Maxim (2004) and Swaffar (1999) emphazise the importance of a curriculum renewal in the foreign language departments that puts an end to the division between language courses and content courses. They also argue for the synthesis of MFG, starting from the beginning of undergraduate instruction to upper level courses in order to enable students to develop advanced foreign language skills.

Maxim (2004) points out that there are several limitations in communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches because learners are encouraged to talk about their immediate first-hand experiences, express ideas and concepts in their own words, and therefore create their own expressive voice. Instead, proponents of the MFG (see names of proponents in the following section) suggest that CLT approaches represent an individualistic and simplistic notion of language rather than a social and cultural understanding of language which does not become truly meaningful unless it is situated in a specific social context and within a specific discourse community that uses that language in different genre forms.

2. A Second/Foreign Language Curriculum in Postsecondary Education

Drawing from the multiliteracy, (Byrnes 1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Byrnes 2006; Byrnes & Kord 2001; Cope & Kalantzis 2000; Developing multiple literacies 2000; Gee 1989; Harklau 2002; Kern 1995, 2000, 2002, 2004; Kern & Schultz 2005; Kress, 2000; Schleppegrell & Colombi 2002; The New London Group 2000), functionalist (Byrnes 2002b, 2006; Developing multiple literacies 2000; Halliday 1990, 1994; Halliday & Hasan 1989; Schleppegrell 2004), and the genre-based approaches (Byrnes 2002b, 2002c, 2006; Byrnes & Kord 2001; Byrnes & Sprang 2004; Christie 1999; Crane 2002; Crane, Liamkina, & Pankova 2004; Developing multiple literacies 2000; Hyland 2002, 2003; Martin 1999, 2002; Pavlenko 2006; Reppen 2002; Rinner & Weigert 2006; Swaffar 2004; Weigert

2004), and also informed by research on curriculum construction in foreign language departments (Byrnes 2000b), I identify in this paper seven curriculum organizing principles to be considered in order to design a second/foreign language curriculum in postsecondary education: I) The notion of multiliteracy and the centrality of text in context II) Situated practice III) Overt instruction IV) Critical framing V) Transformed practice VI) Discourse multicompetence through genres VII) Integration of language and content in a careful sequence of well articulated courses. These points are accompanied by examples of the practical pedagogical applications in the classroom. I make the case for the German Department at Georgetown University (GUGD), which has undergone a substantial curriculum integration and renovation bringing up a totally different orientation toward the program's intentions, teaching mission, and assessment instruments and practices. I conclude with a discussion of the various forms of language learning assessment that the department has adopted based on its intended goals in order to analyze the changed outcomes.

I) The Notion of Multiliteracy and the Centrality of Text in Context

The particularly innovative pedagogy of multiliteracy (Cope & Kalantzis 2000; The New London Group 2000) is the result of the changes in the current and future working, public, and private lives that witness a plurality of texts and modes of language representation, a multiplicity of communication channels, and the increasing multicultural and multilingual diversity in today's world. A crucial notion for such pedagogy is that of 'design' involving three elements elaborated by The New London Group: 'Available Designs'; 'Designing'; and 'The Redesigned.' Available Designs are the existing discourses, styles, genres, dialects, and voices as representation of knowledge and its habitual form of expression. Designing is the process of shaping meaning, and it involves the transformation of the available designs. The Redesigned is the result of Designing, and it represents a new meaning, something new and creative, "a unique product of human agency: a transformed meaning" (The New London Group 2000: 23) (for specific examples see the sections called 'Pedagogical Applications').

For Crane (2002) the overarching goal in achieving a pedagogy of multiliteracy is to be able to think about and analyze texts critically, master sophisticated language and convey appropriate information, content, and recognize how meanings

are made within a wide range of texts situated in a specific socio-cultural context and discourse communities. Assuming that professional-level use of a second/foreign language is the goal, Byrnes (2002c) calls for extensive and intensive reading.

For Kern (1995; 2000; 2004; 2005), multiliteracy is a meaningful, social, and collaborative experience where students can work together with and learn from their peers and more experienced mentors. Multiliteracy is determined by social and cultural conventions that can be used and adapted based on specific purposes, modes, and audiences. Therefore, a multiliteracy-based curriculum for a second/foreign language aims at preparing students to analyze multiple forms of texts, discourses, and uses of a second/foreign language in multiple contexts and modes, for multiple purposes, and for different audiences. In developing activities and tasks to accomplish this goal, Kern (2000, 2004) refers to four curricular components that are incorporated in a multiliteracy approach (see also The New London Group 2000): situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. Specific examples of classroom applications are provided.

II) Situated Practice

Situated practice is immersion in contextualized language use and meaningful practice within a community of learners who can play multiple roles depending on their background and previous experience. This community of learners includes both novices and experts who serve as mentors and guides for the less experienced learners. The focus of situated practice is on the worlds of learners' "here and now" (The New London Group 2000: 33). It involves communication and meaning, and it emphasizes apprenticeship, experience, pattern recognition, and socialization in a low-tension and low-anxiety environment, where students feel free to take risks and trust the assistance of peers and teachers leading them in their language acquisition (see also Kern 2000).

III) Overt Instruction

Situated practice must be supplemented by overt instruction that helps learners gain conscious awareness and control of what they have acquired in situated practice. Overt instruction implies explicit attention to certain aspects of the language, explicit exposure to the public genres and secondary discourses, and development of an explicit metalanguage that enables teachers and students to identify,

describe, and discuss the various forms, contents, functions, and meanings of the discourses of practice. Pedagogically speaking, overt instruction includes "all those active interventions on the part of the teacher and other experts that scaffold learning activities" (The New London Group 2000: 34).

IV) Critical Framing

Critical framing draws on the metalanguage developed through overt instruction and it is related to the interpretative and analytical component of language and literacy pedagogy. It refers to the conscious attention to relationships between linguistic forms (specific lexical and structural choices), social and cultural contexts, as well as purpose and audience. It involves stepping back, creating personal and theoretical distance, and being able to constructively critique what has been learned. It also means being able to account for cultural, historical, and social setting of the material under study. Here the teacher "must help learners to denaturalize and make strange again what they [the students] have learned" (The New London Group 2000: 34). Critical framing can be developed through close reading and analysis of different text types, and peer-group response/editing.

V) Transformed Practice

Transformed practice involves creating a new text departing from an existing one, reshaping, and turning a text into a different product for a different audience and for a new context of communication. Transformed practice focuses on the process of designing meaning to suit the constraints, norms, and conventions of new immediate and larger socio-cultural sites. Examples of transformed practice are stylistic and/or genre reformulation, inventing story continuations, and the use of writing and reading for speaking (Kern 2000; The New London Group 2000).

V) 1. Pedagogical Applications of the Multiliteracy Approach

Shofer (1990) argues for a strong integration of reading associated with writing in the foreign language literature courses where students can be more active and creative with words to increase greater aesthetic appreciation of literary texts. Much of the passivity associated with reading can be attenuated just by having students complete a wide variety of writing tasks such as note-taking on readings, writ-

ing ideas and reactions emerging from the readings, and journal writing. Below are additional ideas that can be applied to a second/foreign language class and that are aimed at stimulating students' critical thinking and transformed practice while creating innovative works and designs are: to have the class put a narrative text into the form of a poem and vice versa; transform a text into a song; create a conversation between two characters within the narrative text; write a formal interview addressing the author of the text; change the ending of the text or continue the story; add an additional character to the plot; or rewrite the same text into a speech or a theatrical script to be performed in front of an audience of young students or Latino children (see also Kern 2000).

Kern (2000) stresses the importance of peer-group response/editing in the foreign language classroom. Students should work in pairs or small groups, exchange their writing samples, discuss strengths and ways to improve their product, give suggestions, share concerns and common issues, as well as attend style and grammar problems with the continual assistance of the instructor. Next, the teacher could select one model text written by a student or a famous author, focus on the writer's lexical and structural choices, strategies, and intratextual moves, and analyze the writer's attitude, point of view, message conveyed, and purpose.

Kramsch (1985) suggests redesigning stories as a class activity to teach students how to analyze the relations between textual languages and the contexts that they construct, and focus on the effects that such transformations might have on the reader. Examples of these class activities are to have second/foreign language (L2) students write variations of the readings they have made, begin to tell the story at a middle episode, reformulate the text in a different genre (dialogue, diary, encyclopedic entry, play script, public report, newsletter), or switch from omniscient to not omniscient narrator.

Cortese (1985) provides an insightful example of transformed practice using literacy for speaking in a content-based project on American Indians in her experimental intermediate-level English as a foreign language class in Italy. Cortese's project consists of three steps: first, background reading in Italian on American Indians, then reading a book in English on the topic, and finally preparing an oral report on the main subject matter. Before the actual oral performance, Cortese had her students write and peer edit successive drafts of their oral presentations and she helped them with recurrent issues such as diction, syntax, rhetorical organ-

ization and vocabulary specific to the content area. Students achieved high levels of oral expressive sophistication and produced extended, connected discourse. Follow-up activities after the students' oral report ranged from the simulation of a United States Supreme Court hearing on a land claim to several testimony role-plays at court. Needless to say, these experiences can be successfully extended to a second/foreign language classroom environment.

Other insightful applications of the multiliteracy approach in the foreign language classroom are designed by Kern (2000) who proposes to work with emails and photographs that the students received from their French pen pals. Quinlisk (2003) also introduces rhetorical analysis of advertisements as sources of linguistic and cultural information, content analysis of people in TV and films as means to look in depth into the verbal and nonverbal messages about culture and society, and analysis of situational comedies that exemplifies appropriate pragmatic language use in varied settings.

VI) Discourse Multicompetence through Genres

Gee (1989) links the somehow abstract concept of literacy to the more concrete idea of 'discourses', in particular 'primary discourses' (the discourses of familiarity) and 'secondary discourses' (the discourses involving social institutions such as schools, workplaces, offices, and businesses). For Gee literacy is control of secondary discourses and uses of language. For Maxim (2004) being literate in a wide range of private and public discourses and contexts is closely related to the notion of advancedness in a foreign language. In order to achieve control and advancedness, students need to be exposed to, recognize, understand, and be able to produce a wide variety of genres and registers. Genres are valuable, suitable, authentic sources and model texts, and provide an excellent unit of analysis. Genres represent a vivid example of all the lexicogrammatical choices for meaning-making which are available to students in a specific discourse community in order to successfully and efficiently participate and communicate in our society.

VII) Pedagogical Applications of the Genre-Based Approach

The Précis. Research has shown that the value of the précis as a tool to acquire sophisticated discursive practices in the analysis, interpretation, and production of

a plurality of textual genres (Byrnes & Sprang 2004; Crane 2002; Crane et al. 2004; Swaffar 2004). The précis is a template for critical interpretation and analysis of texts. It is a grid that helps students and teachers analyze particular information, perspectives, textual moves, messages, and language features that characterize different genres. A practical application of the précis as a critical summary is provided by Swaffar (2004). She chooses Laura Esquivel's Spanish novel *Like water for chocolate* as a thematic unit and then she selects three additional genres related to the novel: a movie based on the novel, a film review, and an author interview. She uses the précis to critically analyze the differences among the four thematically-related genres. She organizes her précis into three main sections, each section displaying highly specific and contextualized vocabulary and phrases in Spanish. The first section of the précis focuses on the topic, content, and main ideas. The second part describes how the reader interprets the macro and micro structure of the text identifying specific discourse markers and organizational moves. The third part presents a reflection on the implications and messages of the text. Here students are encouraged to show their understanding and interpretation of the text, and are asked to draw parallels to other course readings.

Byrnes and Sprang (2004) also stress the numerous pedagogical benefits of the genre-based approach and the précis template in two (pre)advanced courses. First, the pre-advanced courses *German stories and histories* focus on narrative genres, and the authentic texts selected for the course create a dialectic between personal and public narratives through a wide range of text types such as personal narratives, interviews and feature films, short literary works, newspaper stories, documentary videos, public speeches, and magazine articles. Second, the advanced course *Political discourse* focuses on publicly delivered political speeches and presents authentic material discussing topics in the public forum such as educational, social, international, and political issues. The use of various précis templates in the narrative-based course illustrates how early advanced language students can make rich narrative choices in the expression of content, tense, temporal and causal coherence through appropriate adverbs and adverbial phrases. Similarly, the précis templates in the public speech-based course highlight that they are oral, highly interactional texts involving an audience. Additionally, a different rhythm, stress, and intonation accompany different syntactic choices such as statements, exclamations, alliteration, rhyme, and standard opening and close phrases.

Crane, Liamkina, and Pankova (2004) also argue for the construct of genre as a means for fostering advanced language abilities and analyze two case studies of graduate students' experiences with the précis, in order to exemplify how genre-based approach can promote second/foreign language skills, particularly for academic registers. In the first case study Pankova discusses how writing a précis in a graduate literature course for an academic article helped her develop her writing style for subsequent academic and professional work such as research papers and book reviews. Additionally, this writing assignment made her become more aware of important issues in literary analysis and criticism, as well as ways in which they are discussed and examined. In her précis she used specific vocabulary and expressions typical of literary criticism discourse, and she practiced metalanguage phrases that are essential for framing sophisticated ideas and concepts. In the second case study Cori Crane describes her experience, first as a student and then as a teacher, of drawing upon knowledge of the précis to give a formal presentation in German, her L2. The précis served her as model and framework for creating a coherent, cohesive, and well organized text. Her oral version of the précis highlighted the importance of linking the arguments of the text through highly cohesive discourse markers. The activity involved framing the main concepts in a succinct and articulate fashion, using rhetorical moves such as introducing the topic, citing authors, enumerating arguments, comparing and contrasting, and expressing opinion.

Comedy Genres. Byrnes and Kord (2001) outline a course that blends language and content with academic/literary discourses (texts and historical/ social/ authorial/ cultural contexts, different stylistic forms, and literary genres). This course is called *Look Who's Laughing: German Comedies*. Students enrolled in this course are encouraged to go beyond communicative goals and to achieve nuanced interpretations of literary texts and, by extension, human experiences. They analyze five German comedies, three short prose works, one cartoon series, and five films and sketches, and investigate different stylistic forms of what is funny. They examine and evaluate the difference between comedies and other dramatic forms like tragedies and *Tragikömedie*, and when, how, and why these distinctions are historically and socially situated. Kord carefully designs the linguistic tools to discuss topics of this nature in German. Similarly to Swaffar (2004), Kord creates detailed templates and outlines in German where she models for the students how to use the language for text discussion and countering scholarly arguments in both oral

reports and written assignments. The specific phrases, linguistic structures, and lexical items guide the students and encourage stylistic sophistication that eventually enables them to express their ideas, full creativity, and cognitive reasoning.

Business Genres. Weigert (2004) presents a content and business genres course in the context of language programs for specific purposes. These programs serve students' pre-professional needs and therefore contribute to their linguistic multi-competence, intellectual, and cultural advancement. Weigert argues that, through the explicit focus on genre, students learn the vocabulary specific to business-related topics, as well as the discourse-level behaviors associated with a business setting. The business course designed by Weigert designs, called *German Business Culture and Globalization*, is developed into a series of carefully sequenced themes that expose students to a number of business-related genres. For example, the first thematic unit of the course is on international mergers and their cultural factors. The genres presented range from an advertising brochure, to short newspaper articles, to opinion pieces, and to book reviews. The blend of genre-specific content and language features adds a challenging and intellectually stimulating component to the course. The templates designed by Weigert illustrate the linkage between genre-related content and language and show the numerous semantic fields and derivational expressions that can be built around key concepts of the text, such as the notion of merger ("Fusion" in German): *zur Fusion kommen – die fusionierte Konzerne, die Jahrhundertfusion, das Wagnis einer Fusion eingehen* (141).

In sum, it is apparent that the genre-based approach contributes a great deal to increased literacy and discourse competence leading to advanced language skills. Moreover, it is apparent that the practices developed in other foreign languages such as German can be successfully integrated in, and adapted to, the second/foreign language classroom. When teachers adopt a genre-based approach, they help students nurture a greater awareness of the various genres that they can use based on their communicative purpose, audience, and the specific cultural context.

VIII) Integration of Language and Content in a Sequence of Well Articulated Courses

Curriculum developers (Byrnes 1998, 2000a, 2002b, 2002c; Byrnes & Kord 2001; Byrnes & Sprang, 2004; Crane et al. 2004; Kern 2004; Maxim 2004; Pavlenko 2006; Rinner & Weigert 2006; Swaffar 2004; Weigert 2004) have shown

that the program of study should neither be an accidental aggregation of courses designed by individual instructors, nor should it separate language and content. Instead, the curriculum should be a coherent conceptual map of what teachers and students do over time, how they do it, and for what purpose. It should be a collaborative academic plan. It should show the relationship among the material covered and its articulated sequence from beginning instruction to the upper level through a gradual progression form the genres of primary discourses of familiarity to the genres of the secondary discourses of public and professional life. Language and intellectual content are learned and taught concurrently throughout the curriculum and the focus is on language in use and language functionality, that is meaning, context, and content. The goal is to enable students to become advanced, multicompetent, and culturally literate L2 users.

VIII) 1. An Example of a Well-Sequenced and Articulated Curriculum

A vivid example of an integrated and carefully articulated curriculum that can serve as a model for second/foreign language departments is the learning trajectory in the GUGD. The curricula and courses offered by the German Department over all four undergraduate years stand out for four major aspects. First, the program gives intellectual content the highest priority, and all courses intricately connect learning about the German-speaking world (for instance, its intellectual history, socio-political and economic realities, culture, art, and literature) with the German language. This means that the curriculum is not divided into the first four semesters of language classes and the following upper level classes of content courses. Instead, the curricular transition from one level to the next is a gradual and coherent progression over all four undergraduate years as a result of its content/ text/ genre base.

Second, the approach adopted in the GUGD differs from a traditional normative approach because it does not privilege knowledge about the rules of a language. Instead, it focuses on developing the abilities that are necessary to say something meaningful in and with a language in a plurality of private and public/professional contexts and for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Third, the emphasis on content and language acquisition toward advanced levels of literacy has resulted in placing discourse (or texts in oral and written form) at the functional center of the curriculum renewal project called *Developing Multiple Literacies*. This affects the choices of materials and the pedagogical tasks.

For example, the first year of instruction is the only level that selectively uses a commercial textbook (*Kontakte: A Communicative Approach by* Terrell, Tschirner, Nikolai 2004) to teach introductory German. However, the textbook is complemented with ancillary materials that support the program's focus on adult literate learners and the development of multiple literacies in all modalities (reading, listening, writing, and speaking). For all other levels, faculty and graduate assistants have collaboratively put together course packets focusing on discourse and textuality that differ based on the genres that are likely to occur in specific context.

Finally, the undergraduate curriculum in the GUGD has switched from an approach focusing on the progression word-phrase-sentence-paragraph-coherent writing to a functionalist approach that is shaped through the construct of genre. For instance, narratives have become a useful means for highlighting central characteristics of cohesive and coherent texts and for developing learners' awareness of the shift from telling private stories to presenting public (hi)stories. Subsequent and more advanced courses build on the students' ability to narrate within a particular historical, social, and cultural context to develop refined skills to deliver a formal, public, and political speech.

3. Assessment

Developing Multiple Literacies, the GUGD's curriculum renewal project, was conducted between 1997 and 2000 and since then it has attracted significative national and international attention. It is a unique and unprecedented literacy- and content-oriented, genre- and task-based collegiate foreign language program whose central theory of language is systemic-functional linguistics. Its main focus and objective is to lead learners to develop advanced L2 skills and literacy, and become competent non-native users of German capable to effectively navigate in a wide range of academic, intellectual, social, and highly professional settings. One of the challenges faced by the department in engaging in this project was to design assessment guidelines and procedures that would determine the value of the renovated curricular learning goals and their achievements (Byrnes 2002).

In the GUGD no "before" data have been collected before 1997 that would allow an assessment specialist to make the standard "before" and "after" comparison, and determine the improvement that the MFG approaches have brought about. Norris (2006) argues that "In language education, we deal rarely with truly

measurable constructs, and it is unreasonable to expect all student learning to be reduced to just the quantifiable, objectively measurable bits" (Norris 2006: 579). He urges the incorporation of creative assessment practices, techniques, and actions that help language educators better understand how L2 students develop and change across instructional levels. Norris raises awareness about the wide range of possible approaches and methodologies for program evaluation and improvement, and encourages the identification of useful processes by which the quality of educational efforts can be guaranteed.

Although there is no formal indication of the level of the students when initiating the courses with the renovated curriculum, the GUGD has studied the changed outcomes. Norris and Pfeiffer (2003) discussed the oral abilities achieved by GUGD undergraduates after examining the results of 128 SOPIs (live or simulated oral proficiency interviews based on the 1986 ACTFL Guidelines) administered across all levels of instruction. They suggested that recommended oral proficiency ratings in collegiate settings may be rather misleading if they are not appropriately contextualized and analyzed within an overtly stated framework, may underestimate the actual achievements of L2 students, and overlook other crucial learning outcomes. For example, most of the GUGD undergraduates would easily meet an Intermediate-Low/Intermediate-Mid oral proficiency requirement after 6 credit/contact hours of instruction[1], which is the proficiency standard that several US foreign language departments have agreed on based on what is recommended in the literature. However, this proficiency standard would not address certain abilities that the GUGD considers as highly important and expects their students to develop, such as to learn core oral as well as written literacy skills and become literate users of the German language. Moreover, SOPI assessments emphasize oral abilities and global proficiency. Instead, the GUGD prioritize a wider range of FG-specific individual and interactive task-based performance assessments focusing on meaning, content, and topics that are meaningful to the students and that are reflected in the curricular desired learning outcomes of the department. Therefore, the authors argue for the development of curriculum-specific standards and assessment tools based on the learning outcomes that each department values as crucial for their students to achieve.

---

[1]   22 out of 26 GUGD students were rated Intermediate-Low/Intermediate-Mid, while 4 were rated Intermediate-High. (p. 577)

Rather than oral abilities, the primary focus of the GUGD is actually assessing syntactic development (Byrnes et al. 2005). One of the writing tasks that were assigned and measured is the Prototypical Performance Task (PPT). It is a genre task that varies for each curricular level. It has a thematic focus (for example, creating an alternative ending to a novel read in class); a textual focus (placing narration about personal circumstances into the context of a literary work using literary conventions); a specified audience (personal and/or public); and specific lexico-grammatical and discourse features (narrative structures, descriptions, dialogues, coordinate, subordinate, and embedded clauses). The complexity measures that were given priority in the data analysis were three: 1) syntactic complexity; 2) clause length; 3) subordination. The PPT avarage complexity measures over four intensive semesters (Level I to IV) among L2 German learners reveal a considerable syntactic growth:

a) syntactic complexity is higher as curricular level increases, and evolves from 7.96 (# of words) in Level I to 15.04 in Level IV;

b) clause length/clausal elaboration increases from Level II (5.62) to III (6.96) and from III (6.96) to IV (8.70);

c) subordination increases from Level I (1.39) to II (1.64) and from II (1.64) to III (1.80). (Byrnes et al. 2005)

Both cross-curricular and longitudinal syntactic differences show very similar patterns. Changes in syntactic complexity are attributed to individual student development across curricular levels. Longitudinal profiles of individual learners show interesting data:

a) syntactic complexity increases overall across levels. However, two different profiles can be identified as students switch from Level I to Level II: some students increase their syntactic complexity; some others do not;

b) clause length does not change from Level I to Level II but it significantly increases through Level IV;

c) subordination presents three different individual profiles:

- all students increase from Level I to II;

- some students increase to Level III; other students level off or decrease;

- all students level off or decrease.

Other quantitative and qualitative studies have been conducted within the GUGD (Crane 2006; Ryshina 2006) although they do not give "measurement" results in the usual sense of the word. They address the crucial role of genre-based foreign language curriculum for advanced L2 learning, complex theme and coherent and cohesive information-structuring in advanced learner writing, and the learners' texual meaning-making ability. For example, Ryshina (2006) argues that manipulation of grammatical intricacy and lexical complexity of themes are two crucial factors in successfully presenting information and constructing argumentative, persuasive, logical, coherent, and cohesive texts. In her study of L2 German book-review writing, she stressed the considerable increase in the use of thematized subordinate clauses[2] from Level III and IV to Level V, progressing from 6.5% and 6% to 9.6% and suggesting a significant development in grammatical intricacy and text-constructing strategies. Along the same line nominalized clausal themes, which generally represent only a small percentage of occurrence in L2 German writing, increased as well in use from Level III to Level V, and evolved from 4.3% to 14.3%. An evidence of students' information-structuring strategy and advanced writing skills was given by the increase of lexical complexity in themes[3], and the analysis across levels showed a remarkable progression (almost the triple) from 2% in Levels III to 5.9% in Level IV. Here Level III students of German structured their themes essentially by means of relative clauses and prepositional phrases, whereas upper level students also made use of pre-nominal participal constructions, appositions, and extended attributes, which brought them very close to native speakers' writing if it had not been for the absence of post-nominal participal constructions.

Most interestingly, an innovative construct that is being used longitudinally to trace writing development of L2 German learners over three instructional levels (Level 2 through 4), and that is central to systemic functional linguistics (Hallyday 1990), is grammatical metaphor. Grammatical metaphor is a way of looking at the

---

[2]   Thematized subordinate clauses may include various clauses expressing time, condition, concession, and reason.

[3]   Lexical complexity in theme is understood as number of ideational lexical elements in a theme, and results from modifications, expansion, and manipulation of the noun phrase by means of adjectives, extended attributes, prepositional phrases, pre-nominal participal constructions, and embeddings via relative clauses.

L2 writer's capacity of (re)creating meaning and reality through lexically complex and lexically dense themes, such as compound nouns, nominal forms, fixed phrases, prepositional phrases or genitive constructions, and embeddings with relative clauses. In order to understand grammatical metaphor development longitudinally a number of categories describing its context of occurrence need to be looked at. The total number of nouns used in a text to convey information and (re)create meaning and reality is a crucial aspect to be considered in a grammatical metaphor occurrence analysis focusing on lexically complex and dense themes (i.e. nominalizations), besides the clausal environment for all noun occurrences. Within this approach, the main point is not to count or measure things, but rather to longitudinally describe and chart the progressive language developmental trajectory of L2 learners from beginning to advanced levels. An increase in terms of grammatical metaphor use in L2 students' writing is expected across levels, which is interpreted to be an indicator of a significant expressive and meaning-making ability, of broad lexico-grammatical capacity, of discursive-textual competence, of topic competence and genre-based literacy. Ultimately, grammatical metaphor and its strategic use in the text is expected to reflect how L2 writers connect meaning, knowledge, and form, choose to position themselves in the text, and express their poetic, philosophical, and/or rhetorical flair in it.

Finally, the value of a longitudinal approach in advanced L2 abilities and assessment is the central focus of recent studies (Byrnes & Ortega 2008) where the connection between longitudinal orientation and advanced language capacities is under investigation. It is clear that advancedness is increasingly important in our multicultural and multilingual societies and globalized world, and therefore it is crucial to examine in depth the complex process through which L2 learning develops toward advanced levels of competence.

4. Conclusions

The GUGD is a good model to follow for second/foreign language departments in postsecondary education because it proposes the synthesis of the MFGs as extremely valuable approaches. They allow students to be exposed to a plurality of model texts, genres, discourses, and registers typical of specific disciplines such as literature, art, business, economics, law, medicine, and politics. The integration of these three approaches in the second/foreign language curriculum

helps learners practice and develop strong awareness and in-depth understanding of private/public, written/spoken, as well as informal/formal genres differences leading to the advanced mastery of the lexico-grammatical features associated with them.

In this article I have argued that the synthesis of MFG approaches would be particularly beneficial in a second/foreign language department because, used in conjunction, they enable L2 students to develop advanced language skills and become multicompetent and multiliterate L2 users. In our globalized, multicultural, multilingual, and multimodal societies it is imperative for foreign language educators to prepare advanced level L2 learners to work not only in academic and instructional settings but also in other professional, public, and institutional environments that require highly specialized and multifunctional individuals who can successfully participate in, interact within, and negotiate the multiple discourses and the plurality of linguistic and cultural differences.

Finally, collegiate foreign language departments have a unique opportunity to enrich our understanding of how L2 skills develop over time. However, support of upper levels of language development can only be addressed with the joint efforts of the entire departmental faculty and teaching staff, including graduate students. It must be carefully planned, specific tasks and outcomes statements must be identified, and research must be conducted longitudinally in order to ensure and assess successful outcomes over time and at various stages of instruction.

5. References

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Actfl Proficiency Guidelines. Yonkers, NY: ACTFL, 1986.

Byrnes, H. 2002. "Contents for Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Report on an Immersion Institute." In Leaver and Shekhtman (eds) *Developing Professional-Level Language Proficiency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 61-76.

_____. 2002. "The Role of Task and Task-Based Assessment in a Content-Oriented Collegiate Foreign Language Curriculum." *Language Testing* 19.4 (2002): 419-437.

_____. 1998. "Constructing Curricula in Collegiate Foreign Language Departments." In Byrnes, Heidi (ed) *Learning Foreign and Second Languages: Perspectives in Research and Scholarship.* New York: Modern Language Association of America: 262-295.

_____. 2000. "Languages across the Curriculum - Intradepartmental Curriculum Construction: Issues and Options." In Kecht & Von Hammerstein (eds) *Languages across the Curriculum: Interdisciplinary Structures and Internationalized Education.* Columbus: National East Asian Languages Resource Center Ohio State University: 151-175.

_____. 2000. "Meaning and Form in Classroom-Based Sla Research: Reflections from a College Foreign Language Perspective." In Lee & Valdman (eds) *Form and Meaning: Multiple Perspectives.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 125-179.

_____. 2002. "The Role of Task and Task-Based Assessment in a Content-Oriented Collegiate Foreign Language Curriculum." *Language Testing* 19.4 (2002): 419-437.

_____. 2002. "Towards Academic-Level Foreign Language Abilities: Reconsidering Foundational Assumptions, Expanding Pedagogical Options." In Leaver & Shektman (eds) *Developing Professional-Level Language Proficiency.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 34-58.

_____. 2006. "Locating the Advanced Learner in Theory, Research, and Educational Practice: An Introduction." In Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp & Sprang (eds) *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities: Constructs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment.* Georgetown: Georgetown University Press: 1-14.

Byrnes, H., Marianna Pankova, John M. Norris and Hiram H. Maxim. 2005. "Revisiting L2 Writing Development: A Curriculum-Based Study of Syntactic Complexity". Paper presented at the 14th World Congress of Applied Linguistics, Madison, WI. 2005, July 25-29.

Byrnes, H. and K. A. Sprang. 2004. "Fostering Advanced L2 Literacy: A Genre-Based, Cognitive Approach." In Byrnes & Maxim (eds) *Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 47-85.

Byrnes, H. and S.Kord. 2001. "Developing Literacy and Literacy Competence: Challenges for Foreign Language Departments." In Byrnes & Kord (eds.) *SLA and the Literature Classroom: Fostering Dialogues.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 35-73.

Cope, B., and M. Kalantzis. 2000. "Introduction: Multiliteracies. The Beginning of an Idea." In Cope & Kalantzis (eds) *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures.* London/New York: Routledge: 3-8.

Cortese, G. 1985. "From Receptive to Productive in Post-Intermediate Efl Classes: A Pedagogical "Experiment." *TESOL Quarterly* 19,1 (1985): 7.

Crane, C. 2006. "Modelling a Genre-Based Foreign Language Curriculum: Staging Advanced L2 Learning." In Byrnes (ed) *Advanced Language Learning: The Contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky.* London/New York: Continuum: 227-245.

_____. 2002. "Genre Analysis: A Step toward Understanding the Different Stages of Advanced Language Instruction." Paper presented at the ACTFL/AATG, Salt Lake City, UT. Accessed at http://data.georgetown.edu/ departments/german/programs/curriculum/manuscripts/cranegenre.html on January 31, 2004.

Crane, C., O. Ryshina Liamkina, and M. Pankova. 2004. "Fostering Advanced-Level Language Abilities in Foreign Language Graduate Programs: Applications of Genre Theory." In Byrnes & Maxim (eds) *Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 151-77.

Christie, F. 1999. "Genre Theory and Esl Teaching: A Systemic Functional Perspective." *TESOL Quarterly* 33,4 (1999): 759.

Developing multiple literacies: A curriculum renewal project of the German Department at Georgetown University 1997-2002. 22 April 2008. http://www1. georgetown.edu/departments/german/programs/undergraduate/curriculum/

Gee, J. P. 1989. "What Is Literacy?" *Journal of Education* 171.1 (1989): 18-25.

Halliday, M. A. K. 1991. *"Linguistic Perspectives on Literacy: A Systemic-Functional Approach."* Paper presented at the Inaugural Australian Systemic Linguistics Conference "Literacy in Social Processes", Geelong Victoria: Deakin University.

Halliday, M. A. K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. 1989. *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective (Language Education)*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harklau, L. 2002. "The Role of Writing in Classroom Second Language Acquisition." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 11.4 (2002): 329-350.

Hyland, K. 2003. "Genre-Based Pedagogies: A Social Response to Process." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12/1 (2003): 17-29.

_____. 2002. "Genre: Language, Context, and Literacy." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 22 (2002): 113-135.

Kern, R. 2004. "Literacy and Advanced Foreign Language Learning: Rethinking the Curriculum." In Byrnes & Maxim (eds) *Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 2-18.

_____. 2000. "Literacy and Language Teaching." *Oxford Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 2002. "Reconciling the Language-Literature Split through Literacy." *ADFL Bulletin* 33/3 (2002): 20-24.

_____. 1995. "Redefining the Boundaries of Language Foreign Language Literacy." In Kramsch (ed) *Redefining the Boundaries of Language Study*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 61-98.

Kern, R., and J. M. Schultz. 2005. "Beyond Orality: Investigating Literacy and the Literary in Second and Foreign Language Instruction." *Modern Language Journal* 89/3 (2005): 381-392.

Kress, G. 2000. "Multimodality." In Cope & Kalantzis (eds) Multiliteracies: *Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. London: Routledge: 182-202.

Martin, J. R. 1999. "Mentoring Semiogenesis: 'Genre-Based' Literacy Pedagogy." In Christie (ed) *Pedagogy and the Shaping of Consciousness: Linguistic and Social Processes*. London: Cassell Academic: 123-155.

Martin, J. R. 2002. "A Universe of Meaning - How Many Practices?" In Johns (ed) *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum: 269-278.

Maxim, H.H. 2004. "Expanding Visions for Collegiate Advanced Foreign Language Learning." In Byrnes & Maxim (eds) *Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 180-193.

Norris, J. M. 2006. "The Why (and How) of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in College Foreign Language Programs." *Modern Language Journal* 90.4 (2006): 576-583.

Norris, J. M. and P. C. Pfeiffer. 2003. "Exploring the Uses and Usefulness of Actfl Oral Proficiency Ratings and Standards in College Foreign Language Departments." *Foreign Language Annals* 36.4 (2003): 572-581.

Ortega, L., and H. Byrnes. 2008. *The Longitudinal Study of Advanced L2 Capacities.* New York: Routledge.

Pavlenko, A. 2006. "Narrative Competence in a Second Language." In Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp, & Sprang (eds) *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities: Constructs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment.* Georgetown: Georgetown University Press: 105-117.

Quinlisk, C. Chamberlin. 2003. "Media Literacy in the Esl/Esl Classroom: Reading Images and Cultural Stories." *TESOL Journal* v12.n3 (2003): 35-40.

Reppen, R.. 2002. "A Genre-Based Approach to Content Writing Instruction." In Richards & Renandya (eds) *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 321-327.

Rinner, S. and A. Weigert. 2006. "From Sports to the Eu Economy: Integrating Curricula through Genre-Based Content Courses." In Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp, & Sprang (eds) *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities: Constructs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment.* Georgetown: Georgetown University Press: 136-151.

Ryshina-Pankova, M. 2006. "Creating Textual Worlds in Advanced Learner Writing: The Role of Complex Theme." In Byrnes (ed) *Advanced Language Learning: The Contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky.* London/New York: Continuum: 164-183.

Schleppegrell, M. 2004. *The Language of Schooling: A Functional Linguistics Perspective* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schleppegrell, M., and C. Colombi. 2002. "Theory and Practice in the Development of Advanced Literacy." In Schleppegrell & Colombi (eds) *Developing Advanced Literacy in First and Second Languages: Meaning with Power.* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: 1-19.

Schofer, P. 1990. "Literature and Communicative Competence: A Springboard for the Development of Critical Thinking and Aesthetic Appreciation or Literature in the Land of Language." *Foreign Language Annals* vol. 23(4) (1990): 325-334.

Swaffar, J. 1999. "The Case for Foreign Languages as a Discipline." *ADFL Bulletin* v30.n3 (1999): 6-12.

_____. 2004. "A Template for Advanced Learner Tasks: Staging Genre Reading and Cultural Literacy through the Précis." In Byrnes & Maxim (eds) *Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 19-45.

Terrell, T. D., B. Nikolai, and E.P. Tschirner. 2004. Kontakte: *A Communicative Approach.* 5th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

The New London Group. 2000. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." In Cope & Kalantzis (eds) *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures.* London: New York: 9-37.

Weigert, A. 2004. "What's Business Got to Do with It?" The Unexplored Potential of Business Language Courses for Advanced Foreign Language Learning." In Byrnes & Maxim (eds) *Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle: 131-150.

NATURE OF THE ARTICLES

Computational Linguistics, Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, Forensic Linguistics, Language for Specific Purposes, Language Planning, Second Language Acquisition, Speech Pathologies, Translation.

FORMAT OF THE ARTICLES

Contributions should be written in English, using the software package Word. Title of the paper and name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the author (s) should be included on a separate sheet. Submissions must be sent by e-mail attachment.
For information about length, abstract, references, etc. please use the web page www.webs.uvigo.es/vialjournal/

All correspondance should be addressed to:
Rosa Alonso ralonso@uvigo.es or Marta Dahlgren dahlgren@uvigo.es